**Lab Handbook**

**Template**

*A lab handbook reflects the operations and expectations of your lab. While certain topics (e.g. EDI) can be addressed at the departmental or university level, the PI has overall responsibility for how a group is run. Describing your lab's identity enables existing and new members to support the smooth running of daily operations, understand what is expected of them, and similarly what they can expect as a group member. This document provides a basic template for creating your lab handbook, separated into different sections and questions to define your lab’s identity.*

* *The WIN Lab Handbook Team*

*How should I use this document?*

Use this document to form the basis of your own lab handbook. Read the different section headings, and answer the proposed questions to form the handbook text. Discuss with group members to create answers most relevant to your lab.

*Some questions seem less relevant to my lab, and there are a few important topics that have not been covered. How should I address this?*

There is no single prescriptive format for a lab handbook. Some questions may be more or less relevant to your group, and you likely have your own ideas as to what a lab handbook should contain. Please use this template as a guide, rather than a strict set of topics and questions, adjusting as you see fit.

*For some topics, I have very similar expectations to what is written in the example lab handbook. Can I use that text?*

You are welcome to copy sections and edit pieces of text from the example WIN lab handbook, written by the WIN Physics Group. Remember that your group will hold itself - and you - accountable to the content of your handbook. While we are delighted for others to base their own handbook on our text, it is crucial that you do so after careful reflection and discussion with your group.

Section 1: **Introduction**

*Welcoming new members to your group*

*Questions*

**1. How will you make new starters feel welcome?**

This will be the first piece of text that new starters to your group will encounter in the lab handbook. Write a short statement welcoming them to the group, and give a brief, high level overview of your group's work and ethos.

**2. How should new starters navigate this document?:**

Do you expect all new starters to read the entire lab handbook? Do you have an anticipated time period for them to read? For example, “*We expect all new group members to read the lab handbook in the first month*”.

Section 2: [**Roles & Expectations**](#_vzl2zrxb4aal)

*Defining the responsibilities of researchers. What to expect from them, and what they can expect from you.*

*Questions*

**1. How is your group structured?**

Briefly describe the structure of your group in terms of roles: for example, *PI(s)*, *early-career researchers*, *students*, and *other roles* specific to your group.

**2. How does each role interact with the group?:**

Ensure that everybody in your group is aware of the significance of each role. Describe the responsibilities of each role, how they interact with the group, your expectations and challenges each role creates. This section is crucial to establishing healthy working relationships and understanding, particularly for those who have never experienced the reality of certain other roles.

*Example topics for Students: Day-to-day as a student, Challenges for students, What can more senior members expect from students? How can more senior members help students?*

**3. Are there any key interactions between your group and other persons/departments/facilities?:**

Describe any important external interactions fundamental to the operation of your group. What do these roles provide for your group? What are your expectations of your group members in these interactions?

*Example topics for Core Staff: What can group members expect from core staff? How should group members interact with core staff? How should group members recognise scientific contributions from core staff?*

Section 3:[**Research Group Culture**](#_9m5z1itohgml)

*Describing expectations surrounding interactions and behaviour*

*Questions*

**1. How does your group interact?**

Describe how your group interacts both professionally and socially.

*Example interactions: Shared lab spaces, Weekly meetings, Social gatherings*

**2. What are your expectations for conduct in the workplace?**

Highlight your expectations for members to create an inclusive environment in both professional and social situations. Describe what members should do if they experience/witness inappropriate behaviour. Note that some aspects of expected workplace conduct are specified by the university: it is a good idea to link to these in your handbook.

*Example topics: Conduct in meetings, Work interactions, Social interactions, Inappropriate behaviour,*

*Example resources:* [*Harassment advice*](https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/harassment-advice)*,* [*NDCN Harassment advisors*](https://www.ndcn.ox.ac.uk/about/working-in-our-department/anti-bullying-and-harassment)

**3. What are your expectations surrounding working arrangements?**

Describe the working arrangements for group members. This should include your expectations surrounding working hours and working from home. Highlight any specific responsibilities shared between group members (e.g. cleaning a piece of equipment). Note that many researchers find vague statements to be unhelpful and/or to implicitly communicate expectations for long working hours.

*Example topics: Working hours, Working at the office vs home, Group responsibilities*

**4. How do you support the wellbeing of group members?**

Describe your expectations for group members to maintain a healthy work-life balance and support each other's wellbeing. Define what benefits group members are entitled to through the department or University.

*Example topics: Setting targets, Working hours, Work-life balance, Mental wellbeing*

*Example resources:* [*University work-life balance*](https://hr.admin.ox.ac.uk/family-friendly-benefits)

**5. How does your group engage with EDI initiatives?**

Describe how your group and the department engage with EDI initiatives, and how PIs will support members on these topics. Identify resources available to group members.

*Example topics: What is EDI?, Building a Supportive Environment*

*Example resources:* [*WIN EDI resources*](https://www.win.ox.ac.uk/about/edi/equality-and-diversity)*,* [*University EDI resources & training*](https://edu.admin.ox.ac.uk/home#/)

**6. How should group members support the lab?**

Highlight your expectations surrounding being a good lab citizen to support the day-to-day functioning of the lab and your colleagues' research. Describe how members should balance between being a good citizen and progressing their own research.

*Examples of good citizenship: tutoring on a departmental program; answering your colleagues' questions; volunteering for MRI scans; organising group meetings; sharing resources appropriately.*

Section 4: **Developing as Researchers**

*How the group supports your development as a researcher, and your expectations surrounding best research practice*

*Questions*

**1. How do you support the career progression of group members?**

What should group members do to develop skills to support their career progression? What opportunities are there to achieve this? How do you support each group member’s career development?

*Example topics: Developing your CV, Career progression*

*Examples for strengthening CV: Publications, committee activities, outreach, invited presentations, securing funding, conference proceedings*

**2. What are your expectations for best research practices?**

Define your expectations for best research practices and resources available to support your group members in this area. Explain the importance of good research conduct, be explicit about which actions are considered mandatory, and how to address irresponsible conduct by a labmate.

*Example topics: Open science, Reproducible research, Research conduct*

*Example resources:* [Open WIN publishing](https://cassgvp.github.io/WIN-Open-Neuroimaging-Community/docs/open-access-publishing.html); [Open WIN science](https://cassgvp.github.io/WIN-Open-Neuroimaging-Community/docs/tools.html); [University research misconduct guidelines](https://researchsupport.admin.ox.ac.uk/governance/integrity/misconduct)

**3. How do you expect group members to collaborate?**

Provide an overview of the costs and benefits of collaboration, how you expect group members to engage with collaborators, and how to get the most out of collaborations. Similarly, describe the support more junior researchers can expect from more senior researchers in your group in the context of collaborations with external colleagues.

*Example topics: Why collaborate? When to collaborate, Setting expectations*

**4. What are your expectations surrounding travelling and conferences?**

Describe how group members can get the most out of conferences. Define your expectations for behaviour and interactions when representing the group. Consider how to support group members who do not wish to travel for personal reasons.

*Example topics: Conferences - The basics; Planning & what to expect; Looking out for labmates; Travel administration & logistics*