

Expectations and Code of Conduct

Ragsdale Lab, updated February 2024

Lab goals and culture (briefly)

The two primary goals of our research group are to train scientists and to produce scientific output. Students and postdocs will gain experience in carrying out robust and reproducible work, which will be shared via publications and presentations at conferences and meetings.

Research in evolutionary biology and population genetics can be fascinating and fun, and at other times frustrating or stressful. This document provides a set of guidelines to ensure that our lab remains a supportive and engaging environment in which to work and collaborate.

Basic rules (expectations in a nutshell)

1. **Respect:** be considerate and respectful toward your fellow lab-mates
2. **Communication:** engage thoughtfully and (reasonably) promptly with each other and the PI
3. **Responsibility:** take ownership of your project and progress, and conduct your research with integrity
4. **Participation:** be present and contribute to the intellectual environment of the lab

Respect

The main purpose of the lab is for us all to learn and make progress in our science. This requires that we maintain an atmosphere of encouragement, cooperation and mutual respect. We all bring our own sets of expertises and skills, and we come from different personal and professional backgrounds. Cooperation and collaboration is the most effective approach to ensure we each progress toward our academic and research goals, and we commit to participating in an intellectual environment in which it is safe to be wrong, to make mistakes and to ask for help.

We will not tolerate abusive or insulting comments or behavior, nor will we allow bullying, including intellectual bullying. Inappropriate comments, including those about race, gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, identity, or appearance, will be promptly addressed in accordance with University Policy.

Expectations

1. Hours and availability

There is a certain degree of flexibility which comes with being a computational or theoretical biologist. It is often possible to work where and when works best with our schedules, and our schedules can often be occupied with coursework, TAing, or personal and family obligations. As such, we allow for quite a bit of leeway when setting our work schedule. However, in the end this is a job, and it will require a certain number of hours per week to make satisfactory progress. It is each lab member's responsibility to dedicate the needed time to your work.

That said, interaction and participation are important aspects of work in the lab. Face-to-face interactions are often the most fruitful for problem-solving, brain-storming and asking and answering questions. As such, there is an expectation that you spend a reasonable number of hours physically present in the lab to foster those in-person interactions. Of course, there is flexibility in this requirement (periods of remote work from out of town, family obligations, etc), in which case remote availability during the week is expected.

Finally, burnout can be common among grad students and postdocs, and we want to avoid that. Take vacations (please communicate planned vacations ahead of time) and enjoy your weekends.

2. General rules in the lab space

- Clean up after yourself – in particular, keep the kitchen and shared spaces clean
- Be courteous and mindful of others – loud music, loud conversations, etc can be distracting, so make sure to maintain an environment that isn't overly distracting

3. Expectations of PI

As PI, Aaron is expected to maintain funding for the lab. This is expected to be at a level that maintains salary support for lab members and covers publication costs and conference travel. Aaron is committed to providing training and mentorship to facilitate the academic and career goals of lab members. This includes working with students and postdocs to

- develop research questions and projects
- analyze and interpret results
- write and edit manuscripts
- provide detailed and timely feedback on abstracts and other application material
- troubleshoot any hurdles to research and academic progress
- make time for regular one-on-one meetings

4. *Expectations of graduate students and postdocs*

Students and postdocs are expected to lead their own research projects, in collaboration with Aaron – and potentially other members of the lab and campus research community. Students and postdocs may be at different levels of background and experience, but in general we expect trainees to

- develop their research projects and directions, with feedback from the PI
- make reasonable progress on research projects, and seek assistance or guidance if stuck
- attend and participate in lab meetings and one-on-one meetings
- attend seminars (such as evolution seminar), relevant department colloquia and journal clubs
- be available and responsive to the PI and other lab members during work hours
- read relevant literature
- draft, edit and submit manuscripts
- present your research at annual conferences and meetings
- seek external funding when appropriate
- stay on top of paperwork and annual milestones [especially for **graduate students**: you are responsible for organizing committee meetings, qualifying and prelim exams, and ensuring that paperwork is submitted in a timely manner!]

5. *Expectations of undergraduate researchers*

The primary goal for undergraduate researchers in the group is to learn how research is conducted in a computational lab like ours, and to gain some familiarity with advanced concepts in evolutionary biology and population genetics. Publishing a manuscript is not required, although there are possibilities to do so, recognizing that published papers can bolster your CV depending on your intended career or academic path. Undergraduates are expected to

- attend and participate in lab meetings and weekly one-on-ones
- be prepared to share your recent work
- ask questions and seek advice from more senior members of the lab

Orientation and important information

- Graduate student information (including handbook): <https://integrativebiology.wisc.edu/current-students/>
- Center for High Throughput Computing (CHTC): <https://chtc.cs.wisc.edu/>
- Integrative Biology department staff: <https://integrativebiology.wisc.edu/staff/>
- Reporting bias or hate: <https://doso.students.wisc.edu/report-an-issue/bias-or-hate-reporting/>