



## **Laboratory Rotations and Final Placement in a Thesis Laboratory**

**1. Rotation assignments are based on student preferences.**

Faculty preferences will not be considered when making rotation assignments. When demand for particular labs exceeds available slots, every effort will be made to equalize among the students the number of times they are assigned one of their top choices. The algorithm will give each student one of their top three preferences each rotation and each student is guaranteed their first choice at least once. One rotation may be arranged with Berkeley campus faculty outside of MCB with the written approval of the faculty Head of the Graduate Affairs Committee. However, the first rotation must be in an MCB lab.

**2. The rotation periods provide an opportunity to experience, in depth, three different research environments.**

Because each of your three choices for a rotation represents a potential laboratory in which you might pursue your doctoral dissertation research, you should keep an open mind at all times. While you are free to express your interest in any particular laboratory at any time, it is not permissible for you to seek a firm commitment about a position in a laboratory prior to the completion of all three of your rotations. Likewise, it is inappropriate for faculty to make a firm commitment to any student prior to the completion of all three rotation periods.

**3. A faculty member may not accept more than two students into their laboratory in any given year.**

This provision serves three purposes. First, it avoids crowding in any given laboratory and thereby helps ensure that each entering class of graduate students has potential access to all laboratories in the department. Second, the graduate program at large benefits by achieving a reasonable distribution of students among the various available laboratories. Third, it ensures that students will be supervised by PIs whose mentoring resources are not overcommitted. Faculty with a first-year sponsored direct admit student may accept up to one regular rotation student during each of the three rotation periods, but is restricted to accepting mentorship of no more than one of them.

**4. Grades are based upon an average of all three faculty evaluations.**

Faculty are required to submit evaluations and grades for each rotation within a month of the end of the rotation being evaluated. (Faculty who do not submit grades within the prescribed time will not be allowed to participate in the following rotations as per CCDH meeting minutes of 6/2/03).

**5. Upon completion of the rotations, it is the student's responsibility to secure a position in a thesis laboratory.**

Following the termination of the third rotation, you will be given a one-week period in which it is essential that you talk, in person, with each faculty member in whose laboratory you have a serious interest in pursuing your doctoral dissertation research. In addition to exploring likely thesis projects, you should explicitly discuss the likelihood of available space for you in the laboratory, because several other students may be interested in the same laboratory. Given the level of student interest, or other circumstances, the faculty member of your choice may not be able to accommodate you in their group. For these reasons, it is clearly in your best interest to thoroughly explore all of your options for thesis laboratory placement. The aim of these discussions is for you to narrow your choice to one faculty member and obtain a firm commitment from them. A form will be provided to you on which you are to indicate your thesis laboratory and which your faculty member must certify by their signature. The completed form must be filed with the MCB Graduate Affairs Office by the deadline set for the end of the one-week period.

**6. Thesis laboratory selection restrictions.**

In the rare case that an MCB student chooses a laboratory headed by a UC Berkeley faculty member not in MCB, all funding for that student reverts immediately to the non-MCB faculty member. Students in non-MCB labs and their PIs must adhere to MCB student policies (i.e. annual thesis committee meetings). If the thesis field is outside of the MCB emphasis, the student may be asked to change departments. In any case, an MCB student with a non-MCB thesis mentor must also have an MCB mentor. That mentor must assume 50% responsibility for the student, and the student will count against the total of 2 students the MCB mentor can take in a given year. Students in the Chemical Biology Program must also have an MCB mentor but the CB student does not count against the MCB faculty member's allotment of 2 students per year. Faculty with a below-the-line affiliation in MCB are considered MCB faculty.

**7. If necessary, an additional (fourth) rotation can be arranged.**

Occasionally, it is not possible for a student to arrange a match with one of the three rotation laboratories for a variety of reasons that do not necessarily reflect on the quality of their performance in the program. Any student who is unable to secure final placement in one of the three laboratories in which he or she conducted a rotation should arrange for a fourth rotation. This should be accomplished by exactly the same procedure described above and should indicate, on the same form, in which laboratory a fourth rotation will be conducted, as certified by the signature of the faculty mentor. It is the student's responsibility to meet with faculty and secure a fourth rotation by June 15. The fourth rotation should be between four and ten weeks. Fourth rotations do not typically impact academic standing, degree progress, and typically provide permanent homes for thesis research.

In the rare case that students have not secured a thesis lab by August 1, they will lose good academic standing and will have their fall teaching duties postponed to a later semester so that they can focus on finding a lab placement.

**8. If you have any concerns about the above procedures, please feel free to contact any member of the Committee of First-Year Advisors.**

The Committee of First-Year Advisors is keenly interested in assisting each and every student in finding an appropriate laboratory for thesis research. Any student who is having difficulty securing placement in a final thesis laboratory or a fourth rotation laboratory should consult immediately with their advisor and/or any member of the Committee of First-Year Advisors.