

Microscopy Services Laboratory Policies

Updated May 2023

The following policies are designed to ensure smooth operation of the lab and a better experience for all our users. We expect every researcher that uses our core to comply with these policies.

New users and training

- **All users MUST be trained by MSL staff before they can use any microscope.** Training is individual, personal, and non-transferable; a user cannot train another user, no matter how experienced. Training on one system does not confer access to other systems.
- All MSL users must register with iLab. Instructions [here](#).
- Any user that wants light microscopy training or image analysis workstation training must request it by using the applicable form in [our iLab site](#).
- Any user that wants electron microscopy training or services must request it by using the applicable form in [our iLab site](#), and by contacting our lead EM specialist.

Basic lab citizenship

- Users should not come to the lab if they are sick and contagious.
- No food or beverages are allowed in microscope rooms or laboratory spaces. Food and beverages can only be consumed in our common area.
- Kitchenette area appliances are for MSL staff use only (including fridge, microwave, coffee maker, etc).
- MSL iLab kiosk: users should sign in to start their session AND sign out to use the equipment.
- B03 mini-fridge and incubator: please label samples with name and date. Unlabeled materials or anything older than 2 weeks will be discarded without notice. Please contact msl@med.unc.edu for special requests.
- Please bring any consumable or specialty items you may need for your imaging session.
- If using pipettors from B03, please return them when you are done with your session.
- B01 and B06 are only for MSL staff or users trained on EM sample preparation equipment.
- "Lost and found items" will be placed on the bookshelf in B05 (bottom shelf) or stored by MSL staff. MSL is not responsible for lost items.

Microscope usage

- No gloves on microscope controls or computers. Gloves can be used to handle samples, as needed.
- Two-hour rule: if nobody is booked within the following two hours, users must completely shut down the light microscope they are using. If someone is booked within the following 2 hours they must follow instructions for partial shutdown, when applicable.
- ILab bookings will be held for 30 minutes if a user is late without notice. After that, the booking will be automatically categorized as a 'no-show' and cancelled.
- Users should cancel their sessions in the iLab interface if their plans change and they cannot come to MSL. No-shows and last-minute cancellations are very disruptive to other users and should be avoided.

Data storage and transfer

- To log in to the MSL server, users must include ad\ before their ONYEN, as explained [here](#).
- Time used to transfer data is considered instrument use and must be booked. Transferring data while someone else is using an instrument is not allowed.
- **Users are responsible for their own data.** MSL cannot provide storage or backup of users' data. To avoid problems:
 - Users must transfer their data off our acquisition computers onto our server or an external storage device at the end of each imaging session. Data on all acquisition computers will be periodically removed, without notice. If a user is unable to move data off our computers at the end of their session, he/she should contact MSL staff to ensure it does not get deleted.
 - Users are responsible for moving their data from our server to their own storage. Our server is a convenient way of transferring data from MSL to users' labs and should not be considered a place to permanently store data. We will periodically delete data off the server, and as a courtesy will notify users in advance to ensure they have their own copy.

After-hours access

- After-hours access is a privilege granted if a user demonstrates sufficient expertise and experience that MSL staff (and they) feel comfortable operating the microscope without staff assistance. It can be requested following the instructions [here](#). Only UNC personnel can be granted after-hours access to our laboratory.
- If a booking after 5pm is cancelled and the calendar suggests the system is on (someone ended their session less than 2 hours from the cancelled booking), the user cancelling their session is responsible for shutting down the system.
- MSL staff may shut down equipment to preserve lifetime of components. If this affects subsequent start time of equipment, a message with this information will be left on the instrument.

Acknowledging the core

- All users should acknowledge the core, by including the following statement in publication acknowledgements: 'The Microscopy Services Laboratory, Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine, is supported in part by P30 CA016086 Cancer Center Core Support Grant to the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center.'
- Light-sheet ('Snape') users should include the following text: "Research reported in this publication was supported in part by the North Carolina Biotech Center Institutional Support Grant 2016-IDG-1016."
- Dragonfly spinning disk confocal microscope ('Hermione') users should include the following text: "The Andor Dragonfly microscope was funded with support from National Institutes of Health Grant S10OD030223."

Non-compliance

- Users that do not comply with these rules will be asked to modify their behavior. Supervisors (typically, PIs) may be informed to ensure non-compliant behaviors do not repeat in the future.
- Repeated no-shows or last-minute cancellations may result in loss of after-hours access privileges.
- If non-compliance continues, users will be banned from the core for 2 weeks. Other imaging core directors will be informed of non-compliance at MSL.
- If a user attempts to access the core while banned, the issue will be elevated to the Department Chair level and may result in a permanent ban from the core.

Acknowledging the rules

- All MSL users must provide a signed version of these rules to MSL staff, at mssl@med.unc.edu

I, _____, acknowledge I have read these rules and agree to them. I also understand that if I am found in violation of these rules, my access privileges to the Microscopy Services Laboratory may be revoked. I also understand that these rules may be modified in the future.

Date