

Getting started in the Reynolds lab.

Welcome! Whether you are starting a rotation, a summer research experience, or joining the lab as a permanent member, here is some information to help you get started.

Getting along: Our lab aims to be a supportive and intellectually rigorous environment for doing science. The following code of conduct helps us keep it that way.

- 1) The lab is dedicated to maintaining a harassment free experience for everyone, regardless of age, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, race, religion, or physical appearance. Harassment of any sort will not be tolerated. If you have been subjected to such harassment, or observed such harassment in the lab, please notify Kim immediately.
- 2) Clean up after yourself, and use reagents responsibly. Remember that you are sharing space and resources with your colleagues. Leaving a mess or not re-ordering depleted reagents is not only inconsiderate, it slows down science in the lab.
- 3) Consider your volume and length of conversations. We aim to be a friendly environment, but extended conversations in our open workspace (especially on non-work related matters) can be distracting to labmates working on code, writing, or setting up a complex experiment. If you want to catch up, make use of our break areas. All lab members should also feel free to use the phrase “I’m busy and need to focus” to ask any other lab member to limit distractions. Having a dedicated phrase makes it clear that this isn’t a personal matter (and no one should take offense), there is just need for a little extra quiet.
- 4) Several lab members are fragrance sensitive: please don’t wear perfume/cologne to work.

Regular meetings:

Lab meeting: Thursdays, 9-10:30AM (every other week).

Systems Biology “supergroup”: 9-10:30AM (weeks alternating with lab meeting)

One on one meetings with Kim: will be scheduled when you start. These are typically Mondays, and occur every other week. The goal is to have some dedicated time to discuss experimental plans, directions, troubleshooting, writing or whatever is most important to your project. Please submit a short written report beforehand (due by 7pm on Sunday, but can be submitted as early as Friday). This report should list progress on all goals set the week before, and 1-3 new goals for the coming week. It should be brief, maybe 0.5-1 page.

Lab show and tell: On Tuesdays, typically 9-10:30AM, the weeks we do not have one-on-one meetings. Each lab member presents one “artifact” – could be a graph of some data, results from a confusing experiment, a paper they recently read, or a piece of writing for which they would like feedback. The goal is to troubleshoot and discuss as a group, and think about what constitutes the most efficient next problem-solving steps.

Lab cleanings: Chris schedules monthly lab “chores” via a rotating list. These jobs rotate regularly so no one gets stuck with a particular task (and everyone learns how to do everything). Once assigned, the task is yours to take care of for the month. Occasionally we are without a dishwasher, in this case you may be assigned times to help with dishwashing and tip stacking.

Yearly planning meetings: We hold yearly planning meeting (usually in January or February) following the guidelines in: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.molcel.2015.04.025>

This gives us a chance to reflect upon progress for the past year, and make plans for the year to come.

Accounts you will need:

Quartz (for ordering and lab inventory, ask Chris)

Slack (for lab communications, ask Kim)

BioHPC (The University high performance computing cluster, we also use this to share code and protocols). We have a dedicated visitor account for lab members staying only a few weeks or months: this account provides access to HPC services, but no permanent storage (we can move relevant documents to permanent, shared lab storage when you leave if necessary). For lab members staying more than a few months, you can register for a new account here: <https://portal.biohpc.swmed.edu/accounts/register/> Whether using the visitor account or a new account, you must attend the new user training: <https://portal.biohpc.swmed.edu/content/training/calendar-2018/>

Once you have obtained a biohpc account, please login, download

Reynolds_lab/shared/biohpcTestImage.jpg, and send to Kim on slack to demonstrate that you can access.

Lab protocols: We are in the process of pivoting to Benchling, an online electronic notebook system. The expectation is that all lab protocols will eventually be kept in this platform. In the meantime, we also maintain a directory of protocols – both custom to the lab, and from vendors – on the bioHPC (see: shared/CI protocols and shared/KRlab_protocols). Though we aim to keep these current, it is a good idea to consult with your labmates if it is your first time trying any of them. It is possible there is a more current/optimized version on Benchling.

Lab notebook and authorship policies:

Our lab has written policies on both notebooks and authorship. Please carefully review both documents; they are available on the Reynolds lab website:

<https://reynolds-lab.net/resources-and-notes/>

Ordering and lab inventory:

We currently use Quartz to make requests for nearly all laboratory reagents. Chris places orders on Monday and Thursday, 3-4PM, she can very occasionally accommodate more rapid orders *if* they are extremely urgent. It is lab policy that if you use the last of something (or better yet, see that something is getting low and there is no backup) then you are in charge of re-ordering. For primers, we place orders on Sigma – Chris will order primers for visitors (less than three months), if you are staying longer, Chris will help you to set up an account.

Archiving reagents: We currently use a google sheet to archive custom reagents – plasmids, glycerol stocks, strains, and sequencing samples.

And the full lab archive (and format) can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1UaiXqP70JGJfhIvsrZNK64QIL-00urmNZmacYn0plyl/edit?usp=sharing>

It is good practice to create a personal archive that uses this format to make it easier to transfer your reagents (as they are completed) to the lab-wide, locked, permanent archive. Please note that the archive number convention is letter-your initials-a unique number. The letter indicates: g=glycerol stock of a plasmid, p=plasmid in water or EB (not in cells), st = a strain. Strains might be knockout strains, special strains for recombineering, the products of forward evolution, etc. More information on naming convention and instructions can be found here: <https://reynolds-lab.net/resources-and-notes/>

Equipment signups: We use Outlook appointments to sign up for the turbidostats and plate reader, since these are often long (multi-day) experiments. You can also claim a PCR thermocycler by putting your name on a piece of lab tape on the lid an hour or two in advance of when you'll need it.

Key: You may be issued a lab key for use on evenings/weekends. Please see Chris for help obtaining a key. This key MUST be turned in at the end of your appointment in the Reynolds lab.

Hours and vacation: I often receive questions about expectations for how much/when to be in the lab. The general response is to be in lab when you need to be to get your work done. Motivation should not be the limiting reagent. The freedom to set your own schedule is one of the perks of academia, but I do expect new lab members –who at least at first will need help finding things/getting started with new protocols – to generally be around in the hours of 10-4PM. How much to work is highly personal, and depends on your own efficiency, and stage in your project. Not working enough can be limiting and demotivating in its own right, if you aren't making progress. Working too much leads to burnout, and diminishing returns. For many, including myself, the standard expectation is about 50-60 hours a week. Staff are expected to work a regular 40h/week schedule. It's also expected that weekends are primarily for relaxing and taking a break, but maintaining momentum is important. Thus for trainees, I expect many will stop by lab or do some computer work over weekends to keep things moving (e.g. analyze some data, setup an overnight, or get an instrument ready for a Monday experiment).

If you plan to be out for a full day (or more), please mark your time off on the lab calendar (two weeks in advance, no details necessary) so I'll know/remember that you aren't available. This helps in planning discussions, and letting your lab members know when you might be available to share reagents/answer questions. For staff, you will need to submit a request for absence (vacation or sick leave as appropriate) in the UTSW MyTime system. Vacations and rest are important, so I encourage you to occasionally take some time off. Staff receive regular accruals which can be checked in MyTime. For students, NIH guidelines suggest that students should expect about 2 weeks towards vacation/sick leave a year.

Note that Kim will send slack messages and emails late at night and on weekends on occasion. This is in part because she chooses to work late at night so she can spend time with her daughter before bed time. While you're always welcome to respond, you can always wait to respond till the next morning/regular business hours.