

Protocol 1020 Laboratory Rotations Placement

Protocol Number: 1020

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Protocol

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

The decision for the first two laboratory rotations is made by the end of the students' 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 student and the principal investigator. Students 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 student 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 student agree, they should work out the order of the rotations.

Students 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 student to be exposed to the research topics.
- 2) Matching principal investigator temperament and mentoring style to a student's learning style. Students 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. Students 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 student for thesis research (if the principal investigator and a student 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 student for thesis research. Allowing a student to rotate to learn a technique is highly discouraged.
- 3) Fit. The student 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 student should separately confirm the arrangement in writing to the Associate Dean for Administration.

Direct admission students do not participate in laboratory rotations and are directly admitted to a particular lab for thesis research. Students 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 students 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.