

## Shaw Lab Expectations

Last updated January 2023

I believe clear and honest communication is critical for a successful advising relationship. Below are my expectations of Shaw lab members and what you can expect from me. All sections apply to graduate students and postdocs; sections with an asterisk [\*] apply to undergrad students. Let me know if you have questions, concerns, or suggestions for improving this document.

### ENVIRONMENT [\*]

I am committed to providing a safe, collegial and respectful lab environment. Lab members can expect that I will intervene as needed to resolve any personnel conflicts. We value diversity. Diverse skills, backgrounds and perspectives increase our ability to successfully tackle scientific questions in creative ways. We aim to be both equitable and inclusive. You are encouraged to bring your full self to the lab. Discrimination, microaggressions and harassment will not be tolerated. We educate ourselves on how historical injustices have shaped—and continue to shape—our institutions and communities, and strive to enact changes that undo them.

### ATTITUDE [\*]

I expect all lab members to take responsibility for their training and research, to be timely in accomplishing agreed upon milestones, and to be a good citizen of the lab and the department. This includes attending departmental events when appropriate (e.g. seminars, socials) and following any program requirements (e.g., for graduate students those covered in the [EEB graduate handbook](#)).

### WORK SCHEDULE [\*]

I expect *undergraduate advisees* to set a weekly schedule with me and stick to working approximately that many hours. I expect that advisees who report their hours will represent them accurately (i.e., include any lab-related activities like meetings with me, lab meetings, and other lab activities, but not hours spent on non-lab work). I expect *graduate students and postdocs* to set their own schedules (both their day-to-day schedules as well as vacations), determining what hours to work as long as they are active participants in the lab environment, able to accomplish the goals we agree upon, and practice good time management. Postdocs should aim to spend 60% time on their primary research project, 20% contributing to the lab/department culture, and 20% on outside projects (e.g. finishing up PhD work, applying to future positions). I encourage time-tracking as a way to maintain this balance. Postdocs accumulate vacation hours as part of their position and must file for all vacation and absences in advance through MyU (see benefits documentation for details); I expect postdocs to take all vacation time by the end of their position. I expect all lab members to let me know if they will be away for more than a day or two (for vacation, conferences, etc). Rather than micromanage individual work schedules, I expect all lab members to develop time management skills while in the lab, with the goal of working more efficiently rather than more hours (read more about work efficiency [here](#)).

Lab members can expect that I will be around the department most work days during the academic year (Sept to May) and that I will give advance notice as needed regarding my own travel. I aim to take two [meeting-free weeks](#) each semester, to focus more deeply on research projects. I will communicate these weeks early on so we can plan around them. Since my own funding structure is different in the summer (like most faculty, I am paid for 9 months from the University and am either unpaid or paid from other sources during summer), my summer schedule and availability is often quite different than during the academic year, typically without standing individual or lab meetings. I recognize that while I thrive from a different structure in summer, other lab members may want continuity, so I encourage lab members to organize whatever meetings amongst themselves that they would like during summer.

### **INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS [\*]**

I expect lab members to keep me updated on their progress through regular individual meetings that we set at the start of semester. I expect you to show up on time for your meetings with me, and to let me know in advance if you must cancel; you can expect the same from me. You are always welcome to stop by and chat any time my office door is open (if my door is closed it usually means I am away, in a meeting, or doing concentrated writing).

### **LAB MEETINGS [\*]**

Lab meetings are scheduled each semester based on everyone's availability. To foster a strong lab community, I expect you to attend them unless you have an unavoidable conflict like a short work trip, or (for undergrads) a conflict with coursework. If you need to be absent from lab meetings for a longer time, please work with me to find a way for you to continue contributing to our lab community. I expect each lab member to take turns presenting and leading lab meeting discussions to practice leadership, communication and contribute to the lab community. I expect graduate students and postdocs to lead one lab meeting a semester to talk about a research project of yours (e.g., brainstorming an idea, getting help with a sticking point, getting feedback on a manuscript), and, if time allows, one lab meeting a semester talking about another topic (e.g., paper discussion, professional development, DEIJ).

### **FUNDING [\*]**

I know funding can be a source of stress, so I encourage all lab members to ask questions as they arise. Postdocs are paid a salary as outlined in their UMN contract (typically this is described as funding for one year with the possibility of annual extensions), with funds coming from a grant or fellowship. EEB graduate students are guaranteed five years of stipend funding through the graduate program; the exact sources of funding are often unpredictable at the start but will take the form of some combination of a TAship (TA-ing one course a semester), RAship (working on a specific research project that may or may not be a part of their thesis), or fellowship each semester. I encourage graduate students to apply for fellowships, and they can expect me to help them identify possible sources of funding and to provide feedback (given sufficient time) on their application materials. Undergraduate advisees are either paid hourly or

receive course credit; I do not take student volunteers to avoid excluding students who can't afford to volunteer. I am happy to work with all advisees to secure non-salary funding to support their research (e.g. equipment, supplies, conference travel, publication costs). You can expect that I will do everything I can to avoid you having to pay out of pocket for research expenses related to our collaborative work.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENTS**

I expect postdocs and grad students to complete a self-assessment at the start of each semester and summer (see this Google Doc) and to schedule a meeting with me to discuss. Lab members can expect that I will make time to review and discuss their self-assessments, and that I will provide clear feedback.

### **DEGREE PROGRESS**

A PhD is more like a marathon than a sprint. Regardless, I expect graduate students to keep their eye on a number of degree progress milestones. I expect students to meet with their advisory committee annually to keep them updated. During their first year, students will typically start a collaborative research project with me, to get a sense of how we work together. Before the start of the third year, I expect students to submit one manuscript for publication, to gain experience with the publication process early on. I expect students to submit their written prelim exam in the fall of their third year, and to take the oral prelim exam in the fall of their third year (unless there are mitigating circumstances). A PhD should consist of three novel contributions to the field (which would correspond to 3 first-author paper manuscripts). Before they defend, I expect students to have one publication accepted and a second submitted.

### **PUBLICATIONS**

I expect all postdoc and grad student lab members, regardless of intended career path, to be working towards writing up the results of their research as peer-reviewed publications. I view manuscript submission and revision as a central part of the process of research and learning how to do this early on as part of research training. Postdocs should aim to generate at least 1 first-author manuscript for publication per year from their postdoc work, submitting their first prior to the end of their 1st year. (See 'degree progress' above for grad students.) I anticipate that all lab members may also be working on publishing manuscripts from prior positions, and similarly I expect that lab members will work to finalize their publications with me, even after they leave the lab. Lab members can expect that I will provide feedback on publications and other written items within 2 weeks. Lab authorship guidelines can be found [here](#).

### **CAREER PATHS [\*]**

A core part of my job is helping you successfully move on from your position in my lab by advancing along your chosen career path. I will be best able to do this if I know what career (or range of careers) you are considering. Thus, I expect advisees to communicate with me what careers they are interested in (and changes in those interests as they occur) so I can help them find resources to be successful. Although I can most easily advise on academic careers, I expect many lab members will be interested in non-academic careers. Regardless of your

chosen career path, I will connect you to people and resources to help support your success.

### **RECOMMENDATION LETTERS [\*]**

Part of helping you move on from my lab is providing you with any letters of recommendation that you may need (e.g. for fellowships, grants, jobs, etc). I am happy to write these letters provided that you send me the following **two weeks** before the letter is due: (i) due date for the letter, (ii) details of what the letter is for, (iii) instructions for what should be included in the letter, (iv) where to submit/send the letter, and (v) a draft copy of your application materials so I can tailor the letter. Some letters have the same deadline as the application; if you cannot find an explicit due date for the recommendation letter, please either ask for clarification or assume they are due the same day your application is due and plan accordingly.

### **LAB RESOURCES [\*]**

Lab members can expect that I will provide a number of resources to help support their work. These include lab documents (in a shared Google Drive folder), lab common space (first-come first-serve basis) and books in the lab library and in Allison's office (see this Google Doc; please mark which books you borrow and return books via this Google Form). All lab members can get free access to the computer clusters at the Minnesota Supercomputer Institute (MSI), but please keep a close eye on your usage (both disk space and computer time; see more details on this Google Doc and lab usage on this Google Doc). I expect lab members to close out access to these resources when their position in the lab ends: returning borrowed books, removing belongings from the shared lab space, and removing files from MSI. I expect lab members to use these resources while keeping in mind the needs of others.