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# UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH MENTORING IN THE SOGIN LAB @ UC MERCED

Welcome to the Sogin Lab! We are very excited to get to know you and support you both personally and professionally as an undergraduate researcher. This document outlines what I expect from undergraduates in my research group and what undergraduates can expect from me.

## WHAT I EXPECT FROM UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCHERS:

1. **Read background information and complete trainings.** I expect that you will read and do your best to understand the information provided in the research manual and supplemental materials (e.g. research wiki and research group website). I also expect that you will bring any questions you have about the background information to our first team meeting so that I and the other research team members can contribute to your learning.
  - **Website:** <https://esogin.github.io/>
  - **protocols.io:** <https://www.protocols.io/workspaces/sogin-lab>
  - **Github repo:** <https://github.com/soginlab>
2. **Post an update every Friday by 5pm on Slack** describing 1) the projects/tasks you've been working on during the week, 2) any challenges you are facing with your work or questions you have, and 3) what you plan to work on the following week. I expect that you will post every Friday even if you don't feel that you have made substantial progress.
3. **Attend our research team meetings.** Our research team gets together every week to discuss our individual progress on projects and to work collaboratively to troubleshoot any challenges we may be facing.
4. **We communicate through slack. Check and respond every 48 hours.** This is our most effective way of communicating outside of individual meetings. Please do not ignore direct messages from the research team. I expect all members of the research team to respond to all messages in a professional manner
5. **Be organized.** Pay close attention to our team's research protocols and procedures for collecting, processing, and archiving data. Record data using standardized research protocol. Label data files according to our research protocol. Notify research manager when supplies are low. You must keep an online laboratory notebook for both wet lab and computational work. Protocols outlined in this notebook must be reproducible from start to finish. In addition, I expect you to also keep a laboratory journal that documents what you did each day in lab, what worked and what didn't work. Negative results are just as important as positive ones.
  - Please create an account at labfolder and start keeping track of your activities.
    - Labfolder: <https://www.labfolder.com/guide>
    - Please share your username and password with the group so that we all have access to your lab notebook while you are in the lab and after you leave

6. **Communicate your work schedule and strive for consistency.** The research space is open MWF from 9:00am to 5 PM. Please do your best to schedule your hours within that time frame so you can access our resources. Please email me as soon as possible if your schedule doesn't allow you to make a scheduled research time.
7. **Ask questions.** Asking questions is an important part of the research process. There is no such thing as a silly question! You can always email me with questions while you are conducting your research. Other students or post-docs in the research team may also be available to answer your questions as they arise. It is always better to ask questions than it is to move forward without knowing the answers.
8. **Respect the research space and the people in it.** Put things back in their assigned places when you are done using them. Again, don't be afraid to ask questions. Research equipment and other resources are very expensive and asking simple questions about how to use them could help keep them in good working condition. If something breaks, please let me know as soon as possible. I won't be angry – these things happen!
9. **Communicate early and often about any personal or professional concerns** you have about the research or research team. It is my hope that all students on my research team feel supported and included. Please let me know if there are things we can do to better support you.

## WHAT UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCHERS CAN EXPECT OF ME:

1. **I have an “open door” policy**, meaning that you can always come by my office if you need help with anything. If there is something pressing that needs immediate attention you can call or text me at 508-566-5933.
2. **I will provide background information** (e.g. readings, protocols) on our research. If you have never used Google Scholar or the UC Merced online library databases, I will show you how to navigate those sites to download primary literature.
3. **I will attend all research team meetings** regardless of whether or not I am in town. If I am traveling, I will attend via Zoom. You can expect me to give an update on the research progress I have made during the past week. I will also ask you and the other team members for advice and thoughts on how to move forward with my work. I encourage you to contribute to these conversations.
4. **I will respond to all of your emails/slack messages within 48 hours**, unless I am sick or there is an emergency, in which case, I will do my best to communicate to the team that my responses may be delayed. I may respond to your emails over the weekend or at off hours but I do not expect a response. I will announce extended periods where I am unavailable in advance (e.g., vacations, conferences, heavy workload).
5. **I will read your reports, papers, and give you feedback within 2 weeks.** Unless there are emergencies or I am out on vacation, my goal is to provide you feedback as soon as possible. This is because often we are motivated by the feedback we receive, but we must be willing to ask for it and to avoid taking feedback personally. Feedback on your work is not a commentary on you as a person and should never be tied to yourself worth.
6. **I will advocate for you!** If there are any challenges (personal or professional) that you are facing, I will do my best to help you resolve them. As a member of my research team, I care about you as an individual, not just as a researcher. If you want a letter of reference, I am happy to write one for you as long as you have met the expectations outlined here and in our mentorship agreement. Please request a letter at least 1 week in advance of the due date.