**Evans Lab Agreement**

**Institute for Behavioral Genetics and Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology**

**University of Colorado Boulder**

**Lab Goals:**

* Develop and understand methods and tools to explore genetic and environmental variation in complex traits
* Understand the genetic basis of psychiatric and substance use disorders
* Understand the evolutionary forces that shape variation in complex traits

*Additional resources:*

[Graduate Handbook Relationship with Faculty Mentor](https://www.colorado.edu/ebio/graduate/graduate-handbook#faculty%20mentor)

[Graduate Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities](https://www.colorado.edu/uggs/sites/default/files/attached-files/Graduate%20Student%20Bill%20of%20Rights%20and%20Responsibilities.pdf)

**My Commitment to You:**

I recognize that by accepting a student in my laboratory and serving as a mentor, I accept the following responsibilities:

• Be committed to mentoring the graduate student to support achievement of their educational and career goals. This is a top priority of mine, and I will always work towards this effort.

• Provide an intellectually stimulating and emotionally supportive environment by:

* Being your advocate. If there is an issue or problem, talk to me about it and I will work to resolve the issue.
* Striving to be supportive. Each individual is unique, and mentoring approaches that work for one individual may not work for another. I will be open to discussing mentoring strategies with you to find a way that works for us both.

• Strive to provide and actively advocate for the mentee’s right to a work environment that is supportive, harassment-free, and non-oppressive (not reinforcing societal structures of power -- i.e. racism, sexism, ableism, etc.).

• Be supportive, equitable, accessible, encouraging, and respectful, and foster the graduate student’s professional confidence and encourage critical thinking, skepticism and creativity.

• Help plan and direct the research project of the graduate student, set reasonable and attainable goals, and establish a timeline for completion.

• Meet with the student on a regular basis and provide resources as appropriate or according to EBIO best practices mentoring document / [EBIO Grad student handbook](https://www.colorado.edu/ebio/graduate/graduate-handbook) , in order for them to conduct thesis/dissertation research.

• Be knowledgeable about, and guide the graduate student through, the requirements as [EBIO Graduate Regulations](https://www.colorado.edu/ebio/sites/default/files/attached-files/ebio_graduate_regulations_approved_0416.pdf) and deadlines of their graduate program as well as those of the CU Boulder.

• Help the graduate student select a thesis/dissertation committee and ensure that this committee meets according to timelines in the above regulations and meet at least annually in conjunction with the [annual progress report](https://www.colorado.edu/ebio/sites/default/files/attached-files/graduate_student_annual_progress_report_2017_updated_form.pdf) to review the graduate student’s progress.

• Facilitate the training of the mentee in complementary skills needed to be a successful researcher; these may include oral and written communication skills, grant writing, lab management, animal and human research policies, the ethical conduct of research, and scientific professionalism.

• Encourage the mentee to seek additional opportunities in career development training. No one person will be an effective mentor in every aspect of research, scholarship, teaching, service, and academia. I will strive to do my best, but I will also encourage you to seek out others to draw upon the wealth of knowledge at CU.

• Discuss authorship policies regarding papers and data access/ownership with the mentee and acknowledge the mentee’s contributions to projects beyond his or her own, and work with you to publish your work in a timely manner. Authorship is best discussed early, and in an open way. You are expected to take responsibility for your projects and are expected to move your projects towards publication as the first author. As director of the lab, I will often be listed as senior author, at the end. Contributions to projects and manuscripts of others is encouraged and collaboration is an important aspect of science. Collaboration will be acknowledged by co-authorship in accordance with the contribution. Helpful discussion and feedback on a manuscript or at a lab meeting is an expected responsibility of being a good colleague, but not necessarily requiring of co-authorship unless there is a strong intellectual contribution. Being inclusive in authorship acknowledges the collaborative nature of science, and should accurately reflect intellectual, financial, data, analytical, and writing contributions of collaborators.

• Encourage you to attend professional meetings and make an effort to help you secure funding for such activities.

• Provide career advice and assist in finding a position for the graduate student following their graduation, while providing honest letters of recommendation for their next phase of professional development, and being accessible to give advice and feedback on career goals.

• Communicate availability with my lab and notify my lab of any planned absences. These times will change based on teaching responsibilities, faculty meetings, and other responsibilities each semester.

**Graduate Student and Postdoc Responsibilities**

I acknowledge that I have the primary responsibility for the successful completion of my degree and/or research program.

I will seek guidance from my faculty/research advisor, thesis/dissertation committee, or others for advisors and mentors, and any other resources available for advice on career plans. I pledge to do the following:

• Continuously strive to be knowledgeable of past and current literature that impacts my area of research

• Maintain a high level of professionalism, self-motivation, engagement, curiosity, and ethical standards.

• Meet regularly as a lab group with my faculty/research advisor and provide them with updates on the progress and results of my research, scientific activities, and progress towards my degree.

• Work with my faculty/research advisor to develop a thesis/dissertation project. Discuss the level of responsibility expected of the student in designing the project.

• Work with my faculty/research advisor to establish and maintain a timeline for each phase of my work.

• Work with my faculty/research advisor to select a thesis/dissertation committee, which I commit to keeping my committee informed of my progress and be responsive to their advice and constructive criticism

• Be knowledgeable about and comply with all requirements of the policies of my graduate program outlined in the EBIO regulations (link), the Graduate School, and institution with both the letter and spirit

• Maintain a detailed, organized, and accurate record of my research as directed by my advisor; I am aware that my original notes and all tangible research data are the property of CU Boulder. I am able to take my data with me after I complete my thesis/dissertation but be willing to share if requested.

• Before leaving the lab after completion of the degree, discuss my responsibilities for leaving the lab space for future use. The student is responsible for:

* Ensuring all computers, monitors, and other hardware are in working order and returned to the lab.
* Leaving their work area/office clean and removing all personal belongings.
* Making sure that your projects are well documented and ready to be submitted to journals or to continue working towards that goal, or, alternatively, ready to pass off to another for completion.

• Discuss expectations of work hours, sick leave, and vacation with my faculty/research advisor and notify my faculty advisor of any planned absences.

• Discuss expectations of shared authorship and attendance at professional meetings with my faculty/research advisor.

• Work with my advisor to submit all relevant research results that are ready for publication in a timely manner.

• Attend departmental seminars and faculty research talks.

**Best Practices: how to enhance mentoring and the graduate student and postdoctoral experience:**

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|  | **Graduate students are encouraged to:** | **Faculty mentors are encouraged to:** |
| **Establishing mentoring** **relationship norms** | Meet with faculty advisors during their first semester to: * Discuss how often and in what manner they will communicate to share progress and concerns; regular meetings with your faculty advisor are strongly encouraged
* Identify effective strategies for regular communication so that you can receive feedback and direction as needed.
* Discuss any expectations for presence on campus while working (e.g. expected to work in the lab during certain hours or days)

Meeting your mentoring needs:* Your advisor may not be able to provide you everything you are looking for in a mentor. This is okay, and expected.
* Work to establish a mentoring network to get the help and support you need. Form relationships with other faculty, postdocs, and graduate students.
 | When working with a new student: * Facilitate discussions about mentoring norms, communication, expectations, and goals.
* Consider how differences in personality and preferences will affect your working relationship with this student
* Explain the support network available to the student and their role in the student’s education (e.g., lab mates, postdocs, committee members, EBIO staff, graduate students).

Foster a healthy research community by:* Providing graduate students with ways to directly and honestly communicate their concerns and needs for assistance.
* Providing encouragement and constructive feedback on student progress
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| **Working Logistics** | Determine the expectations of their advisor and committee for:* The formulation of a research project,
* Execution of the research
* Final presentation of the advisory committee (exams, defense)
* Expectations for publication
* Notice needed for feedback on drafts and providing letters of recommendation
* Expectations for regular meetings with committee members
 | Share with students:* Your expectations of student progress and timelines
* Your expectations for their research topics, if any
* The steps and time management needed to successfully execute a thesis or dissertations, teach effectively and participate in service and outreach
* Details of the support you can provide for research and funding.
* Clear expectations for what is expected from students for receipt of that support
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| **Career Advancement** | Discuss with their advisors and committees* Career goals, and the best ways to achieve them.
* Areas of concern, or particular challenges
* Areas where they would like to grow, topics or skills they would like to develop or learn.
* Opportunities they should pursue to meet their goals (grants to apply to, courses to take, collaborations, conferences) and how to prioritize these opportunities with other responsibilities and requirements
* Seek advice on applying to and securing desired future positions to meet career goals
 | * Discuss and understand the student’s long-term goals and incorporate appropriate training opportunities into the student’s education plan (e.g., teaching, research, outreach).
* Encourage students to read the scientific literature thoroughly and frequently
* Help students to enhance their writing and speaking skills
* Encourage and support students to attend meetings and seminars.
* Facilitate networking and professional development opportunities
* Discuss possible career tracks, and suggest appropriate courses and opportunities

Be aware that student goals should supersede faculty goals for the student**.**  |
| **Dissertation progress** | * Early in a student’s graduate program, they should review the requirements of the degree and determine a timeline for meeting those requirements
* Discuss progress towards degree requirements with their advisor on a regular basis, at least once a semester.
* Emphasize possible bottlenecks, or trouble spots, where help may be most needed.
 | * Work with students to establish reasonable goals for the completion of milestones that need to be achieved in order to complete their degree.
* Help student to overcome possible barriers to meeting these goals and to grow and learn from these experiences
* Be clear about your expectations for lead time to receive drafts for comments, and for letters of recommendation.
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| **Conflict Resolution** | * Bring up areas of potential conflict and stress before they become a problem
* Open communication can prevent conflicts, so keep your advisor in the loop
* Prevent misunderstandings by asking questions and clarifying expectations if things are unclear
* Send professional emails
* Maintain professional and respectful behavior at all times
* Use available resources and bring in help to resolve conflicts if needed.
 | * Discuss, and provide opportunities for students to bring up, areas of potential conflict and stress before issues arise
* Make sure expectations and timelines are clear
* Maintain open communication
* Discuss small problems before they build to larger problems
* Send professional emails
* Maintain professional and respectful behavior at all times
* Use available resources and bring in help to resolve conflicts if needed.
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