

BIOLOGY & MCBB LAB ROTATION PROCEDURES FOR PhD STUDENTS

2025-2026 PROGRAM CONTACTS

Biology

Cell & Molecular Biology (CM) Associate Chair: Cynthia Bradham - cbradham@bu.edu

Neurobiology (Neuro) Associate Chair: Jen-Wei Lin - jenwelin@bu.edu

Director of Graduate Studies (DGS): Francisco Naya - fnaya@bu.edu

[Only contact DGS for special approvals outlined below, copying your program contact]

Molecular Biology, Cell Biology & Biochemistry

Director: Zeba Wunderlich - zeba@bu.edu

2025-2026 IMPORTANT DATES & DEADLINES

August 18th - August 22nd.....Rotation talks (see orientation web page for schedule)

September 3rd.....Rotation selections due to program contact via email

September 8th - October 28th.....Rotation 1*

No rotation responsibilities:

10/13, Indigenous Peoples' Day

October 29th - December 22nd.....Rotation 2*

No rotation responsibilities:

11/26-11/28, Thanksgiving

12/23-01/02, Intersession

January 5th - February 25th.....Rotation 3*

No rotation responsibilities:

01/19, MLK Day

02/16, Presidents Day

March 6th.....Placement requests to program contact due via email

March 13th.....Lab placements sent out (4th rotations scheduled if needed)

**Rotation summary due via online form roughly 1 week after rotation completion*

GENERAL PROCESS

CM, Neuro, and MCBB PhD students are required to rotate in 3 labs during their first year unless alternate arrangements are approved by the Director of Graduate Studies (Biology) or Program Director (MCBB). Prior to the rotation selection due date, you should reach out to faculty of interest to determine if they are seeking rotation students and if the lab would be a potential fit. If the faculty member agrees to have you rotate in their lab, confirm which rotation spots would work for them (i.e. rotation 1, 2, or 3). Once you have compiled a list of prospective lab rotations, you should email the list to your program contact by the due date.

Your program contact will confirm your rotation schedule prior to the start of the first rotation. Typically, all 3 rotations are confirmed at once, though occasionally more time may be needed to confirm the 2nd or 3rd rotation. Initial rotation selections may change as the semester progresses and your interests evolve; we understand that you may want to adjust your rotation schedule as you learn more about labs and your program. Email your program contact with any changes.

At the completion of each rotation, you will need to fill out a brief rotation summary form. Jen Correia will email you the link to the form. Responses should be submitted within 1 week of receipt. Every rotating student will be registered for a 2-credit lab rotation course in the Fall and Spring (BI791/792 or MB791/792); all 3 rotation summaries must be submitted to receive a grade. Additionally, your program contact may require check-in meetings as part of the course.

After the final rotations are complete, you will email your placement requests to your program contact; they will confirm lab matches. You should discuss your preferred match with the faculty member to ensure that you both are in agreement. Your program contact will email you with your final placement in early April. We seek to place all students after 3 rotations, though additional rotations are sometimes necessary. If you need to complete another rotation, your program contact will provide additional guidance.

If you have any questions about the rotation process, please email your program contact.

CONTACTING FACULTY

Biology Faculty: <https://www.bu.edu/biology/people/faculty/>

MCBB Faculty: <https://www.bu.edu/mcbb/people/faculty/>

Note: Not all recruiting faculty are able to complete a rotation talk; please reach out to any faculty of interest, even if they did not participate in rotation talks.

You are required to complete rotations with faculty from your program unless alternate arrangements are approved by the Director of Graduate Studies (Biology) or Program Director (MCBB). We recommend emailing faculty of interest prior to the start of the semester with your name, status (e.g. incoming CM PhD student), brief description of your research interests, and your CV. If requested by the recruiting faculty, Jen Correia will provide the transcripts and recommendation letters from your admissions file.

SUBMITTING ROTATION SELECTIONS

Email your preferred rotation schedule to your program contact by the due date listed above; include any backup plans or relevant notes. Your program contact will confirm your schedule prior to the start of the first rotation.

BEFORE THE ROTATION

Basic lab safety training is required for all incoming graduate students. Additional lab-specific trainings or clearances might be required. **As soon as you schedule your rotation, ask the PI if you will need any additional clearances/trainings outside of the basic lab safety training.** Two common additions are listed below; most Neurobiology students will need clearance from ROHP and will need to be listed on an IACUC protocol.

ROHP Clearance

Required for anyone rotating in a lab that works with:

- Animals (except fish/amphibians/invertebrates);
- Human-derived tissue or specimens;
- and/or Hazardous materials

<https://www.bu.edu/research/ethics-compliance/safety/rohps/rohps-requirements-for-medical-clearance-process/>

Under "Required Initially and Annually"

1. Job Risk Assessment
 - a. This portion must be completed with the PI
2. Health Questionnaire
3. Submit copies of available immunization records, including seasonal influenza and COVID vaccinations, to ROHP@bu.edu

Listing on an IACUC Protocol

Required for anyone rotating in labs doing animal work.

<https://www.bu.edu/research/ethics-compliance/animal-subjects/training/>

- ROHP Health Questionnaire must be completed first

DURING THE ROTATION

At the start of each rotation, you should discuss expectations with the recruiting faculty. Topics to cover may include: lab and/or one-on-one meeting attendance, hours spent in the lab, project goals, workflow, communication, etc.

If any issues arise that cannot be resolved by the recruiting faculty, please email your program contact. You will also have the opportunity to submit confidential comments regarding your rotation experience via the rotation summary form; these comments will only be shared with the Graduate Program Specialists, your program contact, and the Director of Graduate Studies (Biology) or Program Director (MCBB) if deemed necessary.

SUBMITTING PLACEMENT REQUESTS

Email your placement request to your program contact by the due date listed above. You should discuss your preferred match with the faculty member to ensure that you both are in agreement.

LAB PLACEMENT

Your program contact will confirm lab matches for your cohort and will email you with your final placement in mid-March.

We never place students into labs they don't want to be in. If necessary, additional rotations may be completed until the student is placed successfully.