

Biology Department Space – Update to Temporary Space Allocation Policy

Approved by Department Vote April 28, 2023

Preamble:

On Oct. 21, 2013, the Biology Department approved a Temporary Space Allocation Policy, which went into effect on February 1, 2014. The Policy, which was developed by the department's Space Committee, concerns research use of space outside of faculty research labs and provides a mechanism for requesting the use of such space for purposes ranging from very short-term use to long-term space use for items such as large instrumentation. Since that time, there have been numerous changes with space ramifications: 1) we have hired additional TT and NTT faculty members, 2) we have repurposed some spaces in the building as faculty offices and/or TT faculty research labs, 3) enrollment pressures have increased such that we are offering more sections of many courses, 4) a proposal for more space via a new building was successful, but the amount of space gained from that building will be much less than the department needs, and 5) the duties of the former departmental Space Committee have been reassigned to the Executive Committee. As a result of many of these changes, we are much more pressed for space than we were at the time when the Policy went into effect. This fact necessitates an update to the Policy to a) more clearly define processes, responsibilities, and oversight concerning research use of space outside of faculty research labs, b) ensure compliance with the Policy so that core functions of the department are not compromised, and c) improve the transparency and equitability of space allocation for research outside of TT faculty research labs.

Goals of the Proposed Policy Changes:

- 1) To update the departmental policy for reviewing requests for temporary or long-term use of shared research spaces by faculty and/or the students doing research under their advisement (whether for pay, for credit, or as volunteers).
- 2) To establish a process for assessing space limitations, integrating new requests for use of shared research spaces into existing allocations of such space, and ensuring that research use of such space is consistent with what has been approved by the department.
- 3) Establish clear policies for consequences of space allocation policies by codifying a process for regularly assessing compliance with space allocation decisions and defining a stepwise process of enforcement in cases of non-compliance.

Biology Department Policy: Shared Research Space Allocation

Statement: The Biology Department currently follows, in general, a uniform space allocation policy. That is, faculty lab sizes are approximately equivalent and space outside of faculty labs is shared. However, different types of research endeavors require more or less space and instrumentation. Similarly, faculty often have episodic needs for additional space, as when funded grants include staff such as post-docs or technicians and/or a scaling up of the scope of research projects. Therefore, the “one size fits all” prescription for research laboratory space would benefit from additional flexibility, both with regard to short- and long-term use of “shared” research space. With our recent growth in both faculty and students, space is quite limited in the Biology Building. Thus, it is important that all research use of spaces outside of faculty research labs occur with departmental approval, and that continued use of such space beyond the period of approval needs to be contingent on renewal of the departmental approval. Furthermore, the department needs a mechanism for dealing with situations of noncompliance with this policy.

Oversight: The Biology Department Executive Committee is responsible for:

- 1) Reviewing and approving/denying requests for research use of shared research spaces.
- 2) Regularly assessing space limitations in shared research spaces in the Biology Building
- 3) Giving the Department Chair direction for handling issues of noncompliance with the departmental space policy.

Definition of Shared Research Spaces:

Shared research spaces are those spaces in the Biology Building that are not offices, faculty research labs designated to individual faculty members, teaching labs and their associated prep rooms and support spaces, hallways, bathrooms, or other such common spaces. As of April 20, 2023, the shared research spaces include BI 131, 133, 163A, 332A, 336, 350, 353A, 434, 439, 439A, 446, 447, 452, 455A, 455, 455C, 464, 464A, 466, CB 254, and the Research Greenhouse (including range, headhouse, outside storage, and shed). This policy concerns use of such shared research spaces, including inside drawers, cabinets, and shared equipment such as incubators, laminar flow hoods, and Biosafety cabinets.

General Guidelines:

Shared research spaces must be maintained in a clean and safe manner by those approved to use such spaces.

Teaching labs and prep spaces are under the control of the stockroom staff. Any non-CRN assigned use of teaching lab space needs to be cleared by the Stockroom Manager or lab-specific Tech.

The Research Greenhouse spaces are allocated by the Biology Greenhouse Committee with oversight from the Executive committee.

Temporary or long-term use of space in other rooms (i.e, teaching spaces and any other spaces not falling under the definition of shared research space) for keeping instrumentation and other items from individual faculty research labs is not allowed.

The spaces listed above as shared research spaces can be updated by the Executive Committee in response to changing space demands of the department.

Categories of Shared Research Spaces:

Daily Space: Daily Spaces are locations designated for temporary use within the course of a single day. All counters, shelves and associated space must be completely cleared after each use and by the end of each day. Projects requiring long hours or multiple days may be asked to move to short term space. Materials left overnight may be discarded.

Daily Space is available on a first-come, first-served basis without a need to submit a shared space use application and can be reserved for a specific time with a simple sign (the sign should indicate who is using the space and for what anticipated period of time) as long as no conflicts arise. In the event of conflicts for such spaces, the Executive Committee may re-designate such spaces as Short-Term Space. All equipment and materials in Daily Space must be well identified with regards to ownership.

Short and Long Term space requests for all shared spaces (including Research Greenhouse space) should use the following webform: [Space Request Form](#). Once submitted, Greenhouse space requests will be forwarded to the Greenhouse Committee Chair for consideration.

Short-Term Space: Short-Term Spaces are dedicated bench, cabinet or floor space that can be used for 3-, 6-, or 12-month periods. Formal applications for use of Short-Term Space (using the attached form) must be submitted to the Executive Committee at least two weeks prior to the initial date of planned use of the space. Use of the space requires prior approval by the Executive Committee.

All equipment and materials in Short-Term Space must be well identified with regards to ownership.

Long-Term Space: Long-Term Spaces are limited to equipment and large footprint instrumentation.. Formal applications for research use of Long-Term Space must be submitted to the Executive Committee using the Space Request Form at least one month prior to the initial date of planned use and/or prior to the purchase of the instrumentation/equipment (whichever comes first). Use of the space requires prior approval by the Executive Committee. Long term space requests will be granted for a maximum of 5 years at a time. Requests for renewal of long-term space allocations can be done indefinitely with justification for continued

need for the space. Long term approvals can be revoked based on changes in department “shared spaces” due to capital projects, renovations, classroom needs, new hires, or unforeseen building needs. The Executive Committee will make reasonable efforts to notify/consult all users of equipment/instrumentation prior to decisions about revocations and denied renewals.

All equipment and materials in Long-Term Space must be well identified with regards to ownership.

Shared Research Space Requests for New Grants or Contracts:

If additional space is needed to satisfy the terms of a new grant or contract, that information must be shared with the Executive Committee before submission of the grant or contract, so adequate planning can occur. This notification must occur, and Executive Committee approval received, prior to submitting the Proposal Routing Form. Non-compliance can result in rejection of a Proposal Routing Form at the Departmental level. Additionally, just as sometimes space needs grow for a project, lab, or individual, sometimes too they also decline and/or others’ space needs may increase, and space maybe reallocated as this occurs.

Shared Research Space Allocation Criteria:

Decisions regarding shared research space allocation will be informed by the following:

- Evidence of or potential for research productivity and professional impact including student engagement in research, publications in refereed journals, presentations, patents, internal or external revenue to support the research, etc.
- Multipurpose use of space; e.g., educational as well as research use, multiple faculty sharing space and equipment.
- Nature of the research conducted (equipment, required space for work, safe work environment, etc.) will also be reviewed.
- Compatibility with other users and facility specific protocols (e.g., Greenhouse use).
- Faculty member’s current use of shared research space and research space (or lack thereof) assigned to the faculty member.
- Faculty member’s previous record of complying with terms of shared space allocations.

Shared Research Space Request and Decision Procedure:

Requests for short- or long-term use of shared research space must submitted in writing to the Executive Committee at least two weeks (for short-term use) or one month (for long-term use) before the desired initial date of allocation or projected proposal or contract submission, using the appropriate application form. Safety and security issues, if they exist, must be addressed in the formal request. The Executive Committee will inform the department of any shared research space allocations granted. If a faculty member’s request is denied by the Executive

Committee, they may request an appeal, involving a review, discussion, and vote from the full department. Individual votes in such cases will be confidential.

Additional Considerations in Shared Research Space Allocations:

All shared research space is assigned for temporary use and must be vacated and left clean after the allocated time unless a time extension has been officially granted.

Regardless of prior agreement, all shared research space is allocated on a contingent basis. Temporary allocation of such spaces may be lost or changed for a variety of reasons, such as:

- Failure to maintain a safe and clean work area may result in loss of shared research space.
- Underutilized shared research space may be re-allocated.
- New allocation of shared research space may require the loss of short- or long-term use of shared research space elsewhere.
- Use is no longer consistent with space allocation criteria.
- Emergent research needs by other faculty members may necessitate reallocation of shared research space.
- Emergent teaching needs may require use of shared research space for courses.

Re-assignment of shared research space to permanent assigned space (e.g., new hires) will be made by the chair, but is contingent on majority approval from the Executive Committee.

Assessing Compliance with the Policy:

- Shared research space allocation compliance is subject to review by the Executive Committee at any time and review of specific spaces can be requested by members of the department.
- In addition, the Executive Committee will conduct an annual inventory of space being used for research purposes outside of faculty research labs to determine if any such space use is out of compliance with the Policy (either because the use was never authorized or because the authorized period has expired).

Addressing Non-compliance with the Policy:

- In the event of non-compliance with the Shared Research Space Allocation Policy, the faculty member in non-compliance will be notified by the Department Chair on behalf of the Executive Committee.
- Upon receipt of this notification, the faculty member must either a) submit a new request for shared research space use within 5 working days or b) remove their

materials from the space within 2 working days for Daily Space, 2 weeks for Short-Term Space, or 1 month for Long-Term Space.

- If the faculty member submits a new request for shared research space use and the request is denied, they must remove their materials from the space after receiving notification of the denial, following the same timeline as listed under item b) in the previous bullet.
- If the faculty member does not remove their materials in the required time, they will enter a one-month probationary period during which the Department Chair will not sign off on internal research proposals submitted by that faculty member for routing to RSP. In addition, for faculty members under such a probation, their Biology Department research allotment will be frozen.
- After one month of probation, if the faculty member is still in non-compliance with the Policy, the equipment and materials that the faculty member is keeping in the affected spaces will be moved to off-campus storage. The costs for the first month of storage, as well as any necessary moving costs, will be taken out of the faculty member's current or future (if the current balance is not sufficient) departmental research allotment. It will be the responsibility of the individual faculty member to pay any future storage costs.
- If the faculty member chooses not to pay storage costs beyond the first month, the department may, at the discretion of the Executive Committee, take possession of the equipment and materials for departmental use and/or make them available for auction. If the latter, any proceeds from the auction will be retained by the department.