

## **TECC Lab - General Student/Trainee Information**

### **Technology Enhanced Compassionate Care**

#### **About the Lab:**

Thank you for your interest in the TECC (Technology Enhanced Compassionate Care) Lab! The goal of the TECC lab is to conduct innovative, interdisciplinary research that leverages technology to alleviate suffering and enhance equitable access to quality care – for patients, family caregivers, and healthcare providers – in both domestic and international settings. Current focal areas of the TECC lab include improving patient-clinician communication and optimizing safe and effective pain management for patients with advanced-stage cancer.

The TECC Lab consists of faculty and students, both undergraduate and graduate, from nursing, engineering, medicine, and data science. The Lab is overseen by Dr. Virginia LeBaron, Associate Professor, Department of Acute & Specialty Care, UVA SON. Formal supervision may be provided by Dr. LeBaron or by another faculty member, depending on the student's individual situation and primary school affiliation.

We welcome student and trainee engagement in our research and value diverse perspectives and backgrounds.

#### **How to Get Involved:**

Step One: Check out the [TECC Lab website](#) to learn more about our work and potential student opportunities.

Step Two: Reach out to Dr. LeBaron ([vtl6k@virginia.edu](mailto:vtl6k@virginia.edu)), attach your resume (optional), and briefly explain your background and interest in joining the Lab. [Please also complete this brief survey.](#)

Step Three: After you complete the brief survey, the Lab will reach out to set-up a time to meet. This step will involve a 30-minute meeting with Dr. LeBaron and/or other members of the team to assess your interests and objectives and how these may align with the current work of the Lab.

Step Four: Attend one of our Lab meetings and get a sense for the team and our work.

Step Five: If you will be joining the Lab, complete the on-boarding checklist. If fulfilling Independent Study or Research Practicum credit hours, complete and submit a Learning Contract to your Faculty Supervisor.

#### **General Expectations:**

We expect students to be engaged, willing to learn new skills, attend required meetings, communicate issues or problems, and contribute to the project. Being curious, flexible and collaborative is helpful!

Ideally, we strive to on-board students at the beginning of the fall or spring semester, or before summer, for project continuity.

Depending on how students join the Lab (for example, as an undergraduate volunteer, versus a formal graduate fellowship) some logistics will vary. However, in general, there will be a 1-2 month volunteer (unpaid) period where students/trainees and faculty can both assess the match and make a decision about whether the project is a good mutual fit for their interests and time. After the 1-2 month period, faculty and the student will meet to discuss progress, contributions, engagement and status of the research and opportunities for participation moving forward. *It is the student's responsibility to initiate and set-up this meeting.* At this time, discussions and decisions regarding potential financial compensation will occur (if not already determined by a graduate fellowship, etc.). We certainly appreciate circumstances and bandwidth may change and understand if you decide the timing is not right to join the Lab.

It is also important to know that research projects naturally ebb and flow, sometimes in unpredictable ways. There are times when one aspect of a project will be very busy, and another aspect is not. This can be especially true during phases of iterative technology development. Taking initiative to find ways to contribute during 'quiet periods' is helpful,

as is a general recognition and understanding that this is a normal part of conducting research. Please keep in mind that students cannot work more than 20 hours per week across all UVA jobs during the academic year (i.e., does not include the summer). If you have questions or concerns about your hours, please reach out to Dr. LeBaron or the Project Manager to discuss any concerns.

### **Important Logistics and On-Boarding Procedures:**

#### Required Training:

Prior to any data collection or analysis, or engagement with human participants, Lab members must complete all required Institutional Review Board (IRB) training, such as CITI training. There may also be additional training required, depending on your role with the project and University requirements.

#### Student Compensation:

Financial compensation and amount depends on a number of factors, including:

- Graduate versus undergraduate status;
- Time and seniority with the Lab;
- Level of engagement and meaningful contributions to the project;
- University policies and restrictions;
- Availability of grant funding. For example, students who join the Lab as part of a research practicum or independent study for which they are receiving credit hours are not eligible for payment. Additionally, students who may join the Lab towards the end of a funded project or semester may not be eligible for payment if grant funds have been previously budgeted or allocated. Please make sure you discuss any concerns with Dr. LeBaron as early as possible.

Hourly wages and start of payment will be determined by faculty based on the factors above. In short, it is not always feasible to pay every student who volunteers to be part of the Lab, but we strive to be equitable and transparent in this decision process. In general, undergraduate research assistants earn between \$11-15/hour and graduate research assistants between \$16-20/hour, depending on the factors listed above.

Working as part of a research team is different than other part-time jobs. It is not usually something with a clear start and end, and the work is highly dynamic and iterative. While financial compensation may be a helpful incentive, there are many other – and different – potential benefits for being part of a research team, including: 1) gaining experience with the research process; 2) the opportunity to participate in scholarly publications or presentations; and 3) the chance for high-level engagement with an interdisciplinary team of faculty and students.

If students will receive payment for their time, they must enter their hours into WorkDay under the appropriate project account and before the deadline for that pay period. Students are on their Honor to submit accurate hours worked in a timely manner for payment in WorkDay.

Thank you again for your interest and please reach out to Dr. LeBaron with any further questions!

**Contact Amber Steen, Project Manager, [al9sx@virginia.edu](mailto:al9sx@virginia.edu) for assistance with:**

- On-boarding requirements
- WorkDay or payment issues
- All regulatory training requirements, such as IRB CITI training
- Submitting or processing receipts and reimbursements
- Scheduling meetings or other administrative questions