

## **BBSP Academic Standards Policy And Expectations for the First Year**

1. **Each BBSP student is expected to attend Orientation week.** Exact dates for Orientation vary year to year but is the week before classes officially begin (therefore mid-August). During Orientation you will:

- Meet your classmates.
- Receive useful information regarding courses and registration.
- Meet with your Faculty Advisor.
- Receive assistance in enrolling for student health, getting set up to receive your stipend, setting up your UNC email account, etc.
- Receive useful information regarding the individual PhD programs that are part of BBSP.
- Learn about choosing a research rotation.
- Begin exploring rotation options.

2. **Each BBSP student is required to do 3 research rotations.** We encourage you to fully learn about and explore the opportunities at UNC before deciding and committing to all of your research rotations and therefore have put into place the following:

- Prior to arriving (or during Orientation week), faculty and students should only make a commitment to the first (i.e. Fall rotation). Exact dates vary year to year but typically run from the first week of September through early December.
- If you take the opportunity to do a Summer rotation then you are eligible to set up your second (and if you like your third) rotation during Orientation week.
- If you do your first rotation in the Fall, then you can select your second (and if you like your third) rotation anytime after November 1<sup>st</sup>. Exact dates vary year to year but the Winter rotation typically run early January through mid March and the Spring rotation typically runs from mid March till the end of May.
- While students and faculty are encouraged to have a discussion with each other about the possible thesis projects and whether or not a lab is accepting thesis students for the coming year, neither students nor faculty should make commitments to each other until the following dates (exact dates will vary year to year but are indicated on the **BBSP Calendar**). For students that start their first rotation in the Fall, then this date would be mid May. For students that did a full summer rotation then this date would be early March. The reason for this is to encourage both students and faculty to keep an open mind and fully explore all their options.
- Remember that finding a thesis lab is an important aspect of the first year of graduate school and we are here to help you with that process. While a short fourth rotation early in the summer following the first academic year is a possibility if necessary, it is highly preferred that you choose a lab mentor during the May thesis lab choice period if at all possible.

3. **Each BBSP student is required to enroll in the BBSP First Year group course (BBSP 902) for both the Fall and Spring semesters.** The exception to this is that in

the Spring semester, students that enroll in BIOC 704 can opt to not enroll in the BBSP First Year group course as an alternative. However, students that opt to enroll in BIOC 704 in the Spring instead of BBSP 902 must still attend their original BBSP First Year group for advising, Ethics training, and to present their rotation reports. The goals of these First Year groups are:

- *Mentoring*: Faculty leading each first year group will serve as primary advisors for the students during the first year. Faculty will advise students about course selection, rotations and more.
- *Professional Development*: The groups will meet weekly in a seminar to work on professional development skills including scientific presentation, logic/critical thinking, and scientific writing.
- *Ethics Training*.

**4. Each BBSP student is required to attend the Quantitative Skills/Biostatistics training.**

**5. Coursework.** It is expected that BBSP students, in addition to the above, will enroll in coursework that will keep them on track towards their degree. This typically would be in the form of two didactic courses or a didactic course and a seminar course. Students that are TAing during the semester typically would only enroll in one additional course. However, the ***minimum requirement is enrollment in 3 units of course credit/semester (i.e. non-research) in addition to the FYG course.*** Exceptions must be requested in advance from the BBSP Director of Academic Affairs. (Remedial coursework, such as English to strengthen language proficiency or any undergraduate coursework, does not meet this minimum requirement.)

**6. Ethics Training.** All graduate students in the biological and biomedical sciences are required to receive training in the responsible conduct or research. Topics include conflict of interest, responsible authorship, policies for handling misconduct, data sharing and the like. Some of this training will take place within the First Year Groups (see above), but there will be additional sessions (required) in the summer following the first academic year. Attendance at all sessions is required and any sessions missed during the first year must be made up in the second year.

**7. “Good Academic Standing”.** As a graduate student it is important that you maintain “good academic standing” and are making satisfactory progress towards degree. During your time in BBSP this means the following:

- That you maintain full-time graduate enrollment with a minimum 9 credit hours
- That you **do not** receive a grade of “F”, or receive nine or more credit hours with a grade of “L” throughout your graduate career (per Graduate School academic eligibility policy <http://handbook.unc.edu/eligibility.html>)
- That you present your rotation research in the Fall poster session and the Spring mini-symposium
- That you satisfactorily identify a thesis mentor and PhD program in a timely fashion

For more information on grading, course credits, reinstatement procedures and other useful general Graduate School policies please refer to “The Graduate School Handbook”, available online at <http://handbook.unc.edu/>.

**8. Apply for NC Residency in a timely manner (this applies to US Citizens and Permanent Residents only).** All students that are eligible for North Carolina residency (have lived in North Carolina for 1 year or more prior to the start of classes) need to apply for NC residency as soon as possible after arriving in Chapel Hill. All students who are not eligible when they enroll are expected to complete the steps required to become eligible and then apply for residency at the end of the first year (exact dates for application period are set by the Residency Board). Information on this process and forms can be found on the BBSP web site under “current students” or at the Graduate School website (<http://regweb.unc.edu/residency/manual.php>), and there will be an informational session during Orientation week. The Graduate School also offers orientation and workshops on obtaining residency throughout the year.

*All BBSP students are required sign this form. Please complete the section below and return it to the BBSP office during orientation week.*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby acknowledge that I have read this document and understand the BBSP academic standards and expectations for the first year.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_