

DNA tests for freshmen at UC Berkeley

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Students at the University of California Berkeley will be offered the chance to take voluntary DNA tests as part of a study to unlock the mysteries in three genes, a statement said Wednesday.

Freshmen in the College of Letters and Science will receive a welcome package which will include a cotton-swab and two bar code labels when terms starts later this year.

Students who take part will then return swabs anonymously for [genetic analysis](#), attaching one bar code to the sample and keeping the other for their own records.

Scientists hope the program will yield clues about three non-threatening genetic factors affecting health -- the ability to absorb folic acid, tolerate alcohol and metabolize lactose.

"Understanding the impact of the variation in each of our genomes is the defining challenge for human biology for this century," said Professor Jasper Rine, who is leading the program.

A release on UC Berkeley's website said only students involved would have the ability to recognize their own test findings, while all [genetic material](#) would be incinerated after the experiment.

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