Lab Handbook

We believe in the importance of equality and diversity in science, and we are part of the **SAFE labs** (**S**tarting **A**ware **F**air & **E**quitable **Labs**) initiative. You can read more about the SAFE labs here: https://safelabs.info/

More detailed procedures will be indicated in the Lab internal documents. Both the guidelines as well our lab's version of the Handbook will be reviewed and updated. This Handbook was built following the guidelines of https://safelabs.info/home/safe-labs-handbook/ and specifically inspired by the Handbook of the Reinhard Lab (https://www.reinhardlab.org/home). *[Last update 24/06/2025]*

Safe Labs

Diversity statement

Science is a collective and international endeavour, strengthened by the multiple backgrounds of those who contribute to it. In line with CNRS's commitment to diversity and equal opportunities (https://carrieres.cnrs.fr/en/diversity-and-equality/), we view diversity as a vital resource that enhances creativity and innovation. As a team co-lead by two scientists, a woman and a man, we aim particularly at providing an example for professional equality in science careers.

To this end, we strive to cultivate a psychologically safe and inclusive research environment, where everybody can feel enabled to express their talents. To support this, we recruit in accordance with CNRS's equal opportunity policies, we discuss specific working arrangements and needs at onboarding (in accordance with institutional guidelines rules on holidays and different types of leave of absence), and we encourage lab members to share significant cultural events. International lab members receive support to navigate the settlement process.

Lab Code of Conduct

As a research team, we are committed to maintaining a professional, inclusive, and supportive working environment where all members can succeed and contribute meaningfully to science.

All lab members are expected to act with integrity, accountability, and mutual respect in all scientific and interpersonal interactions, while upholding high standards of rigor, collaboration, and ethical conduct.

We foster a lab culture based on the following principles:

- **Honesty**: Be transparent about your work, including insights gained, difficulties encountered, and any mistakes—errors are part of learning and development.
- **Respect**: Treat all individuals—colleagues, staff, and visitors—with the same courtesy and dignity.
- **Communication**: Share progress, ask questions, raise concerns, and don't hesitate to ask for help or offer it when needed.
- **Participation**: Actively engage in lab meetings, seminars, scientific and other lab activities. Your presence and insights enrich the group.
- **Acknowledgement**: Recognize others' contributions, whether technical help, advice, or feedback.
- **Accountability**: We ask you to do your best for being on time for scheduled team activities, to document carefully your work and share it with the team.
- **Dedication**. We expect all members to do the best research they can - to strive for excellence in their experimental work, analysis, writing and science communication. However, balancing work and the rest of your life is important: make time for personal things and take care of your health.

We are committed to fostering a psychologically safe space where everyone feels free to express ideas, ask questions, and voice concerns. Discriminatory or belittling behaviour is not tolerated.

Green initiatives in the lab.

We follow the guidelines of CNRS and Observatoire Océanologique de Banyuls-sur-Mer for sustainability.

We favour, where possible, travel by train or other lower impact means. Lab waste is recycled according to instructions. We aim to minimize plastic consumables, for example by using smaller containers when possible.

Lab language

The common lab language is English, and as such we encourage everyone to communicate orally and written - while in shared settings – in that language. The lab belongs to a French institution, therefore administrative exchanges, general communication and bureaucracy will be most likely in French; we take care of providing translations when necessary. Proficiency in French remains useful within the institute, as well as when traveling throughout the country. Learning opportunities are available with CNRS or other resources such as France Université Numérique (www.fun-mooc.fr).

SAFE Teams

The list of current and past **lab members** is available at https://cnidevolab.com/people/. The PIs email addresses are available at the page cnidevolab.com/contact/, while all lab members can be contacted through the institutional address composed as follows: ***name.surname[@]obs.banyuls.fr***

According to the type of contract or agreement, rules for working hours, remote working and vacations are set either by CNRS or Sorbonne University. We do not apply a strict **working hour** policy, but we encourage everybody to be present in the lab in overlapping hours, so to maximize exchanges, interactions and problem solving.

The team **meets regularly** to discuss general lab matters, specific projects or ideas. We expect everybody to participate actively.

Our team is composed by **researchers with different roles and backgrounds**. We expect everybody to contribute to scientific progress according to their skills; we encourage all members to **supervise and mentor** less experienced teammates. Depending on the length of stay with us and on the experience level, everybody is generally expected to **contribute to the lab organisation and general interest activities**, such as ordering and specific animal care. All team members receive regular supervision from the PIs. We encourage members to seek further **training** if necessary (several options are provided by CNRS, for example).

As a general guideline, postdocs are expected to be more autonomous in their research, to conduct and analyse their experimental work, and to write scientific publications.

SAFE careers

Authorship

Defining authorship vs acknowledgement is not always clear for a publication. Authorship is ultimately decided in discussions between the group leader and any other potential authors. Although the scientific process is unpredictable, we discuss authorship when a lab member becomes involved with a project.

Scientific outputs

Every position in the lab inevitably has its own set of experimental or funding challenges. Therefore, it is impossible to predict the outcome of any project, however we strive that the efforts of at least longer-term lab members are valorised in a scientific publication.

Some specific information is listed below:

Our team is affiliated to the PhD school “Complexity of Life” of Sorbonne University (https://ed515.sorbonne-universite.fr/en/led-515/presentation). Independently of the source of funding (PhD school fellowship or another grant) a **PhD** lasts for 3 years, a 4th one can be exceptionally granted if additional funding is found. According to the PhD School rules, the thesis must contain original research

results, which translates in the publication of at least one research article; in case of delays or particular circumstances the authorization to defend the thesis can be given if an article is in the final steps of preparation prior to submission. Projects are designed so that it should be possible to have at least a paper draft by the end of the three years.

The length of **postdoctoral** and non-permanent **lab engineers or technicians** contracts depends on both the source of funding, the proposed project and the national and CNRS rules for non-permanent contracts. Depending on the specifics of each position and project, we strive that the work of everybody is valorised in a scientific publication. With regard to postdocs, we aim to propose projects (in discussion with the researcher) which maximise the chance of a publication within the initial contract's timeframe. A typical postdoc contract lasts between 2 to 3 years, according to the funding source. Specific limitations to duration, linked to CNRS policies, might apply, these will be discussed beforehand and case by case.

According to CNRS rules, **master** internships cannot last longer than 6 months. The main purpose of a thesis is for the student to learn laboratory skills techniques, to get insights into analysis of data and scientific thinking, as well as to practice scientific writing and figure making. Given the short time frame, it is rare that the work of a student will contribute to a scientific publication, however if relevant data is produced, the student will be granted authorship.

Conferences & courses

We encourage all lab members to seek and apply for training opportunities to develop new expertise and networking, and we values initiatives to disseminate the lab research at conferences or outreach events. Depending on funding availability and specific circumstances, we aim at providing one opportunity per year to each lab members – this of course remains as a rule of thumb and strategies will be discussed case by case.

We expect lab members to discuss their intentions prior to applying to any event, in order to define priorities, agree on the budget and the eventual work that will be disseminated. We consider conferences and courses as an enriching opportunity, and we expect any lab member attending such an event to make the best use of it. Also for this reason, in general we encourage lab members to present their scientific results, even if of course several factors need to be considered, such as the stage of the project.

Individual fellowships might include an additional budget for conferences and courses, but in general we provide equal travelling opportunities to lab all members. We encourage lab members to seek for additional funding in order to cover the costs, and to behave responsibly with regard to travel expenses.

Completing previous work

Team members joining the lab may have ongoing work from their previous position and we understand that they might need time to complete this work. Every new team member who needs to complete previous work needs to discuss the details with the PI and come to an agreement.

Funding and salaries

At CNRS, salaries are determined by a national grading system [https://carrieres.cnrs.fr/en/compensation-for-contractual-employees/], particular cases might apply to specific funding sources (e.g Marie Curie postdoctoral fellowships). In France, taxes and contributions to pension schemes (etc) are deducted directly from the gross salary, in case of doubts do not hesitate to ask further information. As a general information, health care is provided by the French state.

Contrary to some other countries, no unpaid work is allowed, this concerns also master or bachelor students who will receive a "compensation" if staying longer than 2 months.

PhD salaries are covered by either a fellowship from the PhD schools (once a year competition), by individual grants (for example from a charity, please note that only few options exist in France) or by the lab grants.

Postdoctoral salaries depend on the experience level. Postdoctoral researchers are encouraged to apply for their own funding, both to benefit their own career and to improve lab finances. Options will be discussed case by case.

Visa support for overseas applicants

We provide guidance to lab members in their visa application process. No language test is required, and typically people will be under a scheme dedicated to skilled applicants ("Passeport Talent"). Timeframe might vary according to nationalities and other unpredictable parameters. More information can be found here: https://www.enseignementsup-recherche.gouv.fr/fr/accueil-en-france-des-scientifiques-etrangers-46403

Procedure for requesting reference letters

Reference letters will be provided to lab members at request. We disapprove of "recycling" of letters, and provide tailored letters upon request.

Leaving the lab

In the normal life of a lab, people will leave, either because they have finished their project, or because they've found a new opportunity or for personal reasons. Lab members are encouraged to discuss their plans with the PIs as early as possible, in order to ensure a smooth process: the final months will include the hand-over of any knowledge and data needed to ensure documentation, continuity and completion of ongoing projects.

Core skills

Core skills such as team/time management, feedback, writing, and presentations are crucial to a scientific career. Many of these are addressed during daily interactions. For instance, the PIs provide feedback on writing tasks, giving presentations is practiced during team-wide meetings, and lab members can attend courses on management, writing and communication.

We currently do not have a specific annual meeting in place, as we find more profitable a personalised mentoring (this might change in the future if deemed useful).

Lab management

Everybody is involved in the smooth management of the lab, and we update and involve team members on funding situation, grant application, new recruitments and larger planned expenses. We keep a shared file for ordering, where the costs of items are indicated, so that everybody can get an idea of expenses.

Interview process

We keep the process as fair as possible. We always welcome direct inquiries from applicants, even if no open position is officially available yet.

For open job offers, applications need to be sent through the CNRS portal – we strongly encourage applicants to also directly contact the PIs for more information. The CNRS recruitment system does not allow for blind screening, however all CVs are read with the same interest and dedication, usually by at least two people.

For selections, we will evaluate both the applicant CV and the motivation letter. For this reason, we strongly encourage perspective applicants, at any stage, to avoid submitting "generic" letters, and even more letters that have been clearly written with the preponderant help of artificial intelligence tools.

After selecting candidates, we will proceed with the interview process, which is carried by a small committee. During the interview, we will generally ask the candidate to prepare a short presentation describing previous experiences. All applicants through the CNRS portal will receive an answer: in case of a negative outcome, depending on the number of applicants for a given position, this might be an automatic one.

For perspective **PhD students**, please keep in mind that a slightly different system is in place. Most students join the lab through a fellowship granted by the PhD School Complexity of Life, which runs an annual competition, usually in July. Each PI will select only one candidate to present to the competition, and usually a project pre-proposal is posted on the dedicate portal (adum.fr) in February/March. Candidates are strongly encouraged to directly contact the PI, as no automatic emails are sent from the portal. The PI will make the selection, and directly discuss with the applicant in order to better define the proposed project. The chosen candidate will then submit the official candidature through the adum.fr portal, usually by the end of May. Candidates that are allowed to proceed to the competition, which features an interview with scientists affiliated to Sorbonne University, will be notified in June. The interview includes a presentation of usually 15 minutes describing past research and proposed project, followed by questions for about 10 minutes.