

## LABORATORY ROTATIONS

During the first academic year (September – May) of graduate study, the students are expected to complete a minimum of two, and preferably three, laboratory rotations. Rotations are timed to enable students to gain adequate exposure to laboratories where dissertation research might potentially be conducted and to complete the experiences by the end of the first year (May). During a rotation, a student will typically be apprenticed to a member of the selected laboratory and will have the opportunity to read about and participate in the design and execution of an ongoing research project.

Each rotation will culminate with the rotation student giving a brief illustrated talk summarizing her/his project and progress. These talks will be scheduled in groups (determined by completion date) and attended by other students, postdocs and faculty. The CDB Academic Committee will assist first year students in the selection of laboratory rotation opportunities. It is the responsibility of the faculty member hosting a student to fill out a [Lab Rotation Evaluation](#) and assign a grade promptly at the completion of the rotation.

## SUMMER ROTATION

It is possible, and strongly encouraged, for entering graduate students to arrange for a research rotation to be held in the summer preceding the first fall semester of the program. Doing so will provide additional benchwork experience and expose the student to a broader variety of science within the program on a more flexible schedule. Interested students are encouraged to contact the CDB Program Director or Program Administrator once accepted into the program in order to discuss the possibility of beginning lab rotations in the summer.

## SCHEDULE OPTIONS

The following are recommended dates for students who wish to complete 3 rotations with either a summer or fall start. Depending on the goals established by the student and rotation mentor, the rotation may exceed the 11 week period. In both options the 2<sup>nd</sup> and/or 3<sup>rd</sup> rotation is slightly longer than 11 weeks as Thanksgiving and Winter Break holidays have been taken into account. Regardless, [Laboratory Rotation Mentor Selection Agreement](#) forms are due to the CDB administrator at least 2 weeks prior to the beginning of the rotation, [Laboratory Rotation Evaluation](#) forms are due no later than 5 days after the completion, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> rotation should be completed by the end of April.

### Fall Start

Rotation	Request Due	Begin	End	Report Due
1	September 1	September 15	November 30	December 5
2	November 15	December 1	February 15	February 20
3	February 1	February 15	April 25	April 30

### Summer Start

Rotation	Request Due	Begin	End	Report Due
1	June 15	July 1	August 31	September 5
2	September 1	September 15	November 30	December 5
3	November 15	December 1	February 15	February 20

## LABORATORY ROTATION SELECTION PROCEDURES

### WHICH LAB?

1. Review faculty research posted on the internet, to include personal web pages, lab web pages, and publications. ([http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/bims\\_cdb/areas/areas\\_home.cfm](http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/bims_cdb/areas/areas_home.cfm))
2. Attend fall faculty research series and all sessions during the program retreat. Use the opportunities presented to speak with faculty, postdocs, and other students regarding research being conducted in each lab.
3. Schedule a time to meet with faculty whose research interests you. Ask questions about the research and make relevant connections to your interests.
4. Consult with the Graduate Academic Committee, Program Director, and/or Program Administrator as necessary.

Once a verbal agreement has been reached, it is the student's responsibility to complete the [Laboratory Rotation Mentor Selection Agreement](#), obtain the PI's signature, and deliver the form to the Program Administrator by the due date for each rotation.

Laboratory rotations are an essential part of the Cell and Developmental Biology graduate program. Rotations provide students with invaluable benchwork experience, opportunities to work collaboratively, and exposure to the culture and pace of a research lab. Rotations should be taken very seriously by the student and the Mentor. While there is no specific requirement for hours, students are encouraged to conduct research in the lab whenever possible.

Students are required to make an oral presentation and submit a written rotation report at the end of each rotation. Students will be evaluated at the end of each rotation and will be given the opportunity to review the evaluation with the Mentor. A blank [Laboratory Rotation Evaluation](#) is included in the Forms section of this handbook.

Typically, students select one of their rotation mentors as a permanent mentor/dissertation advisor. Therefore, students should use each rotation as an opportunity to assess the research being conducted in the lab, assess the rotation Mentor as a potential permanent advisor, and evaluate the compatibility of his/her own personality with those of the current members of the lab(s) in question. Selection of the dissertation lab is a long-term commitment and should come at the end of serious, thoughtful consideration of all aspects of the decision.