

GUIDELINES FOR ARRANGING FIRST YEAR ROTATIONS (updated May 2025)

The primary goal of the rotation system is for the student to find a well-matched lab in which to pursue thesis research. In order to allow fair access and adequate exposure to potential rotation labs, students and faculty **should not** make firm commitments until the below specified dates in August and September. Faculty found to be in violation of this policy may be sanctioned from taking rotators for the academic year.

For students

- You can explore Bioscience faculty and their research online but we strongly advise that you not directly contact faculty to discuss rotations until after the first-year advising meeting. This is usually a group Zoom meeting with the Faculty Advising Chairs, Program Directors, and Program Office staff early in the summer.
- Starting on August 8th, you are allowed to officially commit to a 1st rotation lab, but you do not need to finalize a lab until sometime during the first week of classes. The first rotation usually begins the second week of the Fall semester. If you are having difficulty identifying a 1st rotation lab, please talk to your assigned first-year Faculty Advisor.
- You may express interest, but you are **not allowed** to commit to a 2nd or 3rd rotation until after September 15th. This is to protect students from feeling “locked in” to a rotation commitment that they might have made very early, before they became familiar with the research landscape on campus.
- There will be 4 Faculty Research Interest Sessions (FRIS), also known as the MB/BC “Fashion Show”, during orientation week and the first week of Fall semester classes (between August 11-22) that feature faculty from the Bioscience PhD Programs who are actively accepting rotation students throughout the year. This is also an opportunity to meet new Bioscience Program faculty that are just stating their labs, and may not yet have their websites online.

For Faculty

- You may meet with students but please **do not commit** to accepting any rotation students in your lab until August 8th. On that date you are only allowed to fill the first rotation slot. **Do not** agree to 2nd or 3rd rotations at this time.
- There will be 4 Faculty Research Interest Sessions (FRIS), also known as the MB/BC “Fashion Show”, during orientation week and the first week of Fall semester classes (between August 11-22). Please email the Program Office staff and promptly respond to calls for availability if you would like to participate. This is your opportunity to talk to all first-year students about your research. It is assumed that faculty who are presenting in FRIS will strive to arrange space and funding in their

labs so that they can accommodate at least one thesis student from the current class.

- Please **do not** commit to any 2nd or 3rd rotations until or after Sept 15th. We want to give all students equal chance for obtaining desired rotations, and allow all Bioscience Program faculty an opportunity to participate fairly in the rotation process.
- As has been long-standing Bioscience Program policy, faculty are not allowed to host more than two rotation students at one time. Faculty should email the respective Program Director if they would like to request permission for an exception to this policy. Exceptions to this policy may be granted if the faculty has confirmed funding, provides a brief advising plan for how each student's training will be supported during the rotation period, and are open to accepting more than one student into their lab for thesis work. We want to avoid a model where popular labs host "competitive" rotations for a limited number of thesis positions.

Additional information is found in the formal guidelines:

Formal Molecular Biology Guidelines for Laboratory Rotations

https://www.bioscience.utah.edu/molecular_biology/program-guidelines/MBPrequirements.php#Laboratory_Rotations

Formal Biological Chemistry Guidelines for Laboratory Rotations

https://www.bioscience.utah.edu/biological-chemistry/program-guidelines/BCPstudentrequirements.php#Laboratory_Rotations

Joining a Lab

- Students and faculty may discuss the possibility and interest in joining a lab any time, but commitments cannot be made before the 3rd rotation ends in the spring semester.
- Verbal commitments can begin to be made on or after Monday, March 2, 2026.

Formal Molecular Biology Guidelines for Selecting a Thesis Advisor

https://www.bioscience.utah.edu/molecular_biology/program-guidelines/MBPrequirements.php#Selecting_a_Thesis_Advisor

Formal Biological Chemistry Guidelines for Selecting a Thesis Advisor

https://www.bioscience.utah.edu/biological-chemistry/program-guidelines/BCPstudentrequirements.php#Selecting_a_Thesis_Advisor