

Rotations

Rotations are a first year grad student's method for choosing a lab. You have to do at least 2 rotations, and they typically last one semester (or a summer). This gives you enough time to learn some techniques as well as so get to know the personality of the PI and his/her lab. Choosing rotation labs can be somewhat challenging if you are unsure of what you want to study. Start out by thinking about the labs that match your interests. It's not a bad idea to think about this over the summer before arriving at Yale. TALK TO CAROL AND TO CURRENT STUDENTS!!!! This may be the most important advice for choosing a rotation lab. Your peers in the program are the best able to give you the scoop on a particular PI – mentoring style, lab size, whether they even like students. Other than the research focus, you might also want to consider the size of the lab and how much supervision you need or want from a PI or other people in a lab. Once you're in a rotation lab, keep in mind that the point is not to complete an amazing project and get a Nature paper. You are there to learn about a lab and determine if you fit there. Here is a list of things to think about:

- + Email the PI to express your interest in the lab and to set up a time to discuss a possible rotation
- + Give your rotation advisor a copy of your schedule so they don't think you're lazy just because you're not in lab
- + Follow the schedule of the lab – if everyone gets there at 8, don't come in at 12. Try to be there when others are there
- + Don't be afraid to ask questions and get to know the people in the lab
- + Don't forget about safety and animal training – these are easily overlooked
- + In the spring, Neuroanatomy (see INP responsibilities section) takes up a lot of time and is always at the med school. You may not want to have your rotation lab be up at science hill. Just be aware of your non-lab responsibilities when thinking about location.
- + Make sure the lab can take on another student. The PI should tell you, but it never hurts to ask.
- + Don't commit to a lab too early – be sure it's a good fit
- + When you end your rotation and officially join a lab, don't expect things to stay the same – it IS different
- + If you're having a really bad rotation, talk to Carol. You should never stay in a rotation from which you are learning nothing, or the PI is negligent towards you.