

UBSN policy and usage guideline

1 General policy

1.1 Purpose of the general policy

This policy is intended to detail the procedures and requirements for the use of UBSN facilities and to aid the safe and efficient use of such facilities that is consistent with the UBSN's mission.

All requests are subject to review and approval by UBSN. If questions or concerns arise, UBSN reserves the right to cancel or change facility use agreements and regulations whenever deemed necessary. Failure to comply with UBSN's General policy and usage guideline may result in the cancellation of facility usage and rejection of the future application. For information and inquiry, please contact UBSN at +852 2766-5380 or ubsn.enquiry@polyu.edu.hk for information.

1.2 Mission

The University Research Facility in Behavioral and Systems Neuroscience (UBSN) provides state-of-the-art interdisciplinary technological platforms to support the neuroscience researchers of PolyU, as well as other higher education institutions in Hong Kong.

The seven major strategic areas of UBSN include:

- Brain Imaging and Artificial Intelligence/Big Data;
- Healthy Aging;
- Mental Health;
- Neurorehabilitation and Neural Repair;
- Human Development;
- Neurolinguistics;
- Cognitive Neuroscience of Language and Culture.

UBSN encourages the uses of our facilities that aims to:

- Tackle important questions for the benefit of mankind;
- Conduct high-quality research programs;
- Obtain prestigious competitive research grants;
- Nurture and inspire talents in students and beginner researchers.

1.3 Definitions

- **UBSN facilities** are laboratories and equipment that are managed by UBSN.
- **PolyU users** are those users in The Hong Kong Polytechnic University or the collaborators of PolyU principal investigators.
- **Users from other UGC-funded Universities / Self-financed local universities / Non-local universities / HKSAR Government** are those users from UGC-funded or self-financed universities (other than PolyU) in Hong Kong or overseas, and users from the HKSAR Government.
- **Other External users** are all other non-PolyU users.

1.4 General Usage guideline

1.4.1 User registration

- All users are required to complete the online user registration in the University Research Facility Management System (URFMS) (<https://urfms.polyu.edu.hk>).

1.4.2 Eligibility for online booking and usage of the facility

- PolyU users must submit:
 - Relevant online safety test results
 - Student/Staff card copy (for the application of door access to the specific laboratory if needed)
 - Animal license (if animal experiments will be carried out)
 - Ethic Approval Letter (if experiment involves human participants)
- Users received proper training from UBSN staff or authorized personnel. Untrained or unauthorized persons are not allowed to do online booking and use UBSN facilities.
- Online booking will be authorized by UBSN.
- External users, please contact UBSN staff for the arrangement of online safety test and equipment training.
- For MRI users, please refer to the “UBSN Human MRI Project Policy” listed in the UBSN website.
- For usage which involves human participant(s), it is the Principal Investigator’s (PI’s) and his/her research group’s responsibility to ensure participant(s)’ safety during experiment.

1.4.3 Online booking

- Online booking is required before usage of the UBSN facilities and is on a first-come-first-served basis.
- Users are required to have a valid payment source for equipment booking in the URFMS.
- As a general rule, 15 days of advance booking is allowed. MRI bookings can be made at the earliest 30 days in advance.
- Additional booking rules/usage limitations may apply for certain equipment, please refer to the instruction of the URFMS.
- Cancellation of booking should be done at least 24 hours before the booking start time, otherwise, a penalty (fines equal to the charge of booked session(s)) will be imposed.
- For portable equipment, please return to UBSN immediately after use, otherwise a penalty will be imposed. User will be charged for the booking of next day(s) until the equipment is returned.
- For fair use, abuse of the booking system is strictly prohibited.

1.4.4 Room access to UBSN satellite laboratories

- The access to UBSN satellite laboratories depends on the policy of the respective departments, who have the right to make the final decision.
- Users must follow, if any, additional rules imposed by the respective departments.

1.4.5 Responsibility and penalty

- Users are responsible for:
 - Proper usage of UBSN facilities
 - Following safety rules and guidelines
 - Maintaining the tidiness and cleanness of laboratories
 - Reporting any facility damages and failures
- In the case of user misconduct or misuse of UBSN facilities, appropriate penalties will be imposed on the user (please refer to section 2.5). Supervisors are liable for the repair/replacement cost.

1.4.6 Charging

- Charging rates are subject to revision without prior notice to users. The updated charging scheme will be available at the UBSN website (<https://www.polyu.edu.hk/ubsn>).
- External payments will be settled via invoice.
 - Invoices should be settled within 3 months from the invoice issuance date. Failure to settle the bill within this timeframe will result in the suspension of booking access for the equipment until the bill is settled.
 - Deferred payment options are available and subject to mutual agreement.

1.5 Acknowledgment of UBSN in publications

- Acknowledgment of UBSN for using our facilities is highly appreciated. Please use the following suggested template in your manuscript whenever appropriate:

*“We thank the University Research Facility in Behavioral and Systems Neuroscience (UBSN),
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University for technical and facility supports.”*

- Please send a copy of your published work for our reference and record.

1.6 Guidelines for lodging complaints and managing users' complaints

By following these guidelines, users can effectively lodge their complaints, and UBSN can address them promptly and professionally. This approach fosters a positive user experience, builds trust, and contributes to continuous improvement in UBSN's services.

1.6.1 Users' complaints submission process:

- a. Users can lodge complaints regarding UBSN services by filling out the "UBSN Feedback Form" available at UBSN website under the "Contact Us" section or via the following link: (<https://www.polyu.edu.hk/ubsn/about-ubsn/contact-us/>).
- b. When lodging complaints, users need to provide detailed information, including their name, contact details, and a comprehensive description of the incident (date, time, place, involved personnel, etc.) in the complaint. Complaints should be submitted within one week of the incident or concern arising.

1.6.2 Handling of users' complaints:

- a. Acknowledge receipt: Upon receiving a complaint, acknowledge receipt is promptly issued. This may be done through an automated confirmation email or a personal acknowledgment message from the Senior Scientific Officer (SSO) to assure users that their complaints have been received and are being addressed.
- b. Assign a case number: A unique case number is assigned to each complaint for easy identification and tracking purposes. This number can be used as a reference during subsequent communication.
- c. Investigation of complaints: To thoroughly investigate the complaint, the SSO will address the complaint by gathering all necessary information, consulting relevant records, and involving appropriate individuals or departments. UBSN Directors may participate in the complaint investigation if necessary. This hopes to address complaints promptly and effectively.
- d. Regular communication: Users will be kept informed about the progress of their complaints. Updates will be provided on further steps being taken, any delays that may occur, and an estimated timeline for resolution. With regular communication, UBSN hopes to provide transparency and ensure that user expectations are established realistically.
- e. Fair and objective assessment: UBSN will try to conduct fair and objective assessments of all complaints, considering all available evidence and perspectives. UBSN Directors may participate to avoid biases and treat each complaint on its own merits.
- f. Resolution options: Resolution options are offered to users once available to address their concerns. UBSN aims to be provide options that are appropriate and fair, and will effectively communicate with users regarding any potential limitations or conditions. This ensures that users' concerns are thoroughly understood and addressed in a transparent manner.
- g. Documentation: Detailed records of the complaint, including all communication, actions taken, and resolutions provided will be maintained. This documentation can serve as reference for future improvements and help identify any recurring issues that need to be addressed.

2 Laboratory policy

2.1 Purpose of the laboratory policy

Science research laboratories here at UBSN can be a useful tool for users to carry out their research investigations. As a centralised facility, UBSN provides orientation, training, advice, and platform for independent and collaborative research activities.

This guide provides essential information for utilising a shared laboratory space effectively. Whether you are new or experienced, this handbook will provide some basic guidelines for a shared lab environment.

Throughout the guide, we address safety protocols, equipment handling, lab etiquette, and communication guidelines. We emphasize cleanliness, organization, and managing shared resources. Collaboration, respect, and inclusivity are also crucial, with strategies for teamwork and conflict resolution discussed.

2.2 Equipment administration

UBSN manages various types of equipment, in a shared lab space is crucial for safe and efficient utilisation. Access, reservation, and training request (if applicable) are managed on the University Research Facility Management System (URFMS, <https://urfms.polyu.edu.hk/facilities>). This section provides guidelines for accessing equipment and acquiring necessary training.

2.2.1 New users to URFMS

Any personnel who wish to use UBSN equipment must have a valid PolyU NET ID to access our URFMS online equipment system. Instructions can be viewed here (https://www.polyu.edu.hk/rio/docdrive/_sso/URFMS-guide/URFMS-Quick-Guide-New-User.pdf).

PolyU users can simply login to <https://urfms.polyu.edu.hk/facilities> using NetID and browse UBSN's list of equipment; Non-PolyU users can request an account using the registration form linked in https://urfms.polyu.edu.hk/user_registration/all, please remember to choose UBSN as your desired PolyU Research Facility, and choose the correct equipment category that concerns you the most (either human (MRI), human (non-MRI), or animal).

2.2.2 Training

Proper training is essential before operating complex equipment (marked requires training on URFMS). This is to ensure the user's safety as well as maintain a good condition of the equipment. After granted access to UBSN's equipment list on URFMS, some pieces of equipment may require additional training.

Orientation and/or training are provided upon request. Users may use the online request button next to the desired equipment, or emailing officers-in-charge. Operating handbooks (if any) will also be provided to help users learn and understand the proper procedures to use the machines. Regularly familiarising yourself with the procedures outlined can ensure fair usage and prevent conflicts.

Refresher training can be given by officers-in-charge if necessary, subjecting to availability of staff and equipment.

2.2.3 Payment

A valid payment source must be on PolyU record in order for any reservation to take place. Finance office should record payment sources automatically for PIs. Total funds will be available for viewing on URFMS. PIs must manually add new members to new payment sources before they can access UBSN equipment. A positive balance must also be manually topped-up to UBSN's usage. This will allow the specified amount of money to be reserved for equipment related charges. Any remaining balance can also be freely released or re-topped-up at any time. More detailed instructions can be viewed here (https://www.polyu.edu.hk/rio/docdrive/_sso/URFMS-guide/URFMS-Quick_Guide_payment-source-owner.pdf, requires PolyU NetID).

2.2.4 Laboratory door access

Most pieces of equipment are housed in rooms that are electronically locked. PolyU users may contact officers-in-charge to be granted access to UBSN rooms; while non-PolyU users may only enter the rooms when UBSN staff/ PolyU collaborators are present during office hours. To be eligible

for access, suitable training such as STRS training (<https://strs-hseo.polyu.edu.hk/aviarc/strs/>) is training.

2.2.5 Booking

In order to use UBSN equipment, reservations must be made in advance on URFMS (<https://urfms.polyu.edu.hk/facilities>). Please also note that not all equipment is available all the time. Some equipment may additionally have a specific booking advance time. When in doubt, please check with your officer-in-charge.

2.3 Operation and usage

UBSN laboratory spaces are a collaborative platform to optimise resource utilisation and promote efficient scientific research. A well-regulated laboratory practice can ensure smooth and safe use of equipment in the UBSN laboratory space.

2.3.1 Equipment general etiquette

All UBSN staff as well as users are responsible in keeping laboratory equipment in good condition. Users should always inspect the equipment for cleanliness and functionality before and after using UBSN equipment. Users should refrain from bringing food and drinks in the laboratory space. In case of abnormality, please report to your officer-in-charge. If there is a logbook system next to the piece of equipment you are using, please also record your usage and write down any equipment abnormalities in the remarks. If there is a card machine connected to the piece of equipment you are using, please swipe your NetID card to begin using.

2.3.2 Equipment usage

All equipment provided by UBSN has standard operating procedures. Users are given a respective copy when a training is given. If re-training is requested or if the copy was lost, officer-in-charge may re-distribute a copy. Turning on and shutting down facility equipment according to instructions are very important to ensure integrity of electronic components. Please read our operating procedures thoroughly and familiarise yourself with the steps before using any equipment.

2.3.3 Cleaning up after usage

We understand you may bring samples, tools, items or personal belongings to the shared laboratory space. If you brought biological or chemical samples, please ensure proper handling following the safety guidelines adhering to biological and chemical safety e.g., Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).

After using, you should:

1. Keep our spaces clean and tidy.
2. Label and cover your biological or chemical equipment and/or containers.
3. Store equipment and/or containers inside your designated cabinets.
4. Dispose wastes adhering to biological or chemical substance regulations.
5. Remove your personal items from the laboratory.

Wiping with lint-free cloths with distilled water and/or 70% ethanol are typical methods to maintain cleanliness of most lab equipment items. Some lab equipment items may require specific solvents or cloths for cleaning. In case of doubt, please consult your officer-in-charge.

2.3.4 Calibration and safety checks

Calibration and safety checks are done regularly especially for equipment that have intricate mechanical parts. Please do not attempt to calibrate any equipment unless instructions are included in the operational manual. If users suspect equipment problems such as baseline shifts in signals or mechanical offsets, please inform your officer-in-charge to troubleshoot and/or schedule a system calibration and safety check.

2.3.5 Data safety

Any research data collected here at UBSN belong to your affiliated institution. However, we strongly appreciate your acknowledgement to UBSN in any presented or published work wherever possible. Any data remained on our on-site storage after your reservation may be accessible by other users. To ensure the security of your research data, UBSN recommends that you transfer the data to your own data storage device as soon as possible. Additionally, UBSN retains the rights to format and replace any equipment storage and will not be responsible for any data loss in that regard.

2.4 Laboratory safety

UBSN laboratory spaces adheres to university guidelines. All users who use the laboratory space may be asked to complete relevant training on the Safety Training and Registration System (STRS) and obtain training certificates.

PolyU users may use on their NetID and log onto the online system <https://strs-hseo.polyu.edu.hk/aviarc/strs/> to proceed; Non-PolyU users may be asked to provide equivalent certificates from their own institute's training system. The following sections will outline the basic laboratory knowledge that will help you work in UBSN collaborative laboratories.

2.4.1 General Safety

To ensure biological and chemical samples are not accidentally in contact, inhaled, ingested by users, food and drinks are prohibited in laboratories. To avoid physical injuries, running and jumping are also prohibited when navigating in laboratories. Users should put on protective gear prior to entering our laboratories; and remove and store gear in a suitable location when leaving.

Users should regularly refresh themselves and be familiar with the locations of the following:

1. Facility exits
2. First aid kits
3. Eye-wash
4. Shower stations
5. The automated external defibrillator (AED) machine.

2.4.2 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment is a set of protective items of clothing required when entering a biological, chemical, or animal laboratory. Here are some common types of PPE required in laboratories.

1. **Gloves:** Disposable gloves, made of materials such as latex, nitrile, or neoprene, are essential for protecting the hands from chemical, biological, and physical hazards. The choice of gloves depends on the specific tasks and the compatibility with the substances being handled, or whether you have an allergy with a particular material. Insulating gloves are also used when handling substances of extreme temperature such as liquid nitrogen, or heated chemicals.
2. **Lab coats:** Lab coats or protective gowns provide a barrier between the skin and hazardous materials. They help prevent cross contamination between personal clothing and biological or chemical samples. They also offer some protection against spills, splashes, and minor chemical exposures. Lab coats should be worn properly with all buttons fastened.
3. **Face masks/ safety goggles:** Face masks or face shields provide a barrier for airborne contaminating particles. Eye protection is critical to shield the eyes from chemical splashes, flying particles, and laser hazards. These should be worn when working with hazardous chemicals, biological materials or other tasks such as operating a laser source that pose risks to the respiratory system, the face and the eyes.
4. **Trousers and footwear:** Long trousers, Closed-toe shoes with non-slip soles are recommended in the laboratory to protect against spills, falling objects, and potential leg and foot injuries.

5. Hair nets/ hair tie: Any long loose hair should be tied back or confined to avoid coming into contact with chemicals and biological samples, fire sources or becoming entangled in laboratory apparatus. Hair nets can also help prevent the picking-up or deposition of laboratory chemicals and allergens, especially when working with animals.
6. Hearing protection: In labs with high levels of sounds, such as repetitive noises or loud machinery, hearing protection in the form of earplugs or earmuffs should be worn to prevent hearing damage.

2.4.3 Emergency procedures

In case of accidents, users may use our first aid kits to apply appropriate medical care. Users should also report to UBSN and our appointed departmental Health and Safety Officer about the accident as soon as possible. UBSN will replenish and replace emergency kits regularly.

In case of serious emergencies, please remain calm, call the university emergency call centre 2766 7999, your officer-in-charge, and/or 999 where applicable. Examples of more specific emergency procedures are outlined below.

1. In case of a fire emergency: Sound the fire alarm if safe to do so, do not use the elevator, avoid smoky areas and evacuate using the staircase. Inform the emergency team.
2. Chemical spills: If you come into contact, ingested, or inhaled a chemical which has been specified to have adverse or harmful effects, de-robe when safe to do so, and wash the area with designated eyewash or shower. Inform the emergency team.
3. Gas safety: Turn off the source if safe to do so, leave the room immediately, close the lab door and inform the emergency team at once.
4. Medical emergencies: Remove yourself from any chemical or biological samples, and any machineries, stay in a well-ventilated well-lit area, and inform the emergency team and ask for help.

2.5 Policy enforcement and penalties

CCTV cameras are used at UBSN to ensure the safety and security of its users. They can monitor access to sensitive areas, enhance safety by identifying hazards, and allow for reporting of violations of laboratory regulations. However, it is important to implement CCTV responsibly, with appropriate safeguards in place to protect individual privacy. Footage should only be used for its intended purposes, thus, UBSN has a usage policy in place to ensure that the cameras are used ethically and effectively. UBSN CCTV usage policies are published on UBSN's website <https://www.polyu.edu.hk/ubsn/download/>.

2.5.1 Policy violations

Since UBSN provides a collaborative platform among users to share for research purposes, UBSN must take misconducts very seriously. Actions may be taken to address these misconducts to prevent any further hazardous risks or operational disruption to others. Additionally, users should also comply with specific laboratory guidelines, if any.

Misconducts are separated into three general tiers of misconducts. Three repeated offenses within 30 days equate to one misconduct of the next severity level (e.g. three minor misconducts -> one significant misconduct) and will be regarded and addressed as such:

Examples of minor misconducts include but are not limited to:

- Failure to tidy, clean up, or return equipment to appropriate location after use
- Overnight unattended lab equipment,
- Suspicious samples handling,
- Excessive occupancy of lab space,
- Incompliance with lab attire.

Examples of significant misconducts include but are not limited to:

- Mishandling of hazardous chemicals,
- Mishandling of dangerous biological samples,
- Protocol violation,
- Mishandling or vandalising laboratory and/or equipment.

Examples of major misconducts include but are not limited to:

- Abuse of lab equipment,
- Abuse of lab booking system,
- Directly or indirectly causing harm to other users.

2.5.2 Violation penalties

UBSN's suggested* general escalation action ladder for addressing laboratory misconducts, where response actions begin and escalate down the ladder in proportion to the severity OR frequency% of offenses. UBSN retains the right to enact ANY of the below actions in ANY order depending on the type and severity of the misconducts. UBSN retains the final right to discuss and enact any further appropriate actions to address any misconducts.

Action(s) in response to minor misconducts:

1. Scientific Officer gives verbal reminder to user(s)
2. Scientific Officer gives formal email warning to user(s)

Action(s) in response to significant misconducts:

3. Senior Scientific Officer gives formal warning to user(s) and PI(s)
4. Users may be responsible for the additional maintenance and/or repairs (see 2.5.3)
5. Results of misconduct to be recorded and may be used as case examples
6. Misconduct is reviewed at UBSN departmental meeting

Action(s) in response to major misconducts:

7. UBSN incurs booking penalty[#]
8. UBSN incurs temporary access suspension[^] to book the equipment until user re-trains with us. Additionally, to also re-obtain proofs of four STRS's safety certification: 1) General Laboratory Safety, 2) Animal Lab Safety, 3) Chemical Safety, 4) Laser Safety
9. UBSN bans[†] user(s) from using equipment. After which, the user must re-train and re-obtain STRS safety certification. The affected user AND their PI may submit a petition to reinstate user privileges after receiving the relevant certification. Outcomes of petitions will be decided at UBSN's next available Management Committee meeting.

[#]Low-priority booking or booking time limitation penalties are suggested.

[^]Access suspensions are indefinite by nature, and will be lifted as soon as user re-train successfully.

[†]The duration of user bans starts at 1 month. Escalating misconducts warranting bans will result in ban durations that double each time, i.e., 2-, 4-, 8-, 16-, 32-month, etc.

2.5.3 Misconducts leading to additional expenses

It is essential to emphasise the importance of responsible behaviour and proper handling of laboratory facilities and equipment. When users engage in mishandling or vandalising such resources, it can result in damages that go beyond routine maintenance. In these cases, users may be held monetarily responsible for a portion or the entirety of the additional maintenance and repairs incurred. This approach encourages accountability, reinforces the value of careful usage, and ensures the availability and longevity of the laboratory resources for all users.

If these additional maintenance and repairs led to additional expenses, UBSN will consider levying **part or all of its cost** with the involved user depending on the total cost.

The UBSN Management Committee will examine the extent to which damages to equipment directly result from the user's or users' negligence or other bad behaviours, and determine the final penalties levied against the user(s). If the users are found to be responsible, the **full repair cost** may be charged to the individual(s) or the PI.

2.6 Personal Information Collection Statement

At UBSN, we are committed to protecting your privacy and ensuring the security of your personal information. This Personal Information Collection Statement (PICS) outlines how we collect, use, disclose, and handle personal information in accordance with applicable privacy laws and regulations.

2.6.1 Purpose of Collection:

We collect personal information for the purpose of managing and operating the UBSN facility. This includes providing access to research resources, maintaining effective communication with UBSN user groups, and facilitating data sharing and collaboration among researchers (where applicable). Personal information may also be used for statistical analysis, quality improvement, and research purposes, in compliance with applicable PolyU regulations.

2.6.2 Collection of Information:

We may collect personal information directly from you or through our services. The types of personal information we collect may include, but are not limited to, your name, contact details (such as email address or phone number), professional affiliations, and research interests.

2.6.3 Use, Transfer and Disclosure of Information:

Your personal information will be used for the purposes specified at the time of collection or as otherwise permitted by law. We may share your personal information with affiliated researchers, institutions, or authorised third parties who have a legitimate need for accessing such information. However, we will not disclose your personal information to any external party for marketing purposes without your explicit consent.

All participants for MRI experiments are required to fill in the MRI Safety Screening Form. The personal information in the form will be kept confidential, and only authorised staff members of PolyU will be able to access and handle your personal data. None of your information will be disclosed or transferred to others without your written permission, except (1) if necessary to protect participant's rights or welfare, and (2) if required by law.

2.6.4 Data Security:

We take appropriate measures to protect the personal information we collect against unauthorised access, disclosure, alteration, or destruction. These measures include implementing physical, technical, and administrative safeguards to maintain the confidentiality and integrity of your personal information. These data are stored on workstations on-site managed by university domain, and will not be removed for offline access on personal devices.

2.6.5 Data Retention:

We will retain your personal information for as long as necessary to fulfil the purposes for which it was collected, unless a longer retention period is required or permitted by law. We will securely dispose of personal information that is no longer needed in a manner that ensures its confidentiality.

2.6.6 Access and Correction:

You have the right to access, correct, or update your personal information held by us. If you wish to exercise these rights or have any concerns about the accuracy of your personal information, please contact us at ubsn.enquiry@polyu.edu.hk.

2.7 Importance of the policy

By adhering to the guidelines outlined in this policy handbook, users can ensure equitable access, maintain a safe working environment, and maximize the benefits of shared resources. If there is any uncertainty regarding laboratory policies, respective officers-in-charge will always be able to clarify for its users, as UBSN believes that good communication is essential to build a productive and inclusive research environment. To improve transparency of the policy, UBSN sends regular reminders and any updates of this policy to all users no sparser than once every year. Signs are posted at UBSN locations highlighting important policies.

By following the policy guidelines, UBSN hopes users make efficient and productive use of our shared laboratory space.

If you have any questions, please contact your officer-in-charge or email UBSN at ubsn.enquiry@polyu.edu.hk