

Division of Biological Sciences, January 17, 2011

Expectations for undergraduate student mentoring and supervision.

The Division of Biological Sciences encourages the faculty to actively and enthusiastically participate in undergraduate education at all levels: freshman seminars, lower division courses, upper division courses, 195 courses, 196 courses, and 99 and 199 independent study courses. For the purposes of these guidelines, independent study students include: BS/MS students in their first year (before formally entering into the MS phase); students taking 196 courses (honors thesis); students taking 199 courses (independent study); laboratory volunteers; and student employees (work-study, paid, etc). All such individuals must have basic laboratory safety training and be registered with the USIS for students enrolled in independent study courses or Divisional Human Resources office for volunteers or paid employees—BEFORE they can commence work in the laboratory. The expectation is that every PI who mentors/supervises undergraduates understands how to comply with this policy without repeated instruction and reminders from human resources. Although there will occur an occasional transgression, repeated violations of this principle will result in the removal of the privilege to accept undergraduate students into the laboratory, or potentially a complete laboratory shutdown. It is the responsibility of the PI to accurately fill out the required forms and submit them in a timely manner.

The Division mandates that undergraduates have a level of supervision commensurate with their need for training in a laboratory environment. To aid the faculty in understanding this principle, the Division has created guidelines to help PIs in deciding how many undergraduates to admit into their laboratories. With no other obligations, a PI can personally supervise 6 undergraduates. For each postdoctoral fellow, whom the PI determines to be interested and able to mentor undergraduates, an addition two undergraduates can be added. For each PhD student, whom the PI determines to be interested and able to mentor undergraduates, an additional undergraduate can be added.

Thus:

$$UG = 6 + 2PD + 1GD$$

We note that this is a guideline, and in rare circumstances exceptions may be granted. A PI may petition the Council of Chairs no more than once per quarter for exceptions. The petition will be no more than one page and must explain the reason for requesting the exceptions to the above guideline. The Council of Chairs will consider the exception request within their regular meeting schedule, and will provide a response no later than one week following the meeting in which the request was considered.