

Rotation Selection Procedures

1. Faculty are asked to fill out a GDBBS survey of their current lab research interests, personnel, and availability for each of the three rotations throughout the coming year. These will be provided to the first year students soon after their arrival on campus.
2. The Rotations Chair, Guy Benian (pathgb@emory.edu), will arrange a meeting with only the first year students to discuss the nuts and bolts of the rotations system, deadlines, expectations, etc., followed by presentations from BCDB faculty that are interested in having first year students rotate in their lab (commonly known as The Dog and Pony Show, but *officially* called Faculty Research Presentations).
3. After hearing these presentations, students should arrange to meet with faculty they are interested in working with. Use this opportunity to learn about various faculty members' research interests and ask questions.
 - a. What potential projects are available in the lab?
 - b. What are their expectations as far as time commitments during rotations, during thesis research?
 - c. How do they view their role as advisor?
 - d. Would they be able to serve as a dissertation lab for you?
 - e. Do they have adequate space and resources to carry out experiments?
 - f. Do they have time to meet with you at least once per week during the rotation?

Read publications from the lab (do this before you meet!) and most importantly talk with any current or former students and postdocs in the lab. This is best done physically away from the lab.

Once you have chosen a lab for a rotation, you will need to fill out The Rotation Selection Form via Docusign (see https://biomed.emory.edu/PROGRAM_SITES/BCDB/resources/), by the Friday preceding the Monday start of the rotation. It is important that you do this by the deadline, which is before the start of each rotation. The deadline for submitting the Rotation Selection Form for Rotation 1 is Friday September 12.

4. Around halfway through the rotation begin thinking about and lining up the next one. These faculty members can be in BCDB or anywhere within the GDBBS. Do not wait until the deadline to get your Rotation Advisor Selection Agreement form signed.
5. Sometime during the 1st half of December the Rotation Chair will arrange one more meeting to go over any issues that have arisen, encourage students to compare experiences to date, and ask any questions that may have arisen during the first 1.5 rotations. Students should feel free to discuss these with the Rotations Chair at any time; typically other students have similar concerns so it is also good to share.

Rotation Schedule

Each rotation lasts 8 weeks, followed by a one week interim period. Lab Rotation Reports are due at the end of the interim period, i.e. one week after the completion of each rotation.

Rotation	Choices Due	Rotation period	Duration	Report Due
1	Friday, 9/12/25	Monday, 9/15/2025 – Friday, 11/7/2025	8 weeks	Friday, 11/14/2025
2	Friday, 11/14/2025	Monday, 11/17/2025 – Friday, 1/30/2026	8 weeks	Friday, 2/6/2026
3	Friday, 2/6/2026	Monday, 2/9/2026 – Friday, 4/3/2026	8 weeks	Friday, 4/10/2026
Mentor selection due Monday 4/13/2026				

Rotation Reports & Grading

Separate files explaining in more detail what is expected in a rotation report and how it will be evaluated will be sent later. In general, however, this report is essentially a small scientific paper that should include an abstract, introduction, materials and methods, results, discussion, references, and figures. The results and discussion can be combined into a single section. We realize that not many results will be obtained in an 8 week rotation. The main point of the report is to gain experience in scientific writing. These reports should be written with multiple rounds of feedback from the head of the lab you are rotating in.

Rotation reports should be submitted by the above deadlines as follows:

- a. An electronic copy with your Advisor's signature on the front cover should be submitted to the Program Administrator Kathy Smith, at kathy.smith@emory.edu
- b. An electronic copy should be emailed to the Rotations Chair Guy Benian, at pathgb@emory.edu

Electronic copies are distributed for grading with the hard copy used as the definitive version in the event of any issues with formatting, etc., arising through computer/ software incompatibility.

Rotation reports are graded by the Rotations Committee, and each report will be graded by one faculty member and one more senior BCDB student. Their comments will be returned to you to provide detailed but constructive feedback on your reports. For the Fall semester, students will be graded based on the feedback from their first rotation report and mentor evaluation. For the Spring semester, students will be graded based on feedback from their second and third rotation reports and evaluations that will be equally weighted.

A grade for each rotation is determined by a combination of inputs from the Rotation Advisor (how you performed in the lab) and Rotation Committee (rotation reports). The final Rotations course grade is the average of the three individual rotation grades and will only be entered for both semesters after the end of the 3rd rotation in April.

Dissertation Advisor Selection Process

During the course of your rotations, you should be exploring the possibility of doing your dissertation work in one of your rotation labs. By the end of the last rotation, you should have a very good idea of where you want to continue your research. Discuss possibilities with your rotation advisors. You will be asked for your selection after turning in the third rotation report, if not sooner. This year the actual deadline for advisor selection is April 13, 2026.

Your responsibilities: With your Advisor, you should complete the **GDBBS Advisor Agreement Form** and **BCDB Addendum**. These documents must be submitted to the Executive Committee through Docusign for their approval.

Note: Your Advisor of choice must consent to taking you and sign appropriate forms. The Advisor's **chair of his/her Department** must also sign the forms. However, the final approval is made by the BCDB Executive Committee and the GDBBS Director.

After the third rotation period, a student without a dissertation Research Advisor needs to request approval from the DGS to postpone Advisor selection and obtain additional post-rotation laboratory experience (PLE) during the Spring semester. Such requests should be made as soon as possible but no later than one week after the end of the third rotation period (i.e. April 10, 2026). The PLE will be shorter at ~4 weeks. Any student who does not meet these deadlines or is without a research advisor for more than two weeks will be considered not to be making satisfactory progress toward the degree. Further PLE(s) are permitted in principle but require prior approval of the DGS and prospective research advisor. Although it is sometimes referred to as a "fourth rotation", a PLE is not officially part of the formal Rotations course, no written report is required, and the student may proceed to formal research advisor selection at any time with approval of the research advisor and DGS.