

**CITY UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG**  
**DEPARTMENT OF MATERIALS SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING**

**DISCIPLINE POLICY FOR LABORATORY USERS**  
**EFFECTIVE DATE: 1 JANUARY 2015**  
**REVISION DATE: 8 NOVEMBER 2024**

**POLICY**

The Department of Materials Science and Engineering (MSE) expects all users of the laboratory equipment and facilities of the Department to be aware of and to follow the laboratory workplace policies and rules for the well-being of our students, researchers, staffs and laboratory operations. There are many laboratories within the Department, such as the Radiation Laboratory and the Electron Microscope, the Teaching Laboratory and the Research Laboratory, each with its own policy. Users are expected to comply with these internal requirements as well as requirements from the University.

The policy is intended as a guideline to assist the smooth and safe operation in the Department Laboratories. It defines the process for correcting single and repeat episodes of user failure to comply with regulations and/or to meet specific laboratory workplace code of conduct. Corrections to unacceptable behavior may be addressed under this policy or the University Policy, depending on the individual circumstances and the nature and the extent of correction that is needed.

**EXAMPLES OF MISCONDUCT COVERED BY THIS POLICY**

- **Inappropriate and unprofessional behavior** including but not limited to: leave the facility in an untidy state after use, fail to return the equipment to its original state after use, rowdy and inconsiderate behaviors, use or alter another user's equipment or resources without permission.
- **Violations of protocols, regulations and procedures governing health and safety compliance** including but not limited to: laboratory dress code violation, improper discharge of waste chemical, operate equipment outside the allowed operation condition and range, perform experiment in an unsafe environment, no risk assessment before an experiment, move or transfer of Department equipment or supplies without permission.
- **Violations of protocols, regulations and procedures governing access of Department facilities** including but not limited to: undergraduate students working without supervision, user without completion of safety training, stay in the laboratory during off-hours without obtained prior approval, perform potentially dangerous experiment alone in the facility, fail to properly record equipment usage on the equipment log book, fail to report an accident to the technical officer and supervisor, and inappropriate behaviors that can directly or indirectly lead to unauthorized access to the Department facilities.

## **PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE STEPS**

Progressive Discipline is a step-by-step process designed to modify laboratory practices that can cause harm to self or others, or can cause damage to laboratory equipment and/or facilities. The seriousness of the offense and the user's disciplinary history will be considered when determining the level of discipline to be applied. The user is expected to have sustained improvement while on progressive discipline. Failure to show sustained improvement may lead to suspension and/or termination of the offender's privileges to use the Department's laboratory facilities.

### **LEVEL 1: VERBAL WARNING**

The purpose of a verbal warning is to clarify policies and expectations. The warning is designed to address unintended and minor violations that are expected to be corrected immediately. Some examples are improper dress in the laboratory, untidy experiment set up or practice that is potentially unsafe, rowdy behaviors and bring food into the laboratory.

### **LEVEL 2: WRITTEN WARNING**

A written warning either in print or by email will be issued to the offender if the conduct addressed by a verbal warning is repeated or if a single incident is more serious than is appropriate for a verbal warning. Written warning will be issued to all violators of protocols, regulations and procedures. If the conduct addressed by the written warning is repeated, discipline may progress to a final written warning that may lead to a suspension from accessing all Department laboratory facilities. All written warning will be copied to the violator's supervisor or collaborator.

### **LEVEL 3: SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION OF LABORATORY PRIVILEGES**

Access to the Department laboratory facilities will be automatically suspended for two weeks if the misconduct is repeated after the offender received the final written warning. Furthermore, a single incident may be so severe as to merit an immediate suspension. Misconduct that involves dishonesty, violation of the law, or creates significant risks to the Department laboratory operations or to the safety and well-being of oneself or others is grounds for immediate suspension of access privileges to the Department laboratory facilities. In addition, a laboratory disciplinary committee (*Appendix I*) will be convened to investigate the suspected laboratory misconduct if deemed necessary. Some examples of inappropriate behavior that lead to immediate suspension are listed in Appendix II. The Department of Materials Science and Engineering Laboratory Disciplinary Committee will investigate the facts and circumstances of each case to determine the duration of the suspension up to and including the termination of laboratory access.

**Approved by Prof. Feng Wang, MSE Departmental Safety Officer**  
**Approved by Prof. Johnny Ho, MSE Laboratory Committee Chairman**  
**Approved by Prof. Xiaocheng Zeng, MSE Department Head**

**November 2024**

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**Laboratory Disciplinary Committee**

**Terms of Reference:**

- To hear cases brought against MSE laboratory users who have allegedly breached the MSE laboratory workplace policies and rules and/or the safety requirements of the University
- To determine if there has been proven misconduct
- To determine and implement appropriate penalties

**Membership:**

- Chairman, MSE Laboratory Committee
- MSE Departmental Safety Officer
- Student Supervisor/MSE Research Collaborator (if applicable)
- One Faculty Member (to be appointed by Head of Department)

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**Examples of Misconduct that Lead to Immediate Suspension of  
MSE Laboratory Privileges**

- Willful destruction of MSE Laboratory facility and/or equipment.
- Threatening or assaulting another person in AP laboratory.
- Possession of narcotics, or consuming narcotics and/or alcohol in MSE facility.
- Remove others equipment without permission.
- Sabotage other person's experiment and/or equipment.
- Petty thievery.
- Willful allow unauthorized person to access MSE facility and use of MSE equipment without permission.