

Expectations for Undergraduate Mentees

What Undergraduates Can Expect:

Research is an exciting and intellectually rewarding experience. As an undergraduate researcher in the Mathew Lab, you can expect the following:

1. **Research Exposure:** Hands-on experience in neuroscience research using small insect models and behavior, cellular, and molecular biology techniques, along with exposure to relevant primary literature.
2. **Supervision and Training:** Personalized training from an assigned supervisor (approved by Dr. Mathew), with progress toward independence monitored to ensure a safe and educational experience.
3. **Growth Opportunities:** Regular skill development in experimental techniques and the scientific process. Students are encouraged to attend lab meetings and, when ready, present their work. Thesis students must attend and present their research.
4. **Welcoming Environment:** A supportive, inclusive workplace open to individuals of all backgrounds, identities, and beliefs. Respect and collaboration are core to our lab culture.

What is expected of Undergraduates:

1. **Attend Lab Meetings:** Participate in weekly lab meetings, where we discuss research and review assigned materials. Read any distributed articles in advance and come prepared to engage.
2. **Stay Organized:** Track all samples, conditions, and data using lab-specified systems, including spreadsheets and notebooks, and update them promptly.
3. **Learn and Explore:** Familiarize yourself with relevant protocols, our lab's research, and suggested journal articles. Feel free to reach out to discuss any article or protocol—I'm happy to chat over coffee.
4. **Commit to a Lab Schedule:** Maintain a consistent schedule of at least 10 hours per week, as agreed upon with Dr. Mathew. Notify your supervisor as early as possible if you need to miss time. Treat lab work with the same responsibility as a job, as your absence may impact others.
5. **Work Independently:** Take initiative and troubleshoot problems when I'm unavailable. Don't hesitate to ask for help from other experienced lab members—they're excellent resources.
6. **Respect the Lab and Colleagues:** Keep the lab clean and organized, and ask for guidance on equipment use or cleaning as needed. Report any broken equipment immediately—no need to worry about blame; fixing issues is a normal part of lab life.
7. **Foster Inclusivity:** Just as all members of the Mathew lab can expect a welcoming workplace, each member is expected to provide a welcome to other lab members regardless of background, race, ethnicity, age, religious or philosophical leanings, sex, gender identity, or orientation.
8. **Communicate Openly:** Let me know if you need support or have concerns. My "open door" policy means I'm available for discussions—work-related or otherwise.

Communication:

Routine Communication: The lab uses Slack for regular communication during working hours.

Response Time: Expect responses from me within one working day. If I don't reply, send a polite reminder. Lab members are generally expected to respond within the same timeframe.

Non-Working Days: Emails sent on weekends or holidays are for convenience and do not require immediate responses. For example, if I email you on a Saturday, I don't expect a reply until Monday.

Emergencies: Use text messaging for urgent matters, such as equipment failures or unexpected absences requiring assistance.