

MCDB Town Hall Q&A

Answer Legend:

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COVID-19 Safety Concerns

1. What are senior requirement alternatives to being in the lab for BS & BS INT?
Replaced by identical number of credits with
MCDB 485/486 or MCDB 495/496, or MCDB 475
OR
(credit equivalent alternatives) Some combination of:
MCDB 350+, or MCDB 470 (Tutorial w/ 1 or more faculty), or MCDB 471 Senior Seminar
(V. Horsley instructor, small group)
2. What are the expectations for COVID-19 social distancing guidelines in labs?
If the lab is open, it will already be following COVID guidelines. Yale's EHS has a safety plan on file for every research lab that will be open in Phase 3. Regular laboratory courses will be offered as well, some via zoom, physical participation w/ distancing & density rules in place. Labs will be smaller class sizes, may install plexiglass shields/masks/social distancing. Some experiments will be online - should be defined in syllabus by August 7th.
3. What if the University closes mid-semester? How will we complete the senior requirement if we have been working in a wet lab?
May be possible to complete credits with appropriate set of exercises, paper writing, etc. We will address this as needed.
4. Will Undergraduates have appropriate access to labs (will labs give preference to employees/grad students/social distancing/scheduling of smaller numbers in lab - before Undergrads)?
You should have same rights as any other member of lab. Public health issues may control many of these issues. There will be labs available for senior requirement.
5. How will a Fall 2020 LOA affect the senior requirement? Will MCDB 485 & 495 be offered in Spring/off-semester timing?
We will do as much as we can to ensure students can complete the senior requirement; either finish 485/495 -- or change to one of the other courses we're using to satisfy the senior requirement (alternatives). Yes we will offer off-semester courses for senior requirement.
6. How long will the special options during the Covid-19 pandemic be available? Will they only be available to seniors during the school year of 2020-2021 - or until graduation?
The options will likely be available long-term for the senior requirement.
7. I am planning on taking a leave of absence for the upcoming fall semester- what options do I have to fulfill the BS requirements.
YC will not allow students to take courses if not enrolled, and no credits will be awarded. If you are enrolled and remote, you should have no difficulties taking courses. Any student coming back to campus in Spring will also have those options available to them that were offered in the Fall.
8. What happens if the University delays or cancels Phase 3 (allowing students back into labs)?
The online courses will have to be standard then.
9. Does senior requirement count as an in-person course, if you enroll remotely? (International student)

If enrolled for the term remotely - the credits are equivalent. Any students may take courses remotely -- all courses must be offered remotely and will be considered the same as an in-person course.

Options / Alternatives:

10. Please detail what is an acceptable remote project with clear guidelines so we can communicate with our PI clearly about the requirements.

A satisfactory remote project will involve no less than 10 hours of data analysis, modeling and/or programming per week for the entire term (MCDB 475, 485) and > 20 hours per week for MCDB 495. Similar to students working in-person in labs, students working remotely on research must submit proposals due at the end of shopping period and progress reports due at the end of the term. The project must be approved by the faculty mentor (Principal Investigator) of your proposed laboratory and they must confirm (signed contract) you will have sufficient remote work to satisfy the course requirements. {biomedical research with modeling and software analysis and image processing. Students usually have some data and are analyzing images. If the student was involved in acquiring those images – that would be acceptable; but not if you are looking at someone else’s data. If unsure about in-lab and want to consider remote learning – the same rule applies 10 hours/data analysis per week.}

11. Could you clarify the difference between senior research and senior intensive research for what is required?

Research: 10 hours per week two-terms during senior year. Intensive: > 20 hours per week in the lab for two terms of senior year.

12. Will be on campus in Fall, but do not want to be in person in the lab. What are my options? Do I get the same opportunities as those enrolled remotely?

If you are enrolled at Yale, you can work in a lab. If you want lab research experience, but opt not to work in-person, you will need to find a lab that has remote research options (this may be difficult if you plan to start a new project in a new lab). If you are not enrolled, you can't work in a Yale lab. (per email from Dean Chun July 17, 2020)

13. If enrolled in MCDB 495 or MCDB 485 and the University closes mid-semester - will we automatically transition into 470 or 471? Do we have a choice? If so, how many credits will we get?

MCDB 471 will discuss primary papers/society/science relationships. Focus on race/biology & historic, health impacts etc. Driven by student interest. 10-15 students; offered each semester.

You can transition easily into MCDB 471 if the University closes. Transitioning into MCDB 470 is more difficult (1 on 1 full term student/faculty member), depending on timing of University closure.

14. Is there an intensive 470 or 471? If enrolling remotely for Fall - what are the senior requirement intensive options.

Intensive option will require twice the amount of work (4 credits). 20 hours/wk of work for the Intensive option. Will vary depending on topic. MCDB 470 and 471 are both 1.0 credit courses. You will need DUS permission for intensive option. Students can request double credit for single-credit course. See [YCPS](#).

15. Can I work with any faculty member at Yale for the MCDB 470 Tutorial? Does this include Lecturers from MCDB and/or faculty from Yale School of Medicine?

Yes. Any instructor at Yale (with a relevant faculty appointment) can agree to do the Tutorial with the student. Must always be approved by the DUS before beginning with clear detailed plan of action.

16. Will MCDB 350+ classes taken before senior year count toward the new senior requirement alternatives?

Not really. If already taken MCDB 350+ it should be used to fulfill the Special Elective. Senior requirement must be done (even alternative options) in the senior year. Talk to DUS if issues arise.

17. Can we split the credits needed for BS INT between MCDB 495 and MCDB 350+ classes?
Yes. Obtain DUS approval.
18. Can students take MCDB 350+ in Fall while enrolled remotely, and then do MCDB 485 research in Spring?
Yes. We do want to be flexible. Obtain DUS approval. There will be unique circumstances - please run these by the DUS if needed.
19. Will there be additional 350+ courses scheduled to accommodate seniors for the alternative option?
MCDB offers 11 350+ courses, as well as courses in other STEM departments/med school that would be acceptable. Obtain DUS approval if non-MCDB courses. Graduate level seminars also work. Obtain DUS approval. Add MCDB 470 and 471 to the options as well.
20. Must Seniors notify the DUS of their choices before schedules are due? What if a chosen 350+ course is capped enrollment and there are no other courses available - what is the option?
Student pre-registration is earlier this year which may help. MCDB 471 may have more availability than most courses. (see answers to 19 as well)

Senior Requirement Lab:

21. My lab has no computational work. Must I switch labs? What are my options?
If you plan on working remotely and want to be in a research lab, you will need to find a lab that has a computational project that satisfies the MCDB senior requirement. {if can't meet # hours needed may need to switch labs}
22. How do I find a lab that adheres to social distancing?
If a lab doesn't adhere to this it will be in violation. Yale EHS will be monitoring this. Notify DUS if issues arise in this area.
23. Does MCDB have a list of available PI's that have lab openings for Senior Requirement?
No. Begin to ask around now to faculty in MCDB, and any faculty research you are interested in. Joe will share "Wolenski Method" with students. Do not wait to begin this process.
24. Travel Bans are keeping students from returning to Yale - can we perform in-person research in a lab in our home country for the senior requirement?
Recently, a student doing summer abroad was approved to continue research abroad (while Yale enrolled). {More information to follow on this}
25. What is expected of BS/MS students if their lab is not able to give them a remote project, and/or the student cannot be in the lab? Are we required to conduct research in person?
Depends on nature of the project. If a project can't be done remotely you may not be able to continue with that project. May need to search for new lab/project.
26. Will there be any changes to the BS/MS program to adapt to the pandemic? Will we still be able to receive the MS portion of the degree? What if we can't get into our labs?
The GSAS and YC have agreed to allow graduate-level course substitutions to allow BS/MS students to complete their degrees. Students must petition for a course substitution to be sent to the YC registrar office and Dean Richard Sleight. (Obtain DUS approval before petition on which course you are going to substitute. These requirements will not be waived, but can be substituted with DUS approval.)

Senior Requirement Project:

27. I have a lab, but not a project, how do I proceed?
If you are planning on enrolling in the fall, you can work in a lab. You should take steps now to communicate with your faculty mentor (lab PI) on the specific aims of your fall term research so that when you return, you can more easily navigate work at the lab bench. {start research on project now - email Joseph.Wolenski@yale.edu for questions.}

28. My lab has no remote project work available - only wet lab work. How do I proceed?
You have options: 1) you can work in that lab (if open, it will already be following COVID guidelines), 2) You can opt to switch to a lab that has remote work (this may be difficult since remote work in a new lab is a challenge), and 3) you can meet the BS requirements by enrolling in MCDB 350+, 470 or 471, (2 terms). See updates sent by DUS on July 16, 2020. [Link here.](#)
29. How much data from previous semesters of lab research can be included in the final papers for MCDB 485 course?
If you are discussing data from the same lab, previous results can be included to establish a foundation for your most recent specific aims and results.
30. My project is a wet lab project - how do I proceed if I can't get in the lab?
If the lab is open, and Yale is at Phase III, students will be allowed to work in the lab as long as they complete the necessary safety training and the COVID video. If Yale doesn't reach Phase III, labs will not be open to undergraduates. Your options are answered by viewing Question #28 above, see choices #2 and #3.
31. Can we get an extended deadline for the initial paperwork of the senior research courses?
Deadlines are necessary primarily to satisfy requirements of the Office of the Registrar. We occasionally extend deadlines for students who have a lab, but have difficulty getting the required authorization and signature from their PI due at the end of shopping period.
- To avoid any potential deadline problems, please take steps now to communicate with your PI and confirm that you will be returning to lab. Also start working on specific aims for your research project by communicating with your PI well before the start of the term so that you don't have a crisis during shopping period.
- If you have not found a lab to work in this fall, please do not wait until classes begin to communicate with potential PIs. Rather, take steps now to reach out to potential PIs to find a lab and establish a research plan.

Laboratory Courses:

32. Will they be fully online - in person - hybrid?
YC requires us to offer online options for all courses. All lab courses are planning hybrid (to some degree) differs per instructor. Even if onsite/on campus can still take remotely. Faculty are to provide in-depth syllabi to be available to students on August 7th.
33. Will the Laboratory course time meetings remain the same as recorded on the YCS?
The times may change as there are now expanded time patterns added by Yale College for instructors to accommodate students remotely. Many instructors may take advantage of this and change their time slots.
34. Must you be enrolled remotely to take an on-line laboratory course?
YC requires you to be enrolled in order to get credit - but DUS will look into this issue.

Miscellaneous:

35. Will this session be recorded? Can students obtain access to the recording?
Yes, Crystal Adamchek will be recording it and can send a link for viewing.
36. Is there any chance of another Pass/Fail grading semester?
Yale College registrar's office says "NO".

37. Will there be both a fall presentation AND a spring presentation for the senior research?

Yes, these will likely be remote presentations recorded on ZOOM.

38. Will there be a released list of MCDB classes that are capped and will participate in the limited enrollment course selection period in early August?

Capped courses will be indicated on the Canvas site which will go live to students on August 7th. Students should expect to see expanded course descriptions and syllabus at that time, as well as info about capping, sections, remote teaching mechanisms, etc.

Students may be able to get 2 credits in one term of 470 or 471 – DUS will be checking with YC now on this issue and will inform students. See [YCPS](#).