Lab Charter

Aims, Culture & Expectations

Our lab aims to:

● **To create new knowledge by** **Identifying, formulating and answering significant questions of cell biology and develop technologies to help answer these questions**

● **Communicate our data and share our research materials widely**

● **Create a working environment that provides support and growth to all lab members**

● **Create a welcoming atmosphere for all lab. members and visitors to the lab.**

● **Help trainees and students develop the skills, independence, and confidence they need to reach their career goals**

● **Advocate for an open and respectful scientific culture that makes positive contributions to society and does no harm**

● **Enjoy the journey of discovery**

We keep a culture of:

**Respect**

○ We act in a polite, professional and respectful way to others, valuing the experience and expertise of everyone in our lab and Departmental community.

○ We have an unbiased outlook towards all people regardless of nationality, religion, socioeconomic status, immigrant status, gender, disabilities etc.

○ We value diversity of perspectives and considered opinions and ideas

○ We freely provide straightforward opinions but always aim to keep criticisms constructive.

○ We acknowledge that not everyone has had or currently has the same advantages and privileges.

○ We represent the group with pride and integrity.

**Self-motivation**

○ We plan our own work in advance in pursuit of a steady level of research productivity.

○ We think deeply and read broadly to ensure we understand the importance of our research within the wider field.

○ We focus and orient our experiments towards answering research questions and preparing publications.

○ We seek and integrate constructive criticism into our work.

**Scientific rigor**

○ We collect data with an unbiased eye and share all data honestly and openly.

○ We consider alternative hypotheses and seek critical appraisal of our interpretations to strengthen

them

○ We use proper controls and the expected/standard levels of replication.

○ We apply appropriate analysis and statistics and acknowledge any known limitations of methods used.

**Safety and responsibility**

○ We think about and assess the safety and security of our research aims and experimental practices.

○ We abide by risk assessments and SOPs.

○ We keep our personal spaces organised and clean, with appropriate labelling and disposing of all materials in accordance with regulations.

○ We always wear the appropriate PPE and abide by Health and Safety rules as well as regulations for the use of GMOs, licenced materials and restricted reagents.

**Openness and collaboration**

○ We acknowledge our mistakes, accept constructive criticism, and have a growth mindset in how we can improve.

○ We generously share knowledge and expertise and aim to help each other and those from other labs.

○ Where possible, we use preprints, publish open access, use CC-BY copyright licences, and use OpenMTAs.

○ We provide more information than the minimum and aim to record and publish detailed methods to ensure that our protocols and data are reproducible.

○ We aim to make data and materials **F**indable **A**ccessible **I**nteroperable & **R**eusable.

**Support and care**

○ We are considerate of others’ time and schedules and make clear and timely communications if we are unable to make meetings or meet agreed deadlines.

○ We provide emotional support and confidentiality to each other and to others in our professional network.

○ We provide timely constructive feedback on each other’s experimental designs, presentations, and manuscripts.

○ We provide a welcoming atmosphere to new lab members and visiting collaborators to make their

integration into the group and their work as smooth and comfortable as possible.

○ We work hard to meet our goals and we celebrate them, but we keep balanced schedules and practice self-care to maintain physical and mental health.

○ We set healthy boundaries and give ourselves time to relax, recover from illness, and rejuvenate on vacations.

Lab members are expected to:

● Contribute to running our lab, performing duties agreed in lab-meetings and assigned on rotas.

● Treat all laboratory equipment and research infrastructures with care. This extends to all shared facilities.

● Keep your personal bench-/fridge-/freezer-/incubator-spaces organised and clean them regularly. Label all reagents and samples clearly and appropriately.

● Contribute to writing and maintaining SOPs and risk assessments and abide by their contents.

● Be present in the lab for full working days and, though flexibility will be accommodated, maximising the overlap with the PI and others.

● Discuss commitments outside of the lab with the PI if they fall within working hours or affect your work.

● Discuss anticipated absences with the PI and your immediate lab colleagues.

● Contribute to supervising and mentoring junior scientists and be willing and prepared to train other group members in how to develop scientific questions and to apply methods that you are proficient in to answer these questions. *Your expertise and experience are highly valued, whatever your career stage*.

● Make extensive notes and lab book entries for all experiments. Recognise that lab books are not only for ourselves but to aid current and future lab members.

● Take personal responsibility for the safe, secure, long-term storage and back-up of data and materials and store them with the aim that they will be **F**indable **A**ccessible **I**nteroperable & **R**eusable (**FAIR** principles) and will meet the requirements of the agencies that fund our work. Aim to ensure that your work, data, and materials will be **FAIR** even after you leave the lab.

● Record the details of all plasmids, antibodies and other key reagents in our central lab inventories. Store stocks in the assigned fridge, freezer and drawer spaces.

● Store all original data associated with publications into the agreed shared locations within the lab-drive, together with the draft or submitted manuscript and figures.

● Present your research at lab meetings, conferences and outreach events. Discuss conference participation with the PI in advance and share your abstracts, posters and slides for feedback and approval.

● Include the PI on all communications regarding your own or group research. cc the PI on emails and debrief on conversations outside of email.

● Discuss with the PI before sharing lab stocks, materials or data from the lab, including those you have generated yourself.

As a **postgraduate student**, you are additionally expected to:

● Be familiar with and meet the deadlines and benchmarks of your Postgraduate Studies Programme.

● Take responsibility for arranging the required meetings with your Postgraduate Thesis Panel and ensure the timely submission of Quarterly and Annual Progress Reports.

● Aim towards becoming proficient at organising your project timeline, data, materials, and workspace.

● Attend all compulsory training/graduate student events and be proactive about identifying additional training needs - discuss these with your supervisory team.

● Read literature deeply and broadly.

● Practice and develop your scientific writing skills.

● Develop and define your research questions/hypotheses and a research plan for your project. Integrate feedback from your supervisory committee.

● Plan your research, setting milestones and delivering research outputs within the timeline of your PhD. It is ok to feel overwhelmed sometimes - ask for advice and support from your peers, lab members, the PI and your supervisory team. We are all here to support you.

● Aim to become scientifically and technically proficient in your area of expertise.

As a **postdoctoral researcher**, you are additionally expected to:

● When you start in the lab, discuss any plans to wrap up previous research and how this can be integrated with the main priority of the current work.

● Plan your work and develop short-term goals (e.g.,1-3 month) and long term (1-2 year) research plans for your project(s).

● Maintain a clearly articulated structure of the research questions that are driving your research project(s)

● Be proactive in planning the contents, structure, narrative, and figures for your publications. Plan figures for your publications in agreement with the PI and prioritise collecting data for these.

● Maintain a high level of organisation of your project timeline, data, biomaterials, and workspace.

● Prioritise your own research and results and balance this with any work for additional collaborations within and outside of the group.

● Be independent and efficient in time management. It is ok to feel overwhelmed sometimes - ask for advice and support from your peers and the PI.

● Be familiar with and aim to meet the deadlines and benchmarks of your funding sources (fellowships, lab grants you are funded by, etc.,).

● Provide detailed monthly summary reports to the PI and collaborators on your experimental progress.

● Collaborate in grant writing and provide input (e.g., figures) for new grants.

● Be scientifically and technically proficient in your area of expertise and be prepared to develop and adapt novel wet-lab and/or bioinformatics techniques to address your scientific questions.

As the **PI and** **lab leader**, Kathryn is additionally expected to:

● Secure funding for salaries, supplies, and general lab research.

● Secure access to the resources and equipment required to progress lab research.

● Ensure compliance with institute, site, and funding agency rules for the use of biological agents, health and safety, conduct, and data storage.

● Let lab members know how their work is funded and what are the expectations from our funding sources.

● Make decisions on the authorship of lab communications. These will be determined by contributions to the project and the results contributed to the manuscript, rather than by career position or CV needs. The first author is expected to organise and write the first draft of their manuscript in close coordination with the PI and in collaboration with co-authors. All manuscripts are circulated to co-authors for comments before submission.

● Be aware of all research being done within the group and ensure its quality, reproducibility, and rigor.

● Be aware of, provide timely feedback on, and approve all abstracts, posters, manuscripts, presentations, or any other representation of the group’s research in a timely manner.

● Provide regular feedback to lab-members on experimental design and results.

● Provide mentorship, guidance, and constructive feedback to lab members on training, research questions, project management, publication strategy, time management and career development.

● Support the development of lab members’ careers, including the development of independent research projects that are aligned with lab and institute strategies.

● Ensure a safe and supportive work environment free from any forms of harassment. Promote diversity, equal opportunity, and inclusion.

● Develop and encourage collaborations with other groups.

● Facilitate effective communication within the group and with outside collaborators.

● Report on the achievements of the group to grant agencies, board members, the public, and research communities.

● Give credit to those who do the work and actively promote lab members with pride.

Conflict resolution:

● We believe that most conflicts arise from miscommunication between people who have good intentions but are not fully aware of the impact their actions have on others. Therefore, we encourage conflict resolution using the following steps:

1. Approach the individual asking to talk 1:1. Ideally this conversation should happen in person rather than email. Try to remain calm and ask for clarification of why they are doing or not doing something that bothers you, listen first. Let the other person know the impact that their actions or inactions are having on you. Ideally, you can reach common ground at this point, it is best to wait after this initial conversation to see if things improve.
2. If resolving conflict 1:1 does not help, engage a mediator. In best practices, both people should agree who the mediator should be. A mediator must be someone that both you and another person see as an authority and ideally impartial to conflict at hand. A mediator should first talk to you and another person separately and help to communicate your points of view to each other. This is the stage at which most conflicts resolve.
3. If this does not help, a mediator can arrange a meeting where all three of you are present.

Further examples and source documents

**· The DeAngelis Lab Expectations document:** [**https://kristendeangelis.net/expectations/**](https://kristendeangelis.net/expectations/)

**· The Haswell Lab Ethics Statement:**

[**https://docs.google.com/document/d/1D\_ZZ4GMGUOr5kNBjuQ3FUx71nSGAL5idpwr-igrhYbU/edit**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1D_ZZ4GMGUOr5kNBjuQ3FUx71nSGAL5idpwr-igrhYbU/edit)

**· The Krasileva Lab Charter:**

[**https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UgZkvEn\_E06nQPmieZY9Pb6V5fFvPsMjIN\_ulu0k0S8/edit#**](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1UgZkvEn_E06nQPmieZY9Pb6V5fFvPsMjIN_ulu0k0S8/edit)

**· The Thrash Lab Expectations document:**

[**https://thethrashlab.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/thrash\_lab\_personnel\_expectations.pdf**](https://thethrashlab.files.wordpress.com/2013/08/thrash_lab_personnel_expectations.pdf)