Choosing a Thesis Lab

Ray Care, PhD
Program Director, OCPD
rachel.care@ucsf.edu

Put in the chat:
Where you are joining from or how your week has been feeling
Our mission: For every student to have the knowledge, skills, and confidence to navigate their career successfully

Ray Care, PhD
Program Director, OCPD
rachel.care@ucsf.edu
Timeline for engaging with OCPD as a graduate student

Every graduate student gets 5 free and confidential counseling appointments per year. Come talk to us!

Ray Care, PhD
Specialties:
- Choosing your thesis lab
- Managing your mentorship
- Preparing and applying for faculty careers

Linda Louie, PhD
Specialties:
- Exploring careers
- Finding and preparing for internships
- Networking and informational interviews

Michael Matrone, PhD
Specialties:
- Exploring careers
- Designing a job search
- Applying, interviewing, and negotiating

1:1 Counseling
Navigating Your Time at UCSF
Professional Skills
Career Exploration
Finding and Applying for Jobs

Manage Up Series

Conducting Successful Rotations
Decision Matrix for Rotations
Peer Teams
Build Your Professional Network

Evidence-Based Teaching Course
Successful Grants Library

Transferable Skills for PhD Career Paths
Develop skills that are valuable in all careers

Business Skills for Scientists

Career Exploration Roadmap
Career Paths
Learn from alumni on different career paths

Making Informed Decisions (MIND)
Introduction to career exploration

Internships and Experiential Learning
Intermediate career exploration

Employer Information Sessions
Opportunity Comparison Matrix

Opportunities Board
Find internships, teaching opportunities, postdocs, and jobs

Exploring Faculty Careers
Applying for Faculty Careers

Academic Career Readiness Assessment

Search, apply, interview, and negotiate

Sample materials

Year 1
- Year 2
- Year 3
- Year 4
- Year 5

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1:1 Counseling

Navigating Your Time at UCSF

Conducting Successful Rotations

Choosing a thesis lab

Starting in a new position

Finding your mentors

Managing PI relationship

Managing collaborations

Navigating workplace politics

Having a career conversation

Choosing a postdoc

Interviewing to avoid a bad fit

Manage Up Series

Successful Grants Library

Evidence-Based Teaching Course

Decision Matrix for Rotations

Inclusive Research Mentor Course + Inclusive Mentoring Fellows

Transferable Skills for PhD Careers

Making Informed Decisions (MIND)

Introduction to career exploration

Exploring Faculty Careers

Opportunities Board

Career Exploration Roadmap

Career Paths

Learn from alumni on different career paths

Opportunities Board

Find internships, teaching opportunities

Customer Service Representative Course

Evidence-Based Teaching Course

Inclusive Research Mentor Course + Inclusive Mentoring Fellows

Transferable Skills for PhD Careers

Academic Career Readiness Assessment

Business Skills for Scientists

Premier Skills

Evidence-Based Teaching

Inclusive Research Mentor Course + Inclusive Mentoring Fellows

Transferable Skills for PhD Careers

Opportunity Comparison Matrix

Get this timeline!
bit.ly/OCPDtimeline
Timeline for engaging with OCPD as a graduate student

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### Year 1
- **Conducting Successful Rotations**
- **Evidence-Based Teaching Course**
- **Successful Grants Library**

### Year 2
- **Decision Matrix for Rotations**
- **Inclusive Research Mentor Course**
- **Transferable Skills for PhD Careers**

### Year 3
- **Peer Teams**
- **Making Informed Decisions**
- **Business Skills for Scientists**

### Year 4
- **Build Your Professional Network**
- **Choosing a Postdoc**
- **Interviewing to avoid a bad fit**

### Year 5
- **Choosing a Thesis Lab**
- **Navigating Workplace Politics**
- **Applying for Faculty Careers**

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**Manage Up Series**

- **Conducting Rotations**
- **Choosing a Thesis Lab**
- **Starting in a New Position**
- **Finding Your Mentors**
- **Managing PI Relationship**
- **Managing Collaborations**
- **Navigating Workplace Politics**
- **Having a Career Conversation**
- **Choosing a Postdoc**
- **Interviewing to Avoid a Bad Fit**

---

**Professional Skills**

- **Evidence-Based Teaching Course**
- **Transferable Skills for PhD Careers**

**Career Exploration**

- **Career Exploration Roadmap**
- **Making Informed Decisions**
- **Career Paths**
- **Opportunities Board**

**Finding and Applying for Jobs**

- **Exploring Faculty Careers**
- **Academic Career Readiness Assessment**

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- Evidence-Based Teaching Course
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Year 2
- Decision Matrix for Rotations
- Inclusive Research Mentor Course
- Transferable Skills for PhD Career

Year 3
- Peer Teams
- Making Informed Decisions
- Career Paths

Year 4
- Build Your Professional Network
- Business Skills for Scientists

Year 5
- Peer Teams
- Making Informed Decisions
- Inclusive Research Mentor Course

Getting Started
- Search, apply, interview, and negotiate
- Sample materials

Building Your Network
- Build Your Professional Network
- Make connections

Career Exploration Roadmap
- Learn from alumni on different career paths
- Opportunities Board
- Find internships, teaching opportunities

Opportunities Board
- Find internships, teaching opportunities

Career Exploration Roadmap
- Learn from alumni on different career paths

Evidence-Based Teaching Course
- Successful Grants Library

Inclusive Research Mentor Course
- Inclusive Mentoring Fellows

Transferable Skills for PhD Career
- Business Skills for Scientists

Evidence-Based Teaching Course
- Successful Grants Library

Making Informed Decisions
- Introduction to evidence-based teaching

Career Paths
- Learn from alumni on different career paths

Opportunities Board
- Find internships, teaching opportunities

Exploring Faculty Careers
- Faculty mentorship

Academic Career Readiness Assessment
- Assess your readiness

Business Skills for Scientists
- Learn new skills

Exploring Faculty Careers
- Faculty mentorship

Academic Career Readiness Assessment
- Assess your readiness

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Open a new tab!
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Program
A workshop or course offered live

Resource
Tools or information on our website

Development
Student Academic Affairs

Office of Career and Professional

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Links for all this: bit.ly/OCPDthesislab
Scroll down to “Materials”
Quick poll!

WRITE - 1 minute

   a. Make sure you’re in the “Workshop Activities” tab
   b. Claim a column by replacing “Participant” with your favorite animal
   c. Go to question 0
   d. Answer 2 questions
What makes a good decision?

When you know:

- Your preferences and goals
- Your options
- The factors influencing you

A good decision is an informed decision.
What makes a bad decision?

When you:

- Don’t know what you’re looking for
- See it but don’t recognize it
- See it and ignore it

A bad decision is avoidable!

More on this at bit.ly/OCPDrotations

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### A good decision is an informed decision

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals and Preferences</th>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Influences and Process</th>
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<td>What do you need to achieve your goals and feel engaged?</td>
<td>How are the lab’s vital signs? Assess your rotation labs</td>
<td>What other factors are influencing you? How do you make decisions?</td>
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A good decision is an informed decision

Goals and Preferences
What do you need to achieve your goals and feel engaged?

Options
How are the lab's vital signs? Assess your rotation labs

Influences and Process
What other factors are influencing you? How do you make decisions?

Know what you’re looking for
Recognize it
Don’t ignore it
A good decision is an informed decision

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Determine which lab is the **best fit for you**
## Choosing a Thesis Lab

**Goals and Preferences**

- What do you need to achieve your goals and feel engaged?

**Options**

- How are the lab’s vital signs? Assess your rotation labs

**Influences and Process**

- What other factors are influencing you? How do you make decisions?

**Determine which lab is the **best fit for you**

**Feel good** about your choice
A good decision is an informed decision

Goals and Preferences

What do you need to achieve your goals and feel engaged?

Options

Influences and Process
It can be unclear what is part of getting a PhD
What are YOUR goals for your PhD?

Ask yourself:
Why UCSF? Why this program? Why now? What does it mean to get a PhD?

Don’t know where you’re headed?
Take the best next step! How do you want the next 4-ish years of your life to feel?
Heads up!

We will be going into breakout rooms soon but if you can’t, that’s ok!

Please don’t leave :)

Put * in front of your Zoom name if you do NOT want to be assigned to a breakout room today

(Never done that before? See the instructions in the chat!)
What are your goals for your PhD?

WRITE - 5 minutes

   a. Make sure you’re in the “Workshop Activities” tab
   b. Stay in your column
   c. Go to question 1
   d. Write one goal in each category
What are your goals for your PhD?

IN BREAKOUT ROOMS - 10 minutes

Each person gets 2-3 minutes:
1. Introduce yourself with your name, grad program, and something that’s feeling good in your life right now
2. Tell your partners what your goals are
What everyone needs to achieve their goals

Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943)

- **Physiological**
- **Safety**
- **Belonging**
- **Self Esteem**
- **Self Actualization**

**Achieving one’s potential** - being creative, serving a cause, contributing to society

- **Physical and psychological safety**
- **Relationships and affiliation**
- **Respect, confidence, sense of self-worth**

**Basic survival needs**
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs (1943)

- **Physiological**
  - Basic survival needs
- **Safety**
- **Belonging**
  - Relationships and affiliation
- **Self Esteem**
  - Respect, confidence, sense of self-worth
- **Self Actualization**
  - Achieving one’s potential - being creative, serving a cause, contributing to society

Choosing a Thesis Lab part of Manage Up

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What do you need to feel engaged and achieve your goals?

WRITE - 5 minutes

   a. Make sure you’re in the “Workshop Activities” tab
   b. Stay in your column
   c. Go to question 2
   d. There are 8 questions - choose 3-5 that are most important to you and answer those
What do you need to feel engaged?

IN BREAKOUT ROOMS - 10 minutes

Each person gets **2-3 minutes:**

1. Tell your partners about the features of your ideal lab or PhD experience that are most important to you
2. Notice similarities and differences
A good decision is an informed decision

Goals and Preferences

What do you need to achieve your goals and feel engaged?

- Trust what you know about yourself
- This is not the place to look for challenges
A good decision is an informed decision

**Goals and Preferences**

What do you need to achieve your goals and feel engaged?

**Options**

How are the lab's vital signs?

**Influences and Process**
PIs actually have three roles
PIs actually have three roles

- Training
- Supervising
- Advising
PIs actually have three roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Cares about</th>
<th>Responsible for</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Training goals</td>
<td>Teaching scientific knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Training on technical skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Developing scientific thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Developing scientific leadership skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervising</td>
<td>Lab productivity goals</td>
<td>Hiring, promoting, terminating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Managing performance, behavior, productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Allocating resources, assigning projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Authorizing sharing of products and data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advising</td>
<td>Personal, career, professional goals</td>
<td>Career development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Psycho-social support</td>
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</table>
Supervisory role has biggest impact on you

Seven responsibilities in a supervisory role:

1. Set expectations and take baseline assessment
2. Teach/train and delegate effectively
3. Give positive, corrective, and evaluative feedback continuously
4. Recognize progress and reward achievement
5. Articulate and enforce consequences
6. Manage conflict
7. Provide support
Faculty Development Participation Tracker

All basic science graduate programs have adopted a unified policy:

Faculty will participate in at least one mentorship development activity of their choosing each year they have a student in their lab.
Choosing a Thesis Lab
part of Manage Up

All basic science graduate programs have adopted a unified policy:

Faculty will participate in at least one mentorship development activity of their choosing each year they have a student in their lab.

1. Open the tool: bit.ly/facultytracker
2. Type Cmd + F and search for your rotation PI’s last name
3. Search on at least 2 tabs
4. Is their name there? React with “yes” or “no”
All basic science graduate programs have adopted a unified policy:

Faculty will participate in at least one mentorship development activity of their choosing each year they have a student in their lab.

It’s a sign they are complying with policy

You can ask them about their training:
  ● “I see you took a training on inclusivity as a design question. What practices do you use now?”
  ● “It looks like you’ve taken a number of trainings in the last few years. What do you utilize from the trainings you’ve done?”

Double-check with them: It may be that they haven’t had a student in 2018 - 2022

If they haven’t had a student: You can ask them what training they would take if you joined the lab
Lab vital signs show during role conflict

- Training
- Supervising
- Advising

Role conflict

Handle conflict
Manage change
Communicate
Make decisions
How are the lab’s vital signs?

**Handle conflict**

Think of any issues that have come up between you, lab members, with the PI, or with another lab.

**Manage change**

Think of how the lab dealt with new university policies and practices (as well as lab members’ needs and availability) due to COVID-19, or changes in project direction, funding, equipment availability.

**Communicate**

Think of routine communications and special communications (emergencies, world events, important lab news): When do they happen? How? What tone is used? What is talked about/not talked about?

**Make decisions**

Think of hiring decisions, assignment of authorship, responsibilities, or project ownership.
Four vital signs of a lab

WRITE - 5 minutes

   a. Make sure you’re in the “Workshop Activities” tab
   b. Stay in your column
   c. Go to question 3
   d. Describe a time you saw the lab/PI do one of the four vital signs
   e. Think about how you felt in that situation
A good decision is an informed decision

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<td>Believe what you see</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Believe what you hear from lab members</td>
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Determine which lab is the **best fit for you**
Consider the other factors influencing you

- Being conflict-avoidant
- Afraid to look like you don't know
- Your values
- Imposter phenomenon
- Fear of change
- Fear of disappointing (yourself or someone else)
- Beliefs you have
- Your personal goals
- Desire for prestige

Your values

Beliefs you have

Your personal goals

Desire for prestige

Imposter phenomenon

Fear of change

Fear of disappointing (yourself or someone else)

Beliefs you have

Your personal goals
Consider the other factors influencing you

- Fear of change
- Afraid to look like you don't know
- Being conflict-avoidant
- Your values
- Fear of disappointing (yourself or someone else)
- Beliefs you have
- Your personal goals
- Imposter phenomenon
- Desire for prestige
- Other people's expectations of you (peers, PIs, etc)
- What your partner or family need from you
- Time limitations
- What other people have told you about the lab
- What other people have told you this decision
- What a mentor recommends
Consider your decision-making style

Reflect on when you feel most in-tune with yourself
Consider how you made other big life decisions
Choosing a Thesis Lab
part of Manage Up

Consider your decision-making style

Reflect on when you feel most in-tune with yourself
Consider how you made other big life decisions

BUT FIRST
1. Click on “Reactions”
2. Click on “…”
3. Find any emoji you like
4. Click on it now!
5. If you click Reactions -> … , your emoji is now at the top under “Frequently used”
Consider your decision-making style

Data-driven

Intuitive

Reflect on when you feel most in-tune with yourself
Consider how you made other big life decisions
Choosing a Thesis Lab

Consider your decision-making style

Data-driven

Intuitive

Pressure-prompted

Early-starter

Reflect on when you feel most in-tune with yourself
Consider how you made other big life decisions
Consider your decision-making style

Reflect on when you feel most in-tune with yourself
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Choosing a Thesis Lab
part of Manage Up

Consider your decision-making style

- Data-driven
- Intuitive
- Pressure-prompted
- Early-starter
- Crowd-sourcing
- Independent
- Systematic
- Associative

Reflect on when you feel most in-tune with yourself
Consider how you made other big life decisions
## Goals and Preferences

What do you need to achieve your goals and feel engaged?

## Options

How are the lab's vital signs? Assess your rotation labs

## Influences and Process

What other factors are influencing you? How do you make decisions?
Let them know

Dear Dr. Bartlett (or first name),

I hope you’re well/It was good to see you at seminar this week/etc.

I wanted to let you know that I have decided to join Dr. D’anjou’s lab. I wanted to let you know as soon as I decided.

Thank you again for the opportunity to rotate in your lab. I appreciated X and learned Y. I especially enjoyed Z.

Because of your expertise in A, I would be interested in getting your take on my project as it develops over the next few months. Could I follow up with you about that in the fall?

Thank you again.

Regards,
Frances

More sample language at bit.ly/OCPDrotations
No lab is perfect: Own your decision

Make a strategy to manage the things that you don’t love about your lab

- Don’t pretend they’re not there!
No lab is perfect: Own your decision

Make a strategy to manage the things that you don’t love about your lab

- Don’t pretend they’re not there!
Please give us feedback!

WRITE - 2 minutes

   a. Make sure you’re in the “Workshop Activities” tab
   b. Stay in your column
   c. Go to question 5
   d. Answer 3 easy questions!
You did it! What’s your next step?

Pick **at least one** of these things:

- Use our checklist of specific questions (on the “Assess your rotation labs” tab of the Google sheet)
- Go to [bit.ly/OCPDthesislab](https://bit.ly/OCPDthesislab) and open one of the resources under “Materials”
- Send a friend a link!
- Make a counseling appointment

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