

Course Description: Biology/Environmental Biology Research Practicum
BIO/ENVB 1601, 1602, 1603, 2601, 2602, 2603, 3601, 3602, 3603, 4601, 4602, 4603

Calendar Description: This course offers the student research experience as part of a Biology research team. The student must make arrangements with a faculty member before enrolling in this course. [There are no pre- or co-requisites.]

Expanded course description: Students who wish to gain practical research experience, in a lab or in the field, can make arrangements with a faculty member to participate in his/her research. During this course, the student will learn current research techniques and will use these techniques to make a meaningful contribution to the supervisor's research program. Students are expected to commit to approximately 5-10 hours per week (on average) for one term. The student and faculty member must sign a form in which they agree on the type and amount of work to be done, and the form must be approved by the Course Director before the student will be allowed to enroll. Students may enroll in this course during any term, and there is no limit to the number of terms in which they are allowed to enroll. Students will not be allowed to enroll in a Research Practicum with their Honours Thesis supervisor (BIOL/BCHM 4000) during the same terms that they are enrolled in BIOL/BCHM 4000 8.0. The course evaluation will be pass/fail only. Students will be required to obtain safety training, such as WHMIS, if appropriate to the type of research undertaken. The course is intended only for students in biology or biochemistry majors.

Course numbers: Offered every year, every term, at all four levels of study.
1601, 1602 & 1603 = first year, fall, winter & summer terms;
2601, 2602 & 2603 = second year, fall, winter & summer terms;
3601, 3602 & 3603 = third year, fall, winter & summer terms;
4601, 4602 & 4603 = fourth year, fall, winter & summer terms.

Credit: This is a zero-credit course. It will appear on the transcript, but it will not affect the student's GPA, and no tuition will be charged.

Grading: The course is pass/fail only. The research supervisor will base the practical evaluation on whether the student has adequately fulfilled the terms of the agreement signed by both student and faculty member at the time the student enrolls. This evaluation will take into consideration both the number of hours worked by the student and the quality of the work. Students will also be required to submit, at the end of term, a 1-2 page essay describing the practical skills they have acquired and explaining how those skills will contribute to their career goals. The paper will be read by both the research supervisor and the course director. No readings will be required unless requested by the supervisor to support the acquisition of practical lab skills. To achieve a passing grade, the student must be judged to have passed both the practical evaluation and the paper. The supervisor will provide a letter of reference if requested by the student, to use in applications for research positions, professional schools, etc.

Responsibilities

Student:

1. to work responsibly and follow all safety guidelines
2. to work the hours and schedule agreed on with the supervisor
3. to notify the supervisor (in advance if possible) if the student cannot work due to illness, exams, etc.
4. to write a report (1-2 page essay as described in the Course Description) and submit it to the supervisor by the last day of class

Supervisor:

1. to ensure that the student is engaged in meaningful research-related work, is not primarily carrying out menial labour such as dishwashing, and is not working more than 10 hours per week on average
2. to ensure that the student has appropriate training and supervision for the work and has the appropriate safety training when required
3. to involve the student in the research culture of the lab, for example by inviting the student to attend lab meetings
4. to evaluate the student's practical lab work
5. to read and evaluate the student's written report
6. to write a confidential evaluation of the student's work to be used as a letter of reference, if requested by the student

Course director:

1. to approve the agreement between student and supervisor before the student enrolls
2. to ensure that the agreement is being honoured on both sides, by contacting both student and supervisor during the term
3. to read and evaluate the student's written report

How to Enrol

1. Find a supervisor. Start by reading the descriptions of faculty research at the back of the Undergraduate Handbook, and online at: www.yorku.ca/gradbiol/faculty/index.html
Contact supervisors whose research you are interested in (by email or in person). Be prepared to give your potential supervisor a printout of your courses and grades (not an official transcript) and a one-page resumé including your contact information, your degree program and stream, a brief statement of your career goals and how this research experience would further those goals, and any relevant work experience (paid or volunteer).
2. Fill out the form. When you find a faculty member who agrees to supervise you, fill out and sign the enrolment form, and get your supervisor and the course director to sign it as well. You can choose to enrol in either BIO or ENVB, in consultation with your supervisor.
3. Enrol in the course. After the course director has approved the form, take it to the Biology Undergraduate Office and an enrolment window will be opened for you.

Biology/Environmental Biology Research Practicum Enrolment Form

Student name: _____ **Student number:** _____

email address: _____ **phone:** _____

Major (e.g. Biology, Biochemistry) _____

Academic Year (e.g. 11/12): _____ **Term (F, W, S):** _____ **Course number:** _____

Choose appropriate course number:

BIOL or ENVB

1601, 1602 & 1603 = first year: fall, winter & summer terms

2601, 2602 & 2603 = second year: fall, winter & summer terms

3601, 3602 & 3603 = third year: fall, winter & summer terms

4601, 4602 & 4603 = fourth year: fall, winter & summer terms

Supervisor name: _____

email: _____ **phone:** _____

Location of work (building & room number and/or field location): _____

Approx. number of hours of work per week on average (max. 10): _____

Brief description of project and student's role, and details of the type of work to be done (research techniques the student will use):

I agree to the conditions above, I have read the course description and I understand my responsibilities.

Signature

Date

Student: _____

Supervisor: _____

Course director: _____