

Operating Policy – Southeast Collaboratory for Biomolecular NMR

8/29/11

Purpose. The Southeast Collaboratory for Biomolecular NMR was established with support of grants from the National Institutes of General Medical Sciences and the Georgia Research Alliance (GRA). Its purpose is to share, among a group of researchers across the Southeast region of the country and beyond, both high field NMR equipment (up to 900 MHz NMR) and new methods applicable to molecules of biomedical importance.

Organization. While the collaboratory was initially established with support from the NIH and the GRA, it has, since 2007, been self-supporting on a fee for service basis. Fees are kept low by maintaining a user community of sufficient size to maximize billable time and by encouraging users to acquire and analyze their own data. The collaboratory's NMR manager has a broad range of experience in biomolecular NMR and is supported by skilled postdocs associated with local NMR laboratories. Other approved users collect their own data and contribute to the experience pool. An electronic forum is made available to facilitate sharing of new ideas, experimental methods and practical experience with SECNMR instrumentation.

Access. Access to spectrometer time is based on an evaluation of a short project application that is reviewed by the manager, director and local advisors. For those wishing to collect their own data, demonstrated experience or completion of a training module is required before approval by the manager. Approved projects and user-operators are reviewed yearly and renewed based on demonstrated productive use. An oversight committee has responsibility for appeals that may result from managerial decisions and an annual review of operations.

Time allocation. Except for time booked by the manager for training, maintenance, and projects needing collaborative assistance, time is booked online by approved user-operators using the FACES booking system (<http://faces.ccrcc.uga.edu/>). Access to FACES by approved users is based on acceptance of projects and satisfactory completion of the SECNMR training module. Booking is on a first-come-first-serve basis beginning, for most instruments, a month in advance. Normally there are open time slots with as little as one week's notice. Data collection can be done remotely if samples can be delivered ahead of time and safely handled by facility staff.

Charges. Rates are adjusted annually to reflect the cost of operating and maintaining the facilities at the forefront of biomolecular NMR applications. Current rates can be found at: <http://www.ccrcc.uga.edu/~ccrcnmr/nmrfacility.html#Charges>. Arrangement for billing must be made prior to use of the instrumentation, and except in the case of actual instrumental failure, users will be billed for reserved time regardless of the outcome of experiments.

Getting started. Project descriptions and the associated request for participant status can be submitted on-line at <http://secnmr.org>. The information required should include a title for the project, a brief description of the project, funding sources for the project, and an example of a spectrum (HSQC or suitable substitute) collected at lower field. For long-term projects please also include information on a proposed instrument operator including prior NMR experience. It is useful to discuss needs in advance with our NMR manager, John Glushka (glushka@ccrc.uga.edu) or our director, Jim Prestegard (jpresteg@ccrc.uga.edu).