



**THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES
CAVE HILL CAMPUS**

Operating Under Covid-19

Guidelines for Teaching Laboratories

1. Introduction

This guidance relates to teaching and research laboratories which require interaction, hands-on experiments, shared spaces and equipment. It does not relate to computer laboratories where students work at individual workstations.

During these times, the management of laboratory exercises is critical to reducing risk of exposure. Ensuring labs are completed within scheduled times, adhering to physical distancing rules, providing adequate ventilation and scheduling staff are some of the standard measures that should be employed.

The operation of each laboratory session is unique. As such, the associated activities should be reviewed to determine risks and identify the most appropriate control measures. Each Department/Faculty is therefore required to develop plans (in keeping with this guidance) for their laboratory sessions, to ensure the health and safety of staff and students.

Steps should be taken to reduce the number of students required to be physically present in the laboratories. Where possible, students should be encouraged to store personal possessions in lockers.

This document will be reviewed and updated regularly to reflect changes in national policy and internationally accepted best practices.

2. Recording of Information

- Records should be maintained of the names of all persons attending a particular laboratory session. This includes staff (lab attendants, technicians/technologists, demonstrators, supervisors, lecturers etc.) and students.

3. Physical Distancing

- Consider utilizing technology so that some students can watch laboratory demonstrations from a remote location, and are not required to be present within the physical space.
- A physical distance of 6 ft. must be maintained by persons within the laboratories. This will significantly reduce the numbers which can be accommodated in each space.
- Consider conducting demonstrations/lab briefings in a location, and in such a manner, that students within the lab space can still observe the physical distance rule.
- Work areas should be set up in adherence to the physical distance rule. Consideration should be given to the use of markings to indicate the student workspace.
- Excess furniture and equipment should be removed to ensure physical distance is maintained.
- Lab spaces should be filled systematically (e.g. one bench at a time) to avoid crowding.

4. Wearing Masks

- Masks or face coverings must be worn by all staff and students.
- All efforts must be made to maintain physical distance. However, where this is not possible, e.g. when giving hands-on guidance, staff (including lab demonstrators and technicians/technologists) can wear face shields (along with their masks) and ensure that this interaction is kept as short as possible.
- Avoid adjusting masks, goggles or face shields with gloved hands. Gloves should be removed and hands washed, prior to making any adjustments.

5. Personal Protective Equipment

- All persons must wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (e.g. lab coats, gloves, safety goggles) for the particular lab activity.
- Students should be sensitized to the correct use and removal of gloves.
- The use of cell phones during labs or while wearing gloves should be prohibited.
- Disposable gloves should be removed and discarded on leaving the laboratory.

6. Hand Hygiene

- Adequate provisions should be made for hand washing (e.g. liquid soap, paper towels) in all laboratories.
- All persons should wash their hands before leaving the laboratory, even if gloves were worn.

- Due to the associated risks, the use of hand sanitizer should be controlled and only applied on entry to the laboratory. Hands should be allowed to dry thoroughly.

7. Signage

- Clear signage, outlining the rules for laboratory use, should be posted in visible areas.
- The Campus will provide signs with information on hand hygiene, wearing masks and physical distancing.
- Signs should also be posted highlighting the maximum capacity of specific spaces (e.g. equipment rooms) which may need to be accessed by students during the lab session.

8. Air-Conditioning and Ventilation

- Natural ventilation (open windows) can be used where possible. However, windows or doors should not be kept open while air-conditioning systems are working.
- A number of laboratories are air-conditioned and there is no need for occupants to make adjustments to these systems. Any issues or concerns should be reported to the Office of Institutional Planning and Infrastructural Services (INPLAIS).

9. Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Laboratories should be cleaned and disinfected daily. Cleaning and disinfecting of frequently-touched surfaces such as door knobs, push plates, door handles and refrigerator handles etc. should be cleaned three times a day.
- Laboratory equipment should be cleaned after each session.
- Measures should be put in place to ensure that all glassware and equipment used by students are properly cleaned after use.

10. Materials and Equipment

- Where possible, the sharing of laboratory glassware etc. should be avoided.
- Crowding within labs should be avoided. To facilitate easier access, laboratory glassware and other items which are usually stored in communal cupboards (and retrieved by students) may need to be placed on lab benches prior to the start of the session.

11. References

- Health and Safety Protocol Subcommittee of Steering Committee (June, 2020), Health and Safety Protocols for Covid-19 for Phased Reopening of UWI Cave Hill Campus (version 1.1)
- University of Kent (2020), COVID-19 Risk Assessment for University Laboratories and Research Facilities. Retrieved from:https://www.kent.ac.uk/safety/hs/pages/covid-19/COVID-19_risk_assessment_for_University_labs%20and_research_facilities-final.pdf

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