

MARC Undergraduate Program Contract and Policies

I am entering the MARC program and recognize that there are expectations that align with the goals with the program AND with the funding agency. I recognize that I must do the following:

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- MARC U*STAR is a two year program; my training will last 24 months, including summers. I am making a commitment to complete these two years of training.
- My goal is to pursue a PhD, not an MD or professional degree or combined medical/dental/PhD degree.
- MARC funding is a stipend that pays out on the first the month; my final payment will be at the beginning of my final month, not the end.
- MARC is paid through the financial aid office and may replace my loans and some scholarships.
- I must hold no other employment or time-consuming commitments that interfere with research or activity attendance.

Standards:

- I will maintain high standards of academic and laboratory honesty
- I will remain in academic good standing with the program (see below)
- I will attend all required program activities, described below.
- My performance in the program will be reviewed several times per year by my research mentor. If my mentor or the program detects a pattern of behavior in the lab (and activities) that shows lack of engagement, I will be evaluated for termination.

Program Activity Requirements:

- I will participate in any other activities identified as required or mandatory
- I will contact Dr. Taylor or program staff by email if you will miss a required activity.
- I will complete online and in person Responsible Conduct in Research within my first semester of entry.
- I will rapidly complete online Laboratory Safety and/or animal training.
- I will complete UTSA compliance requirements (these will be emailed to me)
- I will not schedule vacations in the week prior to the semester starting so that I can take part in pre-semester meetings.
- I will take the Research Careers course within two semesters of entering the program.
- I will attend the RISE/MARC Meetings and Seminars and speaker lunches, generally held on Friday.
- I will attend, once, the annually offered repeated activities such as StrengthsQuest, Leadership Challenge, Professional Communication, Budgeting, etc.
- I will enroll in two semesters of Honors Research or Independent Study research.
- I will participate in the COS Conference and/or other local conferences (mandatory for COS students)
- I will attend an extramural summer research program before I leave the program (more info below)
- I will complete a thesis prior to graduation (see below).
- I will complete COS, COE, or Departmental Honors
- I will take the GRE prior to graduation
- I will make a final oral presentation of my thesis project.

Field Requirements.

- MARC is funded by the NIH and, thus, my research at UTSA and in summer programs must have an obvious biomedical or behavioral application. I will resign from the program if I choose to pursue non-medical fields of research.
- I will not change my major from an approved MARC Major: Bio, Chem, Comp. Sci., BME, Physics, Psych, Math. Changing to an unapproved major will result in me having to resign. Not telling the program about such a change will result in your having to reimburse the program for all funds received since the change.

Time Commitment

- The MARC program expects a 15 hour/week commitment in the laboratory performing research during the Fall and Spring semesters, and 40 in the summer.
- Students are expected to consistently work this number of hours, although slight fluctuations due to midterms/finals are okay, with approval of your research mentor. Working consistently fewer hours indicates a lack of interest/engagement and will lead to termination.
- Program activities do not count towards MARC hours in Fall or Spring, once a student has committed to a laboratory.
- Courses should be planned so that the full number of laboratory hours can take place during the work week (M – F).
- At times, depending on my project, I might have to spend more than the required number of hours to finish my project; HOWEVER, if my PI is demanding more hours regularly, I will contact a program director.

Graduate Program Requirements

- I will apply for a Ph.D. program in Biomedical, Behavioral or Biochemical Sciences. If I decide NOT to apply for a PhD, or enter a non-covered field, I must notify the program directors and withdraw from the program.
- Prior to graduation, I will apply to at least seven doctoral programs in the Nov-Feb for upcoming fall admissions. If I do not feel ready for doctoral training, I will apply to the same number of postbaccalaureate or Master's programs.
- I will not apply to Medical School or other Professional Degree programs.

Intramural (local) Research Requirements: Local

- I will diligently seek out a research mentor and do several short rotations (if desired) to find a comfortable lab. A permanent lab should be chosen within a month.
- I will fully engage with the research and learn the foundations and purposes of my experiments and techniques.
- I will work diligently and responsibly in the lab to earn a strong letter of recommendation
- I am expected to eventually have an independent project and drive it forward to completion.
- I will NOT plan research experiments that will interfere with required Friday program activities.
- I will establish a semester schedule of when I will be in the laboratory and provide it to my PI
- I am expected to eventually take responsibility for my own project.
- I will notify my mentor or lab supervisor if I will be absent from the lab (even if I will be at a conference!)
- I will follow laboratory/mentor policies regarding holiday and between-semester leave

Extramural Summer Research Requirements

- I will apply to at least 7 summer research programs.
- Programs should be from outside of San Antonio, unless mitigating circumstances are brought to a Program Director.
- I must attend a summer program at an institution that allows me to publically present my work at conferences.
- Unless prior written agreements are made with a program director, if I am not accepted into a summer program by the summer of my final year of the program, I will be terminated from MARC as of June 1.
- As a MARC trainee, my summer funding will come from the UTSA MARC program, not the summer program
- I am expected to engage with the summer program and receive a strong mentor evaluation from my summer experience. If the program receives a negative report from the host institution, my continuation in MARC will be terminated. If you are having problems in a program, please contact Dr. Taylor.
- MARC trainees have the option of arranging summer research work directly with an out-of-town PI.
- Any publications/abstracts resulting from your summer work must also list the MARC grant: NIH GM007717 and the program needs to be made aware of them.

Conference Requirements:

- The program will fund me, and requires me to attend, once conference annually. The first year conference will be ABRCMS or SACNAS. After this, I may attend one in my professional field. All conferences attended have to be held in the US or Canada.
- If at all possible, I must share a room at a conference with another person who can pay for the other half of the room.
- I will arrange with my course instructors to miss my courses or take labs well before the conference; the program can provide a letter of excuse.
- I will not bring significant others/family/friends with me to program-funded conferences.

Thesis Requirements:

- Information about the thesis is available at: <http://www.utsa.edu/marc/thesis.htm>
- I will notify my mentor that I need to complete a thesis.
- I need my mentor and one other faculty/PhD reader for the thesis.
- A thesis plan/proposal is due at the end of two semesters of training.
- I will submit my thesis at least 1 month prior to graduation.

Academic Requirements

- I must earn at least a 3.2 GPA each semester and maintain (and improve) above a 3.4
- I will take any coursework required by MARC for my major:
 - o BIO 1 or Bio for non-majors
 - o Statistics (or equivalent)
 - o Two semesters of Honors Research
 - o Upper division coursework related to my laboratory work.

o Recommended: at least one graduate-level class

- I will be on program probation for earning a C grade.
- If I earn a C, I will take the LASSI Inventory at the TRC, take part in academic coaching, and provide the program with a plan to improve my academics.
- If I continue to earn C's in the following semester, I will be terminated from the program.
- If there are any alternative section or course requirements, I will not take a course during the 11 – 1 timeframe on Fridays.
- If I choose to take summer courses, I will choose low intensity courses 10 week, if possible in the evenings or on weekends. At the same time I will continue to put in a full time effort in the lab.
- I must maintain full time status throughout the Fall and Spring semesters (at least 12 hours)
- I will come in and see Dr. Taylor if I am in trouble academically and am considering dropping a course.

Communication Requirements

- I will provide current contact information to program staff (phone, cell, functional email)
- I will notify the program if an emergency will make I to miss a required program event (including seminar)
- I will notify MARC program staff immediately if I need to take time off for extreme personal reasons, am considering leaving my laboratory of record, or if I wish to withdraw from the program.

Evaluation

- I will participate in and quickly and accurately complete all required evaluation activities
- I will cooperate with post-graduation evaluation and tracking activities

I recognize that my participation in MARC is a privilege, not a right, and will make every effort to comply with the requirements of the program listed above. If for any reason, I begin to fall short in the program, I need to keep the program staff informed and seek their assistance. If I fail to do so, I recognize that my position in this training program may be forfeited and I will be terminated from the program.

Signed:

Name (Printed): _____ (sign): _____ Date: _____
10/10/14