

Translational Neurosciences Program



RCMI PROGRAM

Guidelines for Services

The Translational Neuroscience Program

The goal of the Translational Neuroscience Program is to integrate cutting edge imaging facilities and instrumentation with existing RCMI Molecular Neurobiology and Neurogenetics cores and technological support. Additional objectives are to promote the capacity for the neuroscientists of Puerto Rico to participate in local, national and global networking initiatives and to disseminate knowledge concerning neurological health disparities to the larger community.

General Rules:

To ensure successful use for all, certain rules have to be set and enforced, if necessary. We all are at times inclined to think that our own research is the most important, but this understandable self-indulgence must not lead to negatively influencing the equally important research of others.

Therefore:

Use common sense and respect when interacting with the other users of the facility.

Admission to the core facilities

- New users must submit an application to the Oversight Committee, stating briefly the project and the required space, procedures and instruments. For each new user a user registration form has to be submitted by the responsible principal investigator.
- Lab bench and storage space for reagents are assigned on a first-come first-served basis, as long as space is available. Preference is given to resident scientists from the Institute of Neurobiology. Use of specific equipment by guests may be arranged according to instrument availability.
- Failure to comply with the lab rules may lead to revocation of admission to the facility by the Oversight Committee.
- On termination of a project the user has to clean up his bench and storage space before he can be signed out. If he or she had been provided with a key, it must be returned.

Rules of Engagement

- You are the master of your lab bench. What you do on your bench is your business alone, as long as lab safety and the work of others are not impaired by your activities.
- Stick to your bench space and do not invade the space of your bench neighbors, however tempting a certain free spot may look.

IMPORTANT: Never take other user's reagents, kits or instruments without asking their permission first. Most people are willing to help you out if you ask. Also, do not remove common use reagents or supplies from the premises of the facility, nor

keep them solely in your bench/work area, where others may not be able to find them or access them.

- Even if you prefer creative chaos on your own bench, keep shared areas clean and organized. This means, clean up after you are done with your work (e.g. gel boxes, etc.).
- Items (bottles, containers, kits, etc.) that you store in general storage areas (e.g. all freezers and refrigerators are shared) must be properly labeled with content and with your name. Don't expect others to be able to decipher your artistic scribble. Try to write legibly. Keep in mind that freezers and refrigerators need periodic thawing and cleaning. At times like that it comes handy if you can identify your precious samples.

Procedure in case of problems involving lab user's behavior

- In a shared laboratory there are always points of friction between lab users. That is normal and results from different temperaments and work habits. Most of these minor conflicts can easily be addressed and managed. Most of the time they are settled between the individual users and do not require intervention.
- If a user complains to Luis Quiñones about another user of the lab, he will talk to the respective person and try to solve the conflict.
- In case a conflict cannot be resolved by talking to the involved users, a meeting with the concerned PIs will be held.
- In cases of severe or repeated disruption of lab security or other disturbances affecting work conditions in the lab, a written report will be submitted to the Oversight Committee. This Committee will then meet and decide whether access to the facility will be revoked. The Committee's decision will be final.

Specific Guidelines

Safety

- Some of the reagents we use in molecular biology are potentially harmful to your health. Be sure you understand the hazards involved. An orange binder with Material Safety Data Sheets can be found in the catalog shelf. If you are uncertain, ask staff personnel. Wear gloves and protective clothing whenever necessary. All users must show evidence of compliance with UPR Biosafety regulations.
- Accidents happen to everybody! If one happens to you, don't cover it up! Clean up by yourself or, if a hazardous substance was involved, call staff personnel for help. If an accident resulted in damage of an instrument or a piece of equipment, notify staff personnel immediately so that replacement and/or repair can be initiated. A problem report sheet can be found in the

appendix B. This sheet is also to be used to report damage or malfunction of a piece of equipment.

- If an accident results in personal injury, always notify staff personnel or, in case we are not available, call others for help.
- A first aid kit and a list with emergency telephone numbers is located at the lab technician's desk, next to the telephone.
- We hope you will never need them, but familiarize yourself with the location of fire extinguishers, the emergency shower (you don't need to test it) and the eye-wash installation.
- Literature on lab safety available in the laboratory:
- Stricoff, R.S. & Walters, D.B. (1995) Handbook of Laboratory Health and Safety. 2nd edition. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. New York, Chichester, Brisbane, Toronto, Singapore
- A binder with material safety data sheets of reagents used in the lab.
- Also, keep in mind that most suppliers of reagents have websites, where material safety data sheets can be inspected and downloaded.

Food and drink

- No food and drinks are allowed at the lab benches and in the refrigerators and freezers at any time. A special small FOOD ONLY-labeled refrigerator and a coffee maker are located in the office area and in the lunch room.
- Sharps and waste disposal
- Needles, razor blades, broken glass and other sharp or pointed objects are to be disposed into the provided containers. Never throw them into the general wastebaskets.
- Potentially hazardous reagents (mostly organic solvents, phenol, paraformaldehyde solutions, etc.) have to be collected in the provided labeled bottles under the sink in Lab 104.
- Bio-hazardous materials such as used bacteriological plates, media and bacterial cultures, must be autoclaved before they can be disposed of in the waste.

Radioactivity

Prior to using isotopes, principal investigators, lab staff and users of the facility must show evidence of completing UPR RCM training procedures. All isotope work must be conducted in the lab specified for radioactivity.

Use of the FORMA -70°C freezer

- The FORMA -70 °C freezer is a delicate and expensive piece of equipment. It is meant exclusively for storage and is definitely not a cold experimentation area. Don't abuse it as a rapid freezing device. It should be opened only as long as it takes to identify and take out stored items. Leaving the door ajar for extended times may destroy reagents, such as competent cells, or may even interfere with proper function of the freezer.

- If you need more time to sort out cells or reagents, do it outside the freezer in a polystyrene box with dry ice.
- Literature on cryopreservation available in the laboratory
- Brockbank et al. (2001) Cryopreservation Manual. Published on the FORMA Scientific website.
- Manual for the FORMA Model 8523 Biofreezer. Manual No. 7028516 Rev. 2

RCMI E-Ticket System

An electronic service request system was implemented in March 2012 to facilitate, document and track research support services. Initially, the system requires users to fill an electronic survey form to register in our user database. Users receive a user name and password to access the electronic ticket system. After a ticket is created, all communications related to the requested service are managed by regular email. Once the service is completed, the ticket is closed (resolved).

Acknowledgement to RCMI Program

Users of the Instruments or Services should acknowledge RCMI support by including the following sentence in their publications:

“Infrastructure support was provided in part by grants from the National Center for Research Resources (2G12 RR003051) and the National Institute on Minority Health and Health Disparities (8G12MD007600).”

Cooperation in this respect is **Vital** to the success of the Program.

Approval of Guidelines



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