

Biology Capstone Research Courses Responsibilities of Supervisors and Students

These guidelines are for information purposes only and were modified from the Graduate Supervision–Responsibilities & Expectations Policy of Carleton University.

Overview

Biology 4907 and 4908 are capstone courses in the Department of Biology at Carleton University. In these courses, senior undergraduate students undertake an independent research project under the supervision of a faculty member or Adjunct Professor within the department. When a student-supervisor relationship is established, the student and supervisor are expected to hold the roles and responsibilities outlined here.

Responsibilities of supervisors (including co-supervisors)

To establish a means of communication with the student and maintain regular communication throughout the course.

To be available for meetings with students as needed for the student to accomplish the goals of the project, and to inform the student of prolonged absences that may disrupt the project.

To establish a plan for how performance in the course will be evaluated (including department-level expectations) and communicate this plan to the student.

To assist the student in identifying a suitable research topic and (where appropriate) setting up a program of study.

To assist the student in the interpretation of research materials.

To be aware of and abide by the university's policies on conflict of interest, sexual harassment, and research ethics.

To discuss with the student as early as feasible, any potential joint authorships or joint ownership of data or patents which might arise, provide a written version of any understandings reached on these matters, and also ensure that student contributions to publications are adequately acknowledged. Granting agencies and major journals have guidelines which cover some or all of these items.

To discuss with the student any potential copyright issues related to external material reproduced in the thesis.

Responsibilities of Students

To accept the research project presented by the supervisor or contribute to its development at the supervisor's discretion.

To maintain regular communication with the supervisor.

To work systematically and within agreed deadlines, as far as possible, in order to meet the deadlines specified by both the department and the supervisor.

To familiarize themselves with the Academic Integrity Policy of Carleton University, and adhere to this policy in completion of their thesis.

To make themselves available for meetings with their supervisor during regular business hours.

To be well prepared for meetings with the supervisor.

To understand and agree with the supervisor's plan for how performance in the course will be evaluated (including department-level expectations).

To submit to the supervisor all research materials, as requested, and, at the agreed times, drafts of parts of the thesis for comment.

To give serious attention to the advice and direction of the supervisor.

To realize that the supervisor has duties and commitments that may delay access at short notice or slow down the return of a draft.

To understand that their lines of research may encounter some change due to dependence upon the research direction of the supervisor.

To acknowledge direct assistance of material drawn from other scholars and researchers.

To respect copyright regulations when reproducing external material in the thesis.

Expectations of the Supervisor

To expect the student to pursue the agreed research topic, unless a change has been mutually agreed upon.

To expect the student to give serious attention to advice concerning perceived deficiencies in the research and the thesis, and to receive a reasonable explanation when this advice is not followed.

To terminate supervision if the student is not displaying a reasonable effort, if they fail to heed advice on changes deemed essential, or if the student changes the agreed thesis topic without consent.

To have their contribution to the thesis appropriately and clearly acknowledged.

To have permission from the author of the thesis for the research set out in the thesis to be used as part of the larger project (with the understanding that the student will retain scholarly credit).

Expectations of the Student

To be assisted by the supervisor in developing a clear and feasible research topic and in solving problems and assessing progress as the work develops.

To be permitted to seek a new supervisor with permission from the department. (however, it is understood that an academic unit and the university cannot guarantee a suitable replacement).

To be protected from arbitrary changes in research direction which are detrimental to the timely completion of the thesis.

To have their contribution to the thesis fairly reflected in the attribution of authorship of publications and of patents.

To be permitted to submit a thesis for examination even if the supervisor is not satisfied, providing the work conforms to the guidelines and regulations laid down by the academic unit. In this case, the Biology Undergraduate Advisor will provide guidance on how the thesis would be graded.

Potential Problems and Processes for Resolution

When either the student or the supervisor feel that the supervisory relationship has failed to meet the responsibilities listed in this policy, they may request an informal resolution process. This will take place initially within the Biology Undergraduate Advisor, and then, if not resolved, within the Office of the Dean of Science, with the involvement of the Ombudsman where this seems appropriate.