

Responsibilities for Biochemistry and Microbiology Honours Supervisors

Any faculty member or adjunct faculty member in the Department of Biochemistry and Microbiology at the University of Victoria is eligible to supervise students enrolled in the BCMB 499A/B Honours program. The objective of the course is to allow students to undertake original research over two academic terms and present their results in the form of a thesis and oral defense. All faculty members who accept a student into their laboratories must also accept the responsibility to:

- provide a project that meets the objectives of the undergraduate biochemistry or microbiology programs. Projects from adjunct faculty are welcome but must receive departmental approval.
- clearly outline the research goals and methodology (including backup plans should the initial approach fail) to the student at the beginning of the first term. *Supervisors must provide an outline acceptable to the department before the last day of registration.*
- offer ongoing feedback and advice to the student as to which experiments to perform, how they should be performed, and the interpretation of results.
- make available appropriate reagents, equipment and direction to allow the student to carry out the research.
- educate the student in appropriate safety practices and provide adequate supervision.
- read initial drafts of the thesis and provide constructive criticism and advice. Supervisors have a specific mentorship role, and should guide the student to produce a document that is suitable for defense.
- attend the oral examination normally held during the examination period in the second term of study.
- act as an examiner on a second honours thesis during the same exam period.

As these students may have a limited amount of bench experience they must be supervised. A student may be left in the care of a senior graduate student, post-doctoral fellow or experienced technician. It must be emphasized that 499 Honours research students are not graduate students, but are placed in laboratories to give them authentic research experience. Most Honours students will be able to come into the lab between 10 and 15 hours per week, and the project must be structured to accommodate the limited number of hours. Honours students are also required to attend department seminars, which are normally scheduled on Fridays, 1:30-2:30. Email notices will be sent prior to the seminars.

Note that department policy prohibits students from taking for credit any directed studies course (such as BIOC 470, MICR 470, BIOL 490) and BCMB 499A/B if the directed studies course is an extension of the Honours project. The department does not impose any restrictions on the nature of summer or work-term projects, and these are permitted to overlap with honours objectives.