

Protocol 1020 Laboratory Rotations Placement

Protocol Number: 1020

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Protocol

Standard admission predoctoral researchers participate in three laboratory rotations during the spring term of their first year. These three rotations assist the predoctoral researcher in determining a thesis lab.

The decision for the first two laboratory rotations is made by the end of the predoctoral researchers' first fall term. The decision for the third rotation is made midway through the second rotation in the spring term. Each laboratory rotation is decided by mutual consent of the predoctoral researcher and the principal investigator. Predoctoral researchers are encouraged to consider rotation labs based on their individual interest and interview with the potential principal investigators. The interview should include a discussion of potential rotation projects. Once the predoctoral researcher has narrowed their interest to two top laboratories, they can again approach the principal investigators with a request to rotate in the laboratory. If both the principal investigator and predoctoral researcher agree, they should work out the order of the rotations.

Predoctoral researchers should base their decisions for rotations on the following factors:

- 1) Research interest. The module courses and principal investigators' talks (when principal investigators discuss their research with the first-year class) are opportunities for the predoctoral researcher to be exposed to the research topics.
- 2) Matching principal investigator temperament and mentoring style to a predoctoral researcher's learning style. Predoctoral researchers will be exposed to aspects of a principal investigator's style during the module courses, and they should seek out this information during their interview with the principal investigator and by talking to members of the laboratory.
- 3) Seriousness in joining the laboratory. Predoctoral researchers should rotate only in laboratories that they are serious about joining. Rotating to learn a technique is highly discouraged.

Principal investigators should base their decisions for rotations on the following factors:

- 1) Budget. Prior to confirmation of rotations, principal investigators will submit a report to the Associate Dean for Administration that states that the lab's budget will be sufficient to support a predoctoral researcher for thesis research (if the principal investigator and a predoctoral researcher mutually agree on a thesis lab placement).
- 2) Space. Principal investigators should allow a rotation only if they have sufficient space and resources in the laboratory to support the predoctoral researcher for thesis research. Allowing a predoctoral researcher to rotate to learn a technique is highly discouraged.
- 3) Fit. The predoctoral researcher has demonstrated an adequate fit with the lab environment.

Once a rotation is agreed upon and the above criteria have been met, both the principal investigator and the predoctoral researcher should separately confirm the arrangement in writing to the Associate Dean for Administration.

Direct admission predoctoral researchers do not participate in laboratory rotations and are directly admitted to a particular lab for thesis research. Predoctoral researchers initiate their academic program at the beginning of either Summer or Fall term, complete the module course sequence, and then join the thesis lab without participating in rotations. Direct admission predoctoral researchers must have at least two months experience in the lab chosen for thesis research prior to applying to the program which is equivalent to a rotation experience.