

Student: \_\_\_\_\_

Semester: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Student Volunteer Researcher Agreement**

We are excited to have you joining us! Please fill out this front page, and then read and sign the lab volunteer contract that follows. This is just a way for us to make sure we all understand what the expectations are for the coming semesters and beyond.

#### **I understand that I will be:**

- Receiving DIS credit for my time spent in the lab
  - I have spoken to my advisor and know that this credit:
    - Will count toward my degree
    - Will not count toward my degree
- Volunteering to gain laboratory skills, but will not be getting course credit

#### **My current goals are:**

- Enter medical/dental/nursing program after my B.S. is complete
- Enter a veterinary program
- Go to graduate school
- Get a job in biology
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- I have no idea, I'm an undergraduate and that's just fine

#### **I am most hoping to gain from my time in the lab:**

- Amazing letter(s) of recommendation to get me into \_\_\_\_\_ school
- Mad bench skills (pipetting, DNA extraction, PCR)
- Scientific experience on a higher level (aka independent research)
- A publication
- Travel to conferences to present research and network
- Lab experience to get me in to graduate school
- I just want to touch a giraffe

#### **Please mark the courses you will have COMPLETED at the end of the current semester:**

- Biology I & II Laboratory
- Genetics
- Molecular Biology
- Marine Invertebrate Zoology
- Biochemistry
- Statistics

#### **I sought this lab out because:**

- I LOVE GIRAFFES
- My friend work(s/ed) there and had fun
- I really want to learn genetics
- I heard about the cupcakes at lab meeting
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Do you have any food allergies or anything important we should know?**

## Student Volunteer Researcher Agreement

Having undergraduates work with us is a privilege, and we enjoy it. However, we do not function like many labs here on campus in assigning you a semester of “scut work” to see if you survive that. **You will be doing REAL research from DAY 1.** As such, we have some ground rules:

### I. Expectations we have of our students

1. **Reliability:** You need to work the hours we agree upon, and the times we agree upon. Things happen and conflicts come up, but that should be a rare occurrence. If you are not hitting your hours each week, we cannot train you to a functional level in a single semester. The main reason students get lower than an A, or are not asked back, is due to not hitting the number of hours agreed to or too-frequently being late/re-scheduling training sessions.
2. **Honesty:** Mistakes happen. Daily. Hourly. Please tell us if you make a mistake, or think a mistake was made elsewhere. If you mess up, even if it means a sample is ruined or a piece of equipment is broken, please tell us immediately. **Trust is a critical part of allowing our students to work on real science so early.** If you violate this trust, you will be relegated to other work or asked to leave the lab. **I will never be angry with you for making a mistake.** I will be furious with you for hiding one.
3. **Patience:** Sometimes students move at different rates, and sometimes we move students at different rates. Everything has to do with what’s happening in the lab that semester. Likewise, getting out in the field isn’t a guarantee for anybody (me included!). The weather dictates our schedule, and we will do our best to get you out at least once, but no promises.
4. **Effort:** You are not required to like the work. You might even learn from this that you hate lab work; that is a valid conclusion and a great use of a semester! But please try to find something to keep yourself engaged with what we’re doing in the lab. It is your job to keep yourself motivated!
5. **Logistics:** Keep your lab notebook up to date and beautiful (see demos). Keep the hours spreadsheet up to date each week.

### II. Expectations students should have of us

1. **Reliability:** We will be on time for meetings with you, and we will respect your time as valuable.
2. **Helpfulness:** We will train you to the best of our ability, and we will always enthusiastically answer your questions.
3. **Clarity:** We will talk openly about your progress with you the entire time, and make sure we agree about how you are doing in the lab and what we will learn next.
4. **Mentorship:** We are now here for you, as long as you are a lab member and beyond. We will do our best to aid you in moving toward whatever your personal goals are. You want to do a mock medical school interview? We got this. Want to

work on your resume or CV? We will call a lab meeting and make everybody do it together. Want us to edit your personal statement? We need two weeks (ideally a month). We promise to be dedicated to your personal success as long as you are dedicated to our lab.

### III. Lab Citizenship

Research labs are **workplaces**. Graduate students have desks because this is quite literally our job. Please treat the laboratory as you would treat a “real world” job. This means:

- Noise should be kept to a minimum. If you are working alone and want to blast music, go for it, but as soon as multiple people are at work please ensure we all have the quiet we need to focus and do quality work. This includes chatter- please keep discussions quiet.
- The lab is not a place to have study groups, invite friends into, or remain when you are not actively doing research.
- You will not let **anybody** into the lab without explicit permission from myself or Dr. \_\_\_\_\_. We have to be protective of our research, so please do not be afraid of being rude. Politely say that you are sorry, but you don't want to risk getting in trouble with us. Offer to send us a quick text message, or invite them to do so. If you'd like to arrange a tour for friends/family, please let us know ahead of time.
- **Please let me know if we are running low on anything** that you use (pipet tips, chemicals, tubes, etc.). Ordering more is easy for me; running out is stressful!
- **Respect everybody** who is working in our lab, always. Our lab has always been a community; we are all here to help one another move forward with our research. That means that we respect one another as people first, regardless of rank, title, or project.
- If you think you see something wrong, please tell me about it, but give one another the benefit of the doubt. Sometimes new eyes are the best, and you may well catch mistakes that I miss (including in my work!). Never hesitate to bring things up and ask questions politely. We will all grow from working together if we can constructively help each other improve.

IV. Grading scale

| Performance  | Grade<br>(if DIS) | Volunteer<br>consequence   |
|--|-------------------|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Always works agreed upon number of hours</li> <li>- Always on time for training sessions</li> <li>- Takes the lab work seriously</li> <li>- Shows initiative in the laboratory</li> <li>- Lab notebook is inspirationally organized and complete</li> <li>- Brings good energy into the laboratory, works well with everybody</li> <li>- Doesn't complain about assigned duties</li> <li>- Is an excellent lab citizen</li> </ul> | A                 | Begged to stay forever; potentially given independent project                            |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Misses &gt; 2 hours of multiple weeks during the semester and fails to make them up</li> <li>- Is late for and/or must reschedule multiple training sessions</li> <li>- Is reprimanded once for being careless in the laboratory</li> <li>- Has to be corrected on multiple things, but makes honest effort to improve</li> <li>- Keeps lab notebook up to date</li> <li>- Is a good lab citizen</li> </ul>                       | B                 | Possibly asked back, but conditionally   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Misses &gt; 4 hours of multiple weeks during the semester and fails to make them up</li> <li>- Misses a training session without valid cause</li> <li>- Lab notebook is incomplete</li> <li>- Is reprimanded more than once for being careless in the laboratory, and has work taken away</li> <li>- Complains about work assigned</li> </ul>   | C                 | Not asked back   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is dishonest at any time about work done, hours worked, or anything else in the laboratory</li> <li>- Fails to be a good lab citizen</li> <li>- Fails to take the laboratory work seriously</li> <li>- Fails to follow directions regarded assigned work</li> <li>- Fails to keep a lab notebook</li> </ul>   | D                 | Depending on severity, behavior reported to academic advisor and future DIS's prohibited |

V. Letters of Recommendation:

There is a **HARD MINIMUM of TWO WEEKS NOTICE** for any letter of recommendation.

**Please make sure your Ideal Letter of Rec form is completely up to date!**

Dr. \_\_\_\_\_ will sign all letters of recommendation, but we will work together to write them. Simply put, I'm the one who gets to know you the best in the lab, and will have the most genuine things to say. But I also cannot write 8 letters in the same week. Trust me, you wouldn't want that letter.

I promise that I read and understood this contract, and will put forth a real and honest effort in the lab this semester.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I commit to mentoring the above student to the best of my ability, and will support them and their personal and scientific development.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date