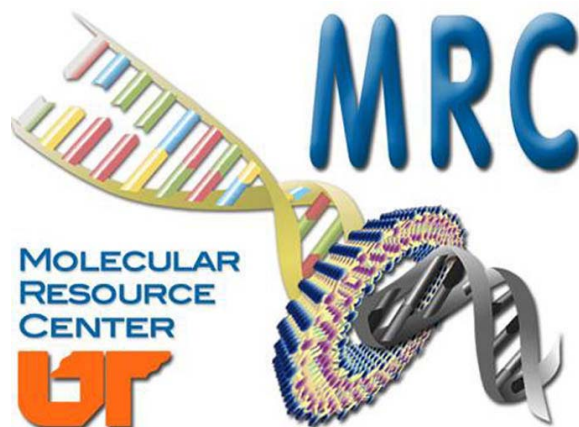


**The University of Tennessee Health  
Science Center**

**Molecular Resource Center  
Administrative Policies**

**March 2008**



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## **MRC Mission Statement**

The mission of the Molecular Resource Center (MRC) is to develop and provide contemporary molecular technologies and reagents to the University of Tennessee Health Science Center (UTHSC) community. The focus of MRC activities is to supplement up-to-date laboratories with capabilities that are not routinely available, and to stimulate development and dissemination of new methodologies and procedures on campus as they become available to the scientific community. Viewed in this way, the mission is one of extending and enhancing the research capabilities of UTHSC investigators rather than assuming primary responsibility for research programs of campus investigators.

## **Educational Mission**

An integral part of the MRC mission is to provide educational opportunities to UTHSC investigators. Examples of such opportunities include: publicizing courses that would meet the needs of junior and senior UTHSC investigators seeking training in new technologies, serving as a source of information relative to hands-on courses being offered in other high quality institutions in the country, conducting formal and informal seminar and workshop experiences on new technologies as they make their appearance in the scientific community, providing a stimulating seminar series attracting nationally-recognized molecular biologists to campus to discuss their research work with UTHSC investigators, providing resources to allow investigators to obtain education and training in techniques that can be applied at UTHSC, and providing a continuing source of information on various molecular technologies.

All MRC activities and materials will be broadly publicized. Information relative to them may be obtained by contacting the MRC Director's office.

## **MRC Advisory Committee Policies**

1. Meetings of the MRC Advisory Committee will be held semi-annually, and chaired by the MRC Executive Director.
2. Additional special meetings may be called, in a timely fashion, by the MRC Executive Director or Director, at their discretion or in response to requests from three or more Committee members.
3. Minutes of the meetings will be sent to all Committee members following each meeting, and kept on file in the MRC.
4. Meetings will be conducted in an informal atmosphere with the objective of reaching a constructive consensus, to be followed by an up-down vote.
5. The appointment of MRC Advisory Committee members will be made by the Vice-Chancellor for Research of the UTHSC in consultation with the MRC Executive Director, Director, and others as he sees fit.
6. The term of appointment will be for three years with one third of the committee being reappointed each year.
7. The selection for appointment to the MRC Advisory Committee will be based on reaching the following objectives: (1) representation of as broad a spectrum of views as possible (2) representation of as wide as possible a spectrum of investigators and units utilizing MRC facilities and (3) acquisition of as high expertise as possible relative to technological and administrative issues associated with the Center.

## **General Policies of the MRC**

A. Access to the MRC will be on a first-come-first-serve basis, independent of the requesting party's departmental affiliation.

B. UT Memphis researchers will be served in priority to all other users.

C. Large orders may be interrupted to prevent the accumulation of a backlog of small orders.

D. Forms requesting MRC services may be obtained from the MRC website ([http://www.utmem.edu/molecular\\_resource/Request\\_Forms.html](http://www.utmem.edu/molecular_resource/Request_Forms.html)) and submitted to the MRC office, 341 Cancer Research Building, ext. 6191.

F. The cost charged for the services of the MRC will be set on the basis of recovery of the costs that are incurred by the MRC. In consultation with the MRC Advisory Committee, additional charges, such as maintenance contracts, personnel, hardware, and software updates, will be added to the base charge only when necessary for the solvency of the facility.

G. Charge schedules will be updated periodically in consultation with the MRC Advisory Committee and published as a supplement to these policies.

H. UT researchers will be subject to a single charge schedule. Non-academic researchers will be welcome to use MRC facilities, but will be subject to an additional surcharge.

I. The MRC does not assume responsibility for the use or purity of the reagents provided or the feasibility of their uses in experimental protocols. It is the PIs responsibility to verify the identity of the materials and the appropriateness of their uses. The MRC also assumes no responsibility for the consequences of the use of reagents provided. These materials are not prepared for use in humans.

J. In all publications, investigators utilizing the MRC must cite the Molecular Resource Center of Excellence at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center.

## **Requests for MRC Services**

A. Requests for MRC services will be accepted only when submitted on the MRC request form. All of the information requested must be provided in a clear and unambiguous manner following the format and directions on the request form.

B. Forms requesting MRC services may be obtained from the MRC website ([http://www.utmem.edu/molecular\\_resource/Request\\_Forms.html](http://www.utmem.edu/molecular_resource/Request_Forms.html)) and submitted to the MRC office, 341 Cancer Research Building, ext. 6191.

C. If more than one service is requested, each one should be submitted on a separate form.

## **Condition of Materials Provided by the MRC-MSL**

A. Materials provided by the MRC will be in the form that they are obtained from the commercial vendors.

B. Isolation, modification, and verification of identity and purity of reagents provided by the MRC will be the responsibility of the PI unless other arrangements are agreed to by the MRC at the time the request for such reagents is accepted. The MRC will provide users with information through which the above information may be obtained by the PI or commercial suppliers, who can provide such services.

## **Deviations from Standard Procedures**

A. Deviations from the above procedures can, in special cases, be accommodated; however, such special requests must be presented in detail prior to the time the request for such services is made. Special requests will be handled on an individual basis, and implementation of such requests will be strictly at the discretion of the MRC. Additional cost to be incurred due to these deviations will be provided to the PI prior to the beginning of service.

## **Collaboration and Co-Authorship**

MRC researchers engage in two contrasting types of scientific interactions with users of MRC facilities. One type involves only limited time and/or intellectual commitment towards the objectives of a research project in response to an investigator's request for a service. The other type involves significant expenditures of time and/or intellectual input towards the successful pursuit of the requesting investigator's research project. The former level of commitment characterizes service functions, whereas the latter is characteristic of collaboration. The establishment of criteria distinguishing between these levels of commitment is admittedly difficult. At the same time the need for balance in reaching a decision on this issue is important both to members of the scientific community who pursue their research work in collaboration with MRC personnel, and to the MRC personnel who are sharing significant time with members of the research community whom they are assisting.

The only reasonable criterion for establishment of a collaboration and accompanying co-authorship is the contribution of significant intellectual or substantial technical input leading to the published or other productive outcome of the work. Automatic or honorary authorship is both dishonest and deplorable. In the absence of significant intellectual or technical contributions to a given publication, MRC-associated activities will be provided with no expectation of collaboration or co-authorship. When significant intellectual or technical contributions to a given publication have been provided by MRC personnel, collaboration and accompanying co-authorship are justified. In general, co-authorship will occur only with the first publication that describes the contribution of the MRC personnel. To avoid potential disagreement between researchers in the community and MRC over the question of collaboration and co-authorship, this question will be resolved and documented before the research work commences. This decision will be developed by the facility director and the requesting researcher; and, when necessary, in consultation with the MRC Director. If the contributions of the MRC begin to evolve from service functions towards a full collaborative effort, this development should be identified as early as possible and documented for all concerned to implement policies of collaboration and co-authorship as described above. Difficulties not resolved by this process will be adjudicated by way of the standard MRC appeal process described elsewhere.

## **Resolution of Disagreements between Investigators and MRC Personnel**

It is possible that, from time to time, disagreement will arise between a member of the research community and members of the MRC staff. The following policies provide mechanisms for resolving such difficulties in a balanced way that protects all parties and seeks to promote the goal of fostering high quality research at UT. They will only be used when less formal interactions fail to resolve the problematic issues.

1. The process of resolving serious disputes is tiered with multiple opportunities for the disputants to reach agreement; minor disputes will be resolved informally. The formal process of resolving a dispute is initiated by either party's providing written documentation to the Director of the MRC describing the circumstances of the disagreement and suggestions for its resolution.
2. The MRC Director will then contact the other disputant and obtain a similar written description of the problem. Thereafter, the MRC Director will seek, by whatever means appropriate, to resolve the issues in as expeditious a manner as possible.
3. If the researcher, the MRC staff member, or MRC Director comes to the conclusion that the problem cannot be resolved successfully, a request for appeal to the MRC Advisory Committee can be made. Upon receipt of such a written request, the Director will call a meeting of the Committee at everyone's earliest convenience.
4. The complainant and MRC Director will be expected to provide full written descriptions of the dispute for distribution to the Committee Members by the MRC Director at least ten days prior to the date of the Committee meeting.
5. The MRC Advisory Committee will meet to discuss the document that is provided by the individual requesting the meeting.
6. A second MRC Advisory Committee Meeting will then be called and the petitioning party will be invited to attend to discuss the issues described in the documentation. The MRC Director in consultation with the Advisory Committee may also elect to invite others to the meeting as the need arises.
7. The meeting will be conducted in an informal manner with the objective of reaching a consensus in a constructive atmosphere that seeks to account for both sides of the dispute in a balanced manner. If the situation warrants, the MRC Director, who normally chairs the Committee meetings, may ask another member of the committee to moderate the discussion.

8. The MRC Advisory Committee will be convened a third time, if necessary, to discuss the issue and information gathered and come to a decision relative to the disputed issues. Thereafter, the MRC Director will draft a document describing the decision and recommendations of the Committee. Following approval of the document by a majority of the Committee, it will be forwarded to all parties concerned and to the University Administration.

# Request Forms

[http://www.utmem.edu/molecular\\_resource/Request\\_Forms.html](http://www.utmem.edu/molecular_resource/Request_Forms.html)