

CODE OF CONDUCT

MEGB Lab – Code of Conduct

Overview

We value the participation of every member of our community and want to ensure everyone has an enjoyable and fulfilling experience, both professionally and personally. Accordingly, all members of the Rosado Lab are expected to always show respect and courtesy to others. We create our culture, and our culture is inclusive.

Please note that this code of conduct is not a legal document, supplementing, but not supplanting, Program, Division-, and/or university- level policies for your level of employment or study.

Inclusivity and diversity

Enjoyable, high-quality research can only be conducted when you feel safe, secure, and supported. All group members are thus dedicated to a harassment-free experience for everyone, regardless of gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, age, and/or religion. We do not tolerate harassment by and/or of members of our group in any form, and we ask all members of the community to conform to the following Code of Conduct:

- All communication, be it online or in person, should be appropriate for a professional audience, and be considerate of people from different cultural backgrounds. Sexual language and imagery are not appropriate at any time.
- Be kind to others and do not insult or put down other group members.
- Behave professionally. Remember that harassment and sexist, racist, or exclusionary jokes are not appropriate.
- Harassment includes offensive verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, sexual images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording, sustained disruption of discussions, inappropriate physical contact, and unwelcome sexual attention.
- Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.
- Contribute to discussions in meetings with a constructive, positive approach.
- Be mindful of talking over others when discussing in groups and be willing to hear out the ideas of others.

In addition to making group members feel safe and secure, diversity and inclusivity have numerous benefits for us all. Put simply, the greater the mix of people in our group, the greater the mix of skills, experiences, perspectives, and ideas we can collectively draw on. But the benefits of diversity and equality cannot be fully achieved without creating an inclusive environment.

Prof. Rosado will discuss the Code of Conduct with lab members who violate these rules, no matter how much they contribute to the MEGB Lab, or how specialized or needed their skill set is. If inappropriate behavior persists after this initial discussion, formal processes, in line with KAUST's work practice policies, will commence. To report an issue, please contact Alex Rosado; all communication will be treated as confidential except in situations where University policy requires mandatory reporting. In these cases,

information will be shared only with those university officials who need to know the information to assist in the response to, investigation of, and resolution of a complaint. If you do not feel comfortable contacting Alexandre Rosado directly, please feel free to contact our staff. If you would prefer to talk through issues with someone outside of the MEGB Lab, please talk with a member of the Postgraduate Research Committee or Human Resources.

Outputs, publication expectations and standards, and open science

Where possible, all research outputs (e.g., papers) will be published 'Open Access' (OA) (preferably Gold or Diamond OA), with some manuscripts also uploaded to a relevant pre-print server (e.g., BioRxiv) prior to journal submission, review, and (hopefully) publication. Where Gold or Diamond OA is not possible, the manuscript should be made publicly available via Green OA within three months of acceptance. Please also note that, we are generally committed to eliminating the use of journal-based metrics, such as Journal Impact Factors, in funding, appointment, and promotion considerations; and assessing research on its own merits, rather than based on the journal in which the research is published. Alex is personally committed to these principles; thus, you will be encouraged to think broadly about your choice of publication venue. Alex believes that the key guiding principle for choosing a journal is that it is thematically appropriate for the work you wish to publish.

Authorship of any manuscript or presentation will be openly discussed in group meetings and should, if possible, include everyone who has made a significant contribution to the work. A "significant contribution" can include but is not limited to, interpretations of primary data and development of ideas presented in the work; it need not include data curation or financial contribution to the work undertaken. The order of authors on a manuscript or presentation should be dictated by the relative contribution made by each author (see www.icmje.org/recommendations/browse/roles-and-responsibilities/defining-the-role-of-authors-and-contributors.html or www.research-integrity.admin.cam.ac.uk/research-integrity/guidance/guidelines-authorship, for further information); in the case these contributions are equal, authors should be listed alphabetically by surname. Where conflict arises, Alex will facilitate discussion to help resolve this. An open dialogue is encouraged about this matter, ideally via authorship 'check-ins' that will likely occur several times over the lifetime of the study. To help inform Editors, reviewers, and readers of our papers, we will include an author contribution statement as part of a paper.

Papers must be shown to and receive formal approval from **all co-authors prior to submission**; this is consistent with guidance provided by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), which states that all authors must approve the submission of work bearing their names. Please give co-authors at least two weeks to comment on paper drafts; at busy times of the year, they may need longer. We also strongly suggest that the paper receives reviews from at least two colleagues prior to submission to your supervisors; this will help to improve the final product, as well as to provide a training opportunity. Also note that some MEGB Lab members are using confidential, human health data and company-provided datasets; for the latter, our confidentiality agreements clearly state we must obtain permission from these companies to publish their data, and that they must have at least 28 days to provide approval. Explicit permission must be sought for **every** paper; i.e., images approved for use in one paper may not be approved for a different paper. If you require any guidance regarding paper submission, please speak to Alex, Research scientists or postdocs. Upon acceptance (or rejection) of your paper, you must inform **all** coauthors of the outcome as soon as possible and ensure **all** co-authors get a chance to look at and comment on page proofs (N.B. many errors can

be introduced into manuscripts by the journal at this stage). Note that after paper acceptance, final text and graphics files must be sent, in raw format (e.g. .docx, .ai.) to **all** co-authors for their records/use **within 14 days**, with an accepted version (the so-called 'Author Accepted Manuscript' or 'AAM') uploaded to KAUST and collaborative institution's repository system.

All computers should be backed up, daily, to at least two locations external to your main computer (e.g., a USB hard drive or network drive).

Upon completion of a project and where data confidentiality allows, all data should be placed on an appropriate repository with a DOI; in the case of publication, these data should be published alongside the manuscript on a repository such as [figshare](#). A curated version of all datasets used during a project should be provided to be made available on the [MEGBLab server](#) (DataWaha) in addition to being provided Alex on a hard drive; the quality of the curation should be verified with Alex. All group members must also adhere to KAUST's [Research Data Management Policy](#).

The group operates numerous computer resources (e.g., shared drives). These shared resources should be respected and not abused, and if you need more computation resources then please discuss your individual requirements with Alex or Ping.

Journals

You should be familiar with recently published material relevant to your PhD project. Below are some academic journals that may be of interest:

Nature journals, including Nature Microbiology, Nature Biotechnology etc

Science journals

Cell journals

Microbiome

PNAS

American Society for Microbiology Journals, including mSystems and mBio

PLOS

ISME

Signing-up to 'mail alerts' from specific journals and more general publication 'feeds' (e.g., Google Scholar) are highly recommended; by doing this, you can be kept informed of newly published literature related to your studies.

Conferences

Logistics

You will be supported (financially and otherwise) to attend and participate in conferences related to your PhD or postdoctoral research. You can either pay conference and travel fees and be reimbursed or direct me towards any bookings you need through Concur travel plan. In either case, you are expected to register for the conference as a student (if relevant or cheapest category) and in advance to obtain discounted registration fees. When possible, you will fly economy class and book the cheapest accommodation possible. You are expected to share hotel rooms if travelling with colleagues, even if they

are from outside of MEGB Lab. You must book no later than 1 month in advance of the conference, and preferably earlier to obtain the lowest cost travel costs and accommodations. In general, each lab member will be encouraged to attend 1 conference per year, with costs decided upon ahead of time on a case-by-case basis. You are strongly encouraged to apply for travel awards to cover conference expenses.

Some conferences that we regularly attend are below (this is by no means exhaustive, and other, more specifically, ad-hoc meetings will likely arise):

Microbiome Conferences
International Society for Microbial Ecology Meeting
Keystone Symposia
Gordon Conferences
American Society for Microbiology
Ocean Sciences
CMI International Microbiome Meeting (CIMM)
FEMS Meetings
Etc.

Note that we will typically aim to attend conferences '*En masse*', such that accommodation costs can be shared and based on experience, a more significant group 'impact' can be achieved. Exceptions can of course be made for conferences specific to your area of study and/or interest. For any questions or concerns regarding your ability to abide by any part of the travel policy or to request alternate arrangements, contact Alex.

Expectations and requirements

Conference abstracts must be shown to **all co-authors at least one week before the abstract deadline**. Upon acceptance (or rejection) of your abstract, you must inform **all** coauthors of the outcome as soon as possible. You must also send a final draft of your presentation or poster to **all co-authors at least one week before the date of the presentation**. Ideally, a near-final draft should be completed two weeks before the date of presentation, so that it can be presented at a MEGB Lab weekly seminar; in this way, you will be able to receive feedback from your colleagues. Presentation and publishing ethics, both of which are at least partly captured by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE), state that all authors must approve submission and presentation of work bearing their names. The same applies to papers (see above). Note that after material has been presented at a conference, this must be sent, in raw format (e.g. .ppt, .ai) to **all** co-authors and data providers for their records/use **within 14 days**; if appropriate, this material can be uploaded to an appropriate online archive (e.g., FigShare, BioRxiv) where it will be assigned a DOI, and will be useable and citable by the scientific community.

Working hours

We recognize that many of you have personal responsibilities and obligations in addition to your work/MS/PhD/postdoctoral studies. We appreciate that, at times, it can be difficult to balance those demands, and that a classic '8-to-5' day may not be optimal. Because of this, the exact hours you choose to work are up to you. However, **it is highly recommended that everyone be on campus between 9am and 5pm most days** as this will help facilitate collaborative work and hopefully lead to a more rewarding research experience. Where possible, meetings and events will not be arranged outside these hours to allow participation by all MEGB Lab members. Alex prefers not to work on

weekends unless necessary – but your work week may be different, and when travelling for work these guidelines may be eroded. Just be flexible with your time, be respectful of other people's decisions on how they spend their time, and remember **it is NOT how hard you are seen to be working, it is the quality of your work and the quality of your accomplishments and outcomes.**

Lab Management

Good and safe lab practices should be obeyed by all lab members. **Always remember to wear PPE when you enter the lab.** It is responsible for all members to keep MEGB Lab behavior rules. It is necessary to clean your own lab bench after experiment every time, keep all the instruments, equipment and chemicals in the original place and cleaned after use. When you first open one chemical, remember to mark the first-time use date. If you check some items almost used up, please raise a purchasing request in Quartzly and inform Ping about it timely. This point is very IMPORTANT, especially for some essential lab items, such as alcohol, petri dishes, 15ml and 50ml falcon tubes. Please remember **the lab doesn't belong to someone, it is all our MEGB Lab members, we should also consider other members' experiments not our own.** If you have any questions about waste disposal, lab safety plan and management, always remember to ask Niketan or Ping prior to any action.

Important: always remember to use the buddy system to avoid being alone in the lab (if not in person, let someone know that you are in the lab).

Meetings

Group meetings: Group meetings are typically held on Mondays at 4:00pm; all group members are expected to attend if they are not otherwise engaged in other research-related activities (e.g., at a conference, attending training or a lecture, etc.). The MEGB Lab meeting is an excellent forum for updating colleagues on project progress, developing research skills, and widening our collective understanding. Meetings provide a forum for the presentation of results, such as 'dry-runs' of conference talks, and more informal discussions around research topics arising. As part of your professional training, you will be expected to lead a group discussion on a topic of your choice at least once per term.

Individual meetings: These will occur on an ad-hoc basis as personal situations require. If you want to meet with Alex, just drop Ping an email and request a time. These will give you an opportunity to discuss your progress and any administrative issues that you need addressed. You are encouraged to send a short Agenda ahead of time and to come fully prepared for individual meetings; in this way, discussions can be focused such that all concerns are addressed. Individual meetings should be supported by twice-monthly updates to your principal supervisors. These can be short (e.g., 5-10 PowerPoint slides), but should ideally contain an overview of: (i) what your plans were for the last two weeks; (ii) work undertaken; (iii) issues arising; and (iv) a forward plan for the next two weeks. Such reports are an important way to self-monitor your progress, as well as keeping your supervisor(s) informed of both positive and negative developments. They are particularly important for those who have supervisors based in other Labs or institutions.

Please inform Alex and Ping of holidays or notable absences in advance. Permission for holiday is very rarely required, but please respect key deadlines within the calendar year and the fact we work in a research group. It is important to take a holiday, respect weekends (or time in lieu) and establish a sustainable work-life balance. It is also important to respect the time and efforts of others, and the contribution of funders, and to note that effective working will improve the quality of your research. Where there are

key time pressures, it is important to prioritize work. If you struggle with establishing a sustainable work life balance, please discuss this with Alex at an early stage.

Communication

Where possible, avoid sending work-related email outside of 08:00 and 18:00. Most email servers provide functionality for saving an email as a draft, such that it can be sent within the hours stated above. Please consider the timing of the email with respect to what the recipient needs to do; for example, try not to send an email at 17:59 for something that is required for a 10:00 meeting the next day. No lab members are required, nor should they feel obliged to reply to email outside of their typical work hours. However, prompt replies to emails, within these times, are helpful. If you experience any challenges related to flexible working within the MEGB Lab, please do not hesitate to contact Alex. All communication will be treated as confidential except in situations where University policy requires mandatory reporting.

Social media

In your work-related life, you may wish to engage with social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). Please be considerate of others when using these platforms, and respectful of how others may wish to use them. **Always remember to ask for authorization of the use of images before posting a photo of a person or group.** For instance, Alex uses Twitter and Facebook in a personal and professional nature, and his account has a wide audience (including authorities, PIs, prospective students, funders, and other academics); you must therefore bear in mind the very public nature of interactions on social media, and that many people (who may not be on a specific platform) will read and hear of online correspondence. We are not compelled to engage with any social media, use any such media for work-related purposes, and we will never pressure each other to 'friend' or 'follow' each other.

Collaborations

Collaborations are welcome. However, it is paramount to discuss it with the PIs first, and only if and after you have the green light, can you go ahead. This will avoid misunderstandings and noise between research groups. Communication must always be open and clear!

Vacation

You are expected to take annual leave: students 15 working days, XX postdocs and staff per year, beyond public holidays and the KAUST breaks. I strongly encourage you to take this time so you can relax, visit family and friends, and generally unwind from the rigors of work or PhD study. Please, it is helpful to inform Alex and Ping in advance when you plan to take holidays or if you will not be present at MEGB Lab weekly meetings.

Miscellaneous

Always remember to act professionally, avoid gossip in the workplace and about co-workers and always accept responsibility for your mistakes. If you see something inappropriate happening in the workplace, a gentle reminder about the Code of Conduct is a productive response. If you believe that a situation requires further intervention, please feel free to contact Prof. Rosado.

Mental Health

There is increasing evidence that certain attributes of academic research, including MS/PhD-level studies, may challenge your mental health. Specific factors driving this include:

- Feelings of isolation in your research, e.g., everyone has their own research topic, and it can often feel as if you are working on your own.
- Uncertainty in your research, although it should be noted that, in research of all kinds, it is not just the outcomes that are uncertain, but the questions themselves!
- Uncertainty in your post-PhD career.
- So-called “negative results;” i.e., at some point in your research certain questions will likely be more challenging to answer than anticipated, or that you will feel you have spent days/months/years toiling with little to show.
- Burnout: i.e., feeling the need to work endless hours to make up for the above issues, and the subsequent exhaustion.

All PhD students come across most of these issues at some level. I strongly encourage everyone in the group to take an active and pre-emptive approach towards the maintenance of their mental health. I assure you that you have the time and resources needed for a highly successful PhD. If there is anything that is placing undue stress, or preventing you from performing at your potential, please do not hesitate to let me or any of the postgraduate tutors in the department know how we can help. You should also be familiar with resources on campus. **KAUST** also provides free counseling services for students, faculty and staff. There is a range of resources and support available including:

- The KAUST Employee Wellbeing Program is available on 800 844 7840 (toll-free number from KSA), or email youricasmena@icasworld.com. The professional psychologists on this service are free, operate confidentially and are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Employees, university students and their families can call as often as they wish. The service also covers live-in domestic helpers.
- KAUST Health provides psychological and psychiatric services
- Student Counseling Services help graduate students and their dependents
- TKS Counselling Services

Every effort will be made to help you access the right support networks.

Thanks, and please enjoy your time in the Rosado/ MEGB Lab!

This Code of Conduct (CoC) borrows heavily and is modified from seven open source CoCs: (i) [BahlaiLab CoC \(Christine Bahlai\)](#); (ii) [WhitakerLab \(Kirstie Whitaker\)](#); (iii) [Hill Lab \(Jon Hill\)](#); (iv) [Krevorlab \(Sam Krevor\)](#); (v) [MicroMicEng \(Ben Britton\)](#); (vi) [Basins Research Group – Christopher Jackson](#); (vii) Gilbert lab (UCSD)