

Rotation Student Expectations and Policies

As outlined in Section II (Admissions) in the Biology Department Rules, Regulations, and Policies Document, graduate students pursuing a Ph.D may be offered a placement in a laboratory in one of two ways: 1) direct admission into a specific laboratory, or 2) admission into the rotation program. A rotation is a short period of time during which a student interacts with and conducts research in a specific laboratory on a temporary basis. Students may rotate in 2 or 3 different labs that are accepting rotation students. The goal of this process is to give the student a chance to learn more about the research projects, methods, and personnel in the lab group. It also provides the student with an opportunity to evaluate the PI's (advisor's) mentoring style and the PI with an opportunity to evaluate the student's potential and fit with their lab group.

Because rotation students do not have a single, specific advisor to mentor them during the rotation period, the Department of Biology has established the following expectations and policies for rotation students in their first semester of the Ph.D. program:

1. **BIO 795 registration**: all rotating students should register for BIO 795 credit with the DGS. The DGS assigns grades for these credit hours in consultation with rotation PIs.

2. Once students have established a draft rotation schedule with the DGS (see Rules, Regulations and Policies for this procedure), they should contact the PIs of the labs in which they are rotating to discuss the specific expectations of each PI/lab.

For example, students should ask about the number and/or schedule of hours they are expected to be in the lab, if there is requisite/recommended reading, lab specific training, and the goals for the rotation (e.g., specific experiments and/or methods to learn). It is highly encouraged that expectations will be documented in a "Rotation Contract" between each student and PI (see Appendix A).

3. Students should consult with their rotation PIs to help them select the courses in which they should enroll for their first semester. The DGS can also provide guidance if needed.

4. Students are expected to meet the expectations of their rotation PI while they are in their lab. Both their 1st semester BIO 795 grade and their opportunity to join that lab as a Ph.D. candidate are dependent on it. In addition, students are expected to participate in all required lab/department seminars, meetings, and journal clubs (unless their course or TA schedule creates a conflict).

5. Students will be asked to provide feedback to the DGS during and after their rotations to identify any specific problems and to help the GAC improve the rotation program. If a rotation student does not feel comfortable sharing concerns with the DGS, they should speak to any GAC member they are comfortable sharing their concerns with, or the Biology Department Chair or Associate Chair.

6. Once students have identified the lab they wish to join for their Ph.D. training, they should first inform the DGS. They should then discuss their decision with the PI of this lab and formally request to join their group as a Ph.D. candidate. If the PI of their first-choice lab agrees to accept the student into their lab as a trainee, the student should then inform all other faculty with whom they rotated about this outcome. If the PI of the student's first-choice lab does not accept them as a Ph.D. candidate, the student should meet with the DGS to discuss next steps i.e., asking to join another lab in which they rotated or possibly doing an additional lab rotation.

Appendix A
Rotation Contract

The goal of this contract is to ensure that there are clear goals and expectations between the rotating student and the PI (advisor). Setting clear goals and expectations in writing helps to ensure that said goals are reached.

Student: _____

PI: _____

Dates of Rotation: _____

What are the goals for the rotation:

What are the expectations regarding hours in the lab:

Are there critical papers that should be read:

Is there lab specific training (IACUC, biosafety) that needs to be completed:

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

PI Signature: _____

Date: _____