MD/PhD Laboratory Rotation and Selection Policy

MD/PhD students are encouraged to explore diverse laboratory opportunities and research environments available on both the BU Medical and Charles River campuses. Experience in a range of laboratory research environments is an essential part of a graduate student education. Rotations expose students to a range of techniques and approaches used within the various biomedical science disciplines. Thus, the process of rotating through several laboratories is an integral part of finding the ideal lab for your dissertation research.

To balance the broadest research opportunities for our MD-PhD students as well as create a cohesive BUSM-based science community, we propose the following guidelines for the timing and selection of lab rotations:

Number and length of lab rotation:
♦ Students are expected to complete a minimum of 2 laboratory rotations and may complete 3 rotations.
♦ It is expected that rotations 1 and 2 will be 7-8 weeks in length while the 3rd rotation will be completed in less time. The length of each is flexible and will be decided by you in discussion with your rotation mentor and the MD/PhD Co-Directors.
♦ If students require a 4th rotation, they must petition the MD/PhD Co-Directors.

Timeslots for lab rotation:
♦ The summer prior to matriculating into the M1 class
♦ The summer between M1 and M2 years
   ▪ Students begin their rotation after final exams are complete and continue until the weekend prior to the start of M2 classes (approximately 8 weeks)
   ▪ In accordance with BUSM policy, a student re-taking a BUSM examination(s) must delay the start of lab rotations until the repeat examination is completed (June 1).
   ▪ Rotation dates available for 2017
     • May 18, 2017 – July 17, 2017 –useable for a single rotation or two short ones
   ■ The summer between M2 and GRAD1
     ▪ In accordance with School of Medicine policy, students cannot begin their second lab rotation until they have completed the USMLE step 1 examination.
     ▪ Suggested lab rotation dates: May 18– July 31, 2017

How to select a research mentor for lab rotations and dissertation mentors:
♦ Faculty members hosting rotation students include those associated with the numerous programs and departments that participate in the MD/PhD program and may have specific research programs for funding students or a T32 program to sponsors students.
♦ Each student will receive a list of Department/programs and faculty advisors
♦ Information regarding potential principal investigators is available on the BU Profiles Website
♦ Additional information can be found at PiBS rotation events, through PhD and MD/PhD colleagues, and direct contact with principal investigators or departments of interest
♦ Students are encouraged to contact Dr. Trinkaus-Randall for assistance in determining whether faculty have adequate funding.
♦ The Co-Directors will approve rotations prior to their initiation. To facilitate this, BUSM M1 and M2 students should plan to discuss their choices of lab(s) prior to March 1.
Additional Rotation Requirements and Payment

♦ Forms (for payment and evaluation) can be found at http://www.bumc.bu.edu/gms/students/student-forms/. Forms must be submitted to Sherrill Ashe by the second Friday of the month to be paid at the end of the month. If you wish to be paid monthly that would be June 9 and July 14.

♦ Students will receive summer stipends (equivalent to PhD stipends) from GMS upon completion of rotation work for up to 16 weeks total of rotation time.

♦ During the rotation, students should expect to attend lab meetings and maintain documentation consistent with the policies of the host laboratory. Students may be asked to present their results to the laboratory group at the end of the rotation period.

♦ Students should provide the rotation PI with an evaluation form and ask for feedback on their performance. Forms should be returned to GMS liaison by PI or student and are a part of the student record.

♦ Students will be asked to give a 10 minute rotation talk at an MD/PhD sponsored MNE at which faculty and lab members are welcome.

Joining a lab and a department – important!

♦ Decisions should be discussed with the MD/PhD directors prior to a final decision so that we can ensure funding is in place and that we can confirm formal acceptance with your PI.

♦ Students decide on the best department/program in conjunction with their PI.

♦ Selection of your PI and Department/Program should be completed before August 1 after M2 prior to GRAD 1 to facilitate department/class registration and health care benefits.

♦ Complete the online MD/PhD M-GRAD transition form before August 1. Millie Agosto, Registrar for the Graduate Division of Medical Science (Millie@bu.edu), will assist with your GMS registration. Please contact Dr. Trinkaus-Randall for form assistance.

♦ Upon acceptance and verification of a lab rotation, GMS will send a formal agreement to the PI, the faculty advisor, Chair of that Department/Program, MD/PhD Co-Directors, and the student. A student-faculty agreement will also be forwarded at this time.

♦ At the time of these agreements, the PI will assume responsibility for the student’s stipend.

♦ Students are expected to attend 80% of the day and evening MD/PhD student sessions/meetings held at BUSM even if they are in labs at the CRC.

Exceptions

♦ If a PI leaves BU, the MD/PhD student may remain with the PI. The individual student and PI should notify the Co-Directors of this change so that we can assist your transition.

♦ On rare occasions, an offsite rotation may be considered for a collaborative project as long as the project has a BUSM-based PI. In this rare case, there must be:
  ▪ Approval by the BU Departmental Chair in the student’s sponsoring department/program
  ▪ A GMS faculty member of that department must be the PI and primary thesis reader

Dr. Trinkaus-Randall & Borkan

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