

Scientific Technical Services Instrument User Agreement

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APPROVED BY SCIENTIFIC TECHNICAL SERVICES COUNCIL:

By signing up as an instrument user, you agree to the points outlined in this agreement.

The instruments maintained by Scientific Technical Services (SciTech) are free to use by Western Washington University faculty, students and staff in support of approved academic research and teaching. This user agreement outlines SciTech's protocols and expectations for all SciTech lab users. These policies are intended to help SciTech provide a safe, respectful, productive, and equitable environment for all students, faculty and staff that use SciTech instruments and related equipment for learning and research. **These are general policies and protocols for SciTech instruments and laboratories. Please be aware of instrument-specific policies for the equipment you will be using by referring to instrument-specific user agreements.**

Instrument and laboratory access

The SciTech laboratories are available for use during normal University business hours, 8AM-5PM, Monday through Friday, except holidays. SciTech staff are generally available during those times for training and assistance. Users may be allowed to use SciTech resources outside of normal business hours with express permission of SciTech staff, but training and assistance will not be provided after hours or on weekends.

Safety training

SciTech has a variety of spaces with ranging safety concerns. All of the instrument spaces require annual safety training prior to independent use. Individuals requesting to use an instrument independently are required to confirm they have completed specific safety training outlined in the instrument-specific policies with the appropriate SciTech staff member. What training is required as well as this confirmation will be tracked within Facility Online Manager, FOM. Class demos as well as supervised instrument use do not need prior safety training. Any user not demonstrating safe lab behavior will be promptly corrected or dismissed from the lab space if immediate correction is not possible and the user's supervisor may be informed by SciTech staff.

Training and certification for independent use

Users are required to receive training from SciTech staff before operating any instrument and are not permitted to use an instrument independently until certified to do so by SciTech staff. There is not a set number of training sessions a user must complete. Rather, users must demonstrate proficient and safe

operation of equipment to the satisfaction of SciTech staff, which will be determined on an individual basis. A user must have express permission from SciTech staff to use the equipment on their own.

Users must be trained on and approved separately for each individual instrument or piece of equipment they use.

For many instruments, users must be explicitly trained to use any specialized modes of operation or special attachments before they can operate them independently. Please see policies for the instrument you are using and arrange a time with SciTech staff to learn how to operate the special features. Certain operations can only be performed with assistance from SciTech staff.

With permission from SciTech, a user may show another person an instrument in operation, but it is the express responsibility of SciTech to determine when a user is proficient to safely operate equipment independently.

Scheduling instrument time

[Link to scheduling webpage](#)

After an initial training, users will be able to sign up for instrument time on FOM. Due to heavy demand and staffing limitations, the following restrictions are in place and may vary between instruments. Please see instrument specific policies for.

- Appropriate window in which reservations can be made (e.g. no more than 30 days and no less than 24 hours in advance)
- Appropriate window in which assistance can be requested
- Maximum number of reservations
- Maximum reservation hours per individual session

Cancellation policy

A user may need to cancel a reservation. We ask that users cancel their reservation as far in advance as possible. Excessive cancellation is not permitted and may result in suspension from instrument privileges.

Reservations canceled within 24 hours of the scheduled start time will be considered 'late' cancellations. If a user has two late cancellations in a quarter, the user and their supervisor may be notified. A third late cancellation may result in suspension of instrument privileges pending a meeting between the user and SciTech staff. Additional late cancellations may result in long-term or permanent loss of instrument privileges. It is understood that unexpected circumstances may arise, in these situations as long as it is communicated to appropriate SciTech staff promptly, cancellations may not be considered 'late.'

No-shows

When a user fails to show up for a scheduled appointment, SciTech staff may contact the user and their supervisor. Failing to show up for an appointment a second time may result in suspension of instrument privileges pending a meeting between the user and SciTech staff. A second no-show may result in long-term or permanent suspension of instrument privileges.

Ongoing supervision and assistance

Users may request SciTech staff assistance when scheduling time on FOM and/or emailing the instrument manager.

Any user may be observed and supervised while using SciTech labs at the discretion of SciTech staff. Users are required to follow verbal or written instructions given by staff.

People who have not used an instrument within the previous 6 months must request SciTech assistance during scheduling.

Always ask for assistance if you think you need it. SciTech is here to help. Please see contact sheets in each instrument lab for any assistance needed during your reservation.

Scheduling priority

SciTech instruments are in high demand and can be difficult to schedule. Users are encouraged to schedule time early in order to get the instrument time they need. Generally, instruments are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis; however, there may be conflicting scheduling needs. Priority of instrument use is as follows:

1. Instrument maintenance and repair
2. Class demos and lab activities that are scheduled at the start of each quarter
3. WWU Research
4. External use, such as paid-for-service

Class use will be scheduled at the start of each quarter based on requests provided by instructors. The first choice of times may not be available for a given class if it conflicts with other classes, so instructors are encouraged to have a backup plan for scheduling. SciTech staff will schedule classes and resolve conflicts on a case-by-case basis. Requests for class use made after the start of the quarter are not guaranteed and will be given the lowest priority, meaning they cannot supersede research activity or other SciTech staff obligations.

Research use is scheduled by individual users according to the scheduling guidelines above. If a particular user, research group, or department is taking up too much scheduled time so that other groups cannot reasonably access an instrument, scheduled time may be taken from that group and given to other user(s) at the discretion of SciTech staff.

Scheduling time with SciTech staff

It is SciTech's priority to enable people to access and use instrument resources. Staff will make every effort to be available when a user needs assistance. There are times, however, when staff have other obligations and cannot be available for training or assistance. Users who need assistance or are not approved to work independently may be asked to reschedule a session if staff will not be available. In general, please ask to schedule assistance in advance. Scheduling assistance can be done through FOM and/or emailing the instrument manager.

Using laboratory space, equipment, and resources

Shared space

SciTech labs are shared spaces used by numerous individuals from several departments. Users should be respectful of other people and their property. If anyone feels disrespected by another user, they should notify SciTech staff. If they feel unsafe, they should leave and contact SciTech staff immediately. SciTech has zero tolerance for belligerent, threatening, or harassing behavior. Such behavior will result in immediate and possibly permanent suspension of lab access.

Effective use of instrument time

Users should begin their scheduled session on time. Multiple late starts will result in SciTech staff notifying the user's supervisor and may lead to suspension of instrument privileges.

If a user is late for a training session or other appointments requiring staff assistance, the session may be canceled at the discretion of the SciTech staff.

Users should only schedule as much time as they need to accomplish the objectives of that session. Users who regularly schedule significantly more time than they use may be subject to a suspension of their user privileges.

Users must complete their session in time to allow the next user to start their session on time or risk suspension.

Users in need of SciTech assistance must complete their session within their scheduled time.

Consumables and other lab equipment

Some instruments require consumable materials to operate. SciTech provides users with essential consumables to investigate or learn a technique; however, we ask that users purchase their own consumables for ongoing projects and instrument use. Speak to the designated staff member for a description of consumables needed for each SciTech instrument.

Sample Preparation

SciTech is not responsible for providing space to prepare potentially hazardous samples. All samples brought into SciTech lab spaces are expected to follow all safety requirements of the space upon arrival (e.g. tools necessary for handling the sample, proper containment). SciTech staff reserve the right to deem any sample potentially hazardous to the safety of lab users or lab instruments; staff have ultimate say as to whether a sample is permitted to be in the lab and analyzed.

Sample Disposal

Users are responsible for handling all of their own sample disposal. See instrument-specific policies for guidance on available waste streams within SciTech lab spaces. Please reach out to the SciTech staff to determine safe protocols if unsure of availability of proper waste streams within lab spaces. With staff approval, samples may be left in the laboratory for short periods of time. All samples should be well labeled with the User full name, research group name, date, and a brief description of what the sample is.

Key codes and room access

Allocation of key codes and room access for users is determined at the discretion of SciTech staff. Key codes should never be shared between users.

Data transfer and storage

Data transfer and storage is unique to each instrument. SciTech is presently working on establishing methods for centralized data sharing and long-term data storage.

Acknowledgement and Co-authorship

Users should acknowledge SciTech and any appropriate staff members when publishing or presenting data collected using SciTech resources.

Publications and presentations referencing data collected using SciTech resources should be reported to SciTech through [our brief form](#).

Please consider inviting SciTech staff to participate in authorship when contributions warrant it, such as:

- Staff contributed substantially to method development
- Staff provided data interpretation
- Staff made important intellectual contribution

Unlike other universities, SciTech does not charge a user fee for any instrument use, and an acknowledgement increases awareness of our services.