

# CMB Professional Development Pilot Program

## Background and Rationale

CMB requires all students to complete at least one semester as a Graduate Student Instructor (GSI). There are many fundamental benefits to serving as a GSI, including mastering fundamental topics in biology and fostering interactions with professors, fellow GSIs, and students. Further, GSIs develop essential skills in: science communication, time management, teamwork, organization, teaching, and leadership while running a classroom. However, given the diverse career paths for CMB students following the completion of their PhD training, and the broadening options for CMB students to engage in professional development activities beyond classroom instruction, there is an opportunity to reconsider the current CMB GSI requirement.

## Pilot Program Goal

To provide CMB students with an opportunity to propose alternative professional development activities that will provide critical training in skills similar to those provided by the current GSI requirement.

## Considerations Before Applying to the CMB Professional Development Pilot Program

- CMB still strongly encourages GSI positions for all CMB students. As noted above, experience as a GSI leads to the development of a valuable skill set that will be useful regardless of future career goals.
- This is a prospective (not a retrospective) pilot program. Prior activities will not count toward this program.
- This program does not reduce expectations, but provides alternate skill development opportunities.

## Application Elements

1. **1 page written proposal** (0.5 inch margins, single spaced, full justification, Arial 11 font) that summarizes the nature of the activity, including the specific skills that will be obtained by the completion of the proposal.
2. **Table summary of the duration of the proposed activity** (e.g., 3 weeks, 1 semester, 2 years), number of hours per week, and total number of hours involved in the activity. Applications should also specify how the time is spent (e.g., 8 hours of classroom instruction, 10 hours of mentoring, 12 hours of writing, etc.)
3. **Name of contact person** (and contact information) for proposed activity (e.g., Faculty advisor).
4. **A short (2-3 sentence) signed statement from the thesis advisor(s)** indicating that you have discussed this plan and that they approve of the proposal. A formal approval from CMB is also required for this to count in lieu of the teaching requirement.

NOTE: The emphasis is NOT on number of hours committed to an activity, but instead on the skills developed as a consequence of the activity. However, successful activities will likely require a significant time commitment.

Applications will be evaluated and approved (or denied) on a rolling basis by CMB leadership.

This pilot program has been extended through April 30, 2025. Any proposals approved during this time period can be completed outside the time period that applications are accepted.

CMB students will be required to provide confirmation of the successful completion of the proposed activities.

## Examples of potential pilot proposals:

- Leading a student organization (e.g. president of SEEK)
- Industry internship (e.g., summer internship at Genentech)
- Non-GSI instructional activities (e.g., DFB instructor, CSHL TA, MBL TA)
- MSTP longitudinal preceptorship program
- Pilot proposals are NOT limited to the above-mentioned activities. Novel activities are encouraged!

## Alternative activities that would likely NOT be approved:

- CMB committee service (committee service is separate from professional development requirements).
- Individual undergraduate mentoring (a recommended activity already performed by most CMB students).