

Policy on Full-Time Employment of Ph.D. Students in the Department of Microbiology & Immunology

I. Working elsewhere while employed as a MCRO Ph.D. student

We have long had a policy that being a Ph.D. student in our department is a full-time job, and therefore students may not hold additional jobs. Our student handbook states:

"OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT

If you are receiving a stipend from the department, outside employment is not allowed, this includes teaching assistantships in other departments. However, in certain instances an exception may be made for TA'ing with prior approval from the Director of Graduate Studies and your advisor. A reduction in stipend will occur. Please contact the Director of Graduate Studies for information."

The policy likely has its origins in both restrictions on the use of grant funds and the expectation that students are paid a stipend and benefits commensurate with full time employment.

II. Being a MCRO Ph.D. student while employed full-time elsewhere

A circumstance arose necessitating articulation of a policy for the inverse situation, i.e. a student with full-time employment elsewhere wishing to be a Ph.D. student in our department. There is no Graduate School policy that prevents this arrangement, but it would not be acceptable to us. The relationship between a mentor and student is fundamentally different than that between an employer and employee in several ways, including: (i) An employee can be fired for a variety of reasons; a student cannot be fired. (ii) If an employer loses funding to support an employee, then the employee loses their job. If the mentor of a MCRO student (or a student in any of the BBSP-affiliated Ph.D. programs) loses their funding, there is a mechanism in place to guarantee financial support for the student. (iii) The research conducted by a student is chosen jointly by the student, their mentor, and advice from the dissertation committee, whereas an employer determines what the employee does. Being a MCRO Ph.D. student is a full-time job.