

Lab Hours and Policy for Research Assistants

When joining the lab, students should plan to make at least a two-semester commitment and need to officially join the lab within/before the first two weeks of class. A two-semester commitment allows for time to deepen scientific skills and thus engage in research in a way that is beneficial to the project(s) and team(s). Additionally, this allows time for supervisors and PI to get to know students' work and potential for research. This is beneficial for undergraduates seeking strong letters of recommendation for graduate and professional degree programs and post-graduate jobs.

In-Person and Work From Home Policy

- **In-Person Policy - Must Do In-Person at Erwin**
 - RPAD (participant) recruitment
 - Data collection
 - Coding videos
 - Responding to emails via Ecc lab outlook
 - Anything involving confidential participant data
- **Work From Home Policy - Need to Receive Permission First**
 - Creating stimuli
 - Making social media posts/graphics
 - Literature review
 - Cleaning data on excel/analyses with unspecified participant info
 - Writing reflections, etc.

Weekly Lab Hours

Lab working hours include independent work on weekly goals such as data collection, coding, administrative tasks, and meetings for supervision and training. All students need to officially join the lab within/before the first 2 weeks of class. Hours are averages, and can fluctuate over the course of the semester, depending on the status of current lab projects.

Goat Setting

Tasks in the ECC lab are managed through a common Goal Setting sheet. **All RAs are required to fill out the Goal Setting Sheet at the start of the week either on Sunday or Monday to plan for the week and to keep a record of tasks.** Once RA's receive their tasks to be done during shifts that week, they can update the goal setting sheet so that the RA, lab manager, and supervising project lead can have a

shared reference for keeping track of weekly work. It also allows for weekly critical reflection and refinement of time management skills and helps with the end-of-semester Critical Reflection and Progress document.

Weekly Lab Meetings

Attending weekly lab meetings is *highly encouraged*, though optional. Lab meetings are useful for your intellectual development as a scientist, for learning more about the research in the lab, and for getting to know lab members outside of your team.

Lab meetings involve presentations from lab members, discussions on papers, guest speakers, and other intellectual development activities.

Lab meetings occur in-person at Erwin with the option of virtual participation on zoom. **Lab meetings do not count toward weekly lab hours.**

Missing Lab Hours and Museum Shifts

It is the RAs responsibility to communicate at least three days in advance if they need to miss or reschedule hours during the week, and their responsibility to consult with their Project Lead and Lab Manager and come up with a plan for making up missed hours.

We are very flexible with rescheduling and cancelling hours given that we receive advance notice of absence (preferably three days). With the exception of emergency situations, we advise against last minute cancellations as it could affect the continuation of your research assistantship.

To Reschedule Missing Lab Hours:

- Slack/email project lead and the lab manager in the same group chat to inform them. Reaching out to both the project lead and lab manager in the same thread prevents any miscommunication/differences in plans.
- Provide lab manager and project lead with a range of times available for making up the shift. Flexibility with make-up hours will allow project leads to accommodate to the RAs schedule.
- Project lead(s) and the lab manager assign make-up hours based on their availability within the range of hours provided by the RA.
- In extenuating circumstances where it is not possible to make up missed work (for example, due to extended illness or other life circumstances) it is the RAs responsibility to initiate a conversation with the lab manager and project lead to come up with a plan. In extreme circumstances this might

mean withdrawing from the lab for a time, with the option of returning when circumstances change.

To Reschedule Missing Museum Shifts:

- It is not the Lab Manager or Project Lead's responsibility to find coverage for RA assigned to work with a community partner such as a museum, school, or daycare center.
- If an RA needs to cancel a museum shift, it is their responsibility 1) notify the lab manager and project lead no later than the Friday before a shift and 2) find another person in the lab who can cover your shift. 3) Notify the project lead and lab manager as to who will be covering their shift.
- In the case of illness, this policy still holds. It is an RA's responsibility to anticipate absences or no-shows with community partners and find another team member willing to cover their time in advance. If an RA needs help with this task, they are welcome to reach out to the Project Lead/Lab manager to help.

End-of-Semester Writing Assignments

At the end of the RA's first semester, they are required to submit a brief (2-page, double spaced) document with end of semester reflections and progress directly to Dr. Kushnir. This reflection discusses what the student has been working on during the semester, reflects on what the student has learned and hopes/ideas about what the student would like to work on or learn more about in the upcoming semester. This document communicates between the student and Dr. Kushnir directly, and is confidential. It is a place where RAs can communicate needs that issues that can be addressed, as well as hopes and plans for how the ECC lab can further the students' short- and long-term goals. **It is appropriate to use this document to communicate intent to do independent study or honors thesis research.

At the end of each semester in the lab, all RAs are required to submit a brief written assignment to Dr. Kushnir. These writing projects are assigned by the Project Lead and can involve research-related tasks such as literature reviews, coding and analysis of data, or presentation of findings. This is a way for Dr. Kushnir to get a sense of what the student has been up to during the semester.

Being consistent with the goal setting sheet will make the end-of-semester writing assignment an easier task.