

BIOLOGY RA POLICIES AND EXPECTATION

Biology graduate students are occasionally supported with funds from a grant or start-up. This form of funding allows students to work with their advisor(s) on specific research projects (typically) related to their dissertation or thesis work and frees up time that would normally be dedicated to teaching. Students receiving research assistant (RA) funding support by their major advisor, or a collaborating advisor, are expected to perform satisfactorily in two areas. Students should (1) perform the tasks specified by their research faculty supervisor and (2) work towards the successful completion of the grant/project goals. Specific requirements related to each of these areas are listed below.

1. Perform tasks specified by the research faculty supervisor, which may include: project design, data collection, maintaining animals or cell lines and/or animal facilities used for the research project, maintaining reagents used for the research project, data analysis and interpretation, training and supervision of new undergraduate and/or graduate students.
2. Students supported by RA are expected to communicate with their advisor at the start of the semester to set clear goals and expectations for the work to be performed during the time of RA support. Students should also meet with their advisor at the end of the funding period to discuss which goals were met/satisfied and any problems that prevented successful completion of the established goals. It is advisable that these expectations be documented in a mentor-mentee contract for that semester.
3. In the rare cases where a student is supported on an RA and the research is not related to their thesis, Biology requires faculty research supervisors to ensure that their RAs work no more than 20 hours per week on the unrelated project(s).

RAs should see support from the Biology Director of Graduate Studies or the Chair of the Biology Department concerning conflicts with their research faculty supervisor.