

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University – University Research Facility in Chemical and Environmental Analysis (UCEA)

General User Policy

1. General information
 - 1.1. The University Research Facility in Chemical and Environmental Analysis (UCEA) at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University houses state-of-the-art equipment in specific areas.
 - 1.2. Access to the facilities in UCEA is restricted to registered and authorized users.
 - 1.3. An online booking system is implemented for all UCEA equipment. Users must register for an online booking account and request access to specific equipment, if applicable. Please refer to Section 2 for more information.
 - 1.4. Prior to accessing any equipment, users must successfully complete official training conducted by UCEA staff and obtain approval from the Director of UCEA or their delegate(s).
 - 1.5. Users and their supervisors are required to comply with the rules outlined in this General User Policy.
 - 1.6. The UCEA reserves the right to modify the General User Policy as necessary. Users and their supervisors should consult the UCEA webpage (<https://www.polyu.edu.hk/ucea/>) for the most up-to-date version.
2. Registration for the UCEA online booking system
 - 2.1. User can apply for an online booking account via the University Research Facility Management System (URFMS) at <https://urfms.polyu.edu.hk/facilities>. Potential users should visit the UCEA webpage (<https://www.polyu.edu.hk/ucea/>) for more information.
 - 2.2. New user can submit the application via https://urfms.polyu.edu.hk/user_registration/all.
 - 2.3. During the first equipment training session, our responsible staff will verify the information provided in URFMS.
 - 2.4. If there are any changes to the provided information, users and supervisors must promptly notify the UCEA.
3. Equipment training and access
 - 3.1. Training sessions for UCEA equipment are scheduled once per calendar month or can be requested. Detailed arrangements for each equipment can be found on the UCEA webpage.
 - 3.2. Each training session can accommodate up to 5 users. If there is high demand, additional session(s) may be arranged accordingly.
 - 3.3. Each training session will be applied to one equipment only. Users need to submit a new training request for each equipment they are interested in.
 - 3.4. New users of UCEA or existing users who wish to access additional UCEA equipment must request a separate equipment training session. They need to submit request via URFMS and complete the training session. Equipment can only be booked once these steps are completed.
4. Room access and security
 - 4.1. Some UCEA equipment is located in laboratories that are not managed by the UCEA. Access to these laboratories is subject to the respective departmental policies. Users may be

required to submit registration forms and attend safety briefings offered by the UCEA on their behalf or by the respective departments, as well as safety courses offered by the Health, Safety, and Environment Office (HSEO). Detailed procedures for accessing each laboratory will be explained during an equipment training session or available upon request.

- 4.2. As a general principle, UCEA equipment is open to all UCEA users. However, for UCEA equipment located in laboratories managed by other departments, the respective department has the sole right to impose preferential access policies (e.g., access hours) for departmental, non-departmental, and non-PolyU UCEA users. The UCEA will make reasonable efforts to notify users of the most up-to-date departmental access policies for each piece of UCEA equipment, where applicable.
 - 4.3. Users are not allowed to use non-UCEA equipment in those laboratories unless authorized by the respective departments that manage the non-UCEA equipment.
 - 4.4. In the event of discrepancies or conflicts between UCEA and departmental policies concerning access to UCEA equipment located in laboratories managed by the respective departments, the latter shall prevail.
 - 4.5. Users are not allowed to bring any unauthorized personnel into the equipment rooms.
 - 4.6. Users should not use any object to prevent doors from properly closing.
 - 4.7. Some of the equipment rooms are equipped with closed-circuit television (CCTV) video surveillance systems for security and investigation purposes. Captured video or image data will be retained for 30 days and will not be transferred to third parties (except to law enforcement bodies upon request).
 - 4.8. Unauthorized personnel: Users are strictly prohibited from bringing any unauthorized personnel into UCEA laboratories/equipment rooms.
5. Equipment booking
- 5.1. An online booking system is implemented for most UCEA equipment. Details of the implementation can be found on the UCEA webpage and will be updated periodically.
 - 5.2. Users must book the equipment using the system. Booking will not be available through any other means.
 - 5.3. The UCEA will notify the existing users of the equipment of the updates regarding the schedule of the implementation. It is the responsibility of existing users to apply for an online booking account, attend the required equipment training or briefing, and obtain room access in time to avoid interruptions to their experiments.
 - 5.4. For new users of an equipment, their booking right will be granted after they have activated their online booking accounts, completed the required official training, and granted for online booking system access.
 - 5.5. Booking is available 15 days in advance and is on a first-come-first-served basis.
 - 5.6. Booking limit is imposed for some of the UCEA equipment. Details are available on the UCEA webpage.
 - 5.7. Bookings may be made in sessions with increments of 15 minutes.
 - 5.8. Bookings may be amended or cancelled up to 24 hours prior to the beginning of a booked session through the online booking system. Requests for changes and cancellations within the 24-hour time window shall be made to the UCEA and might be subject to a penalty equivalent to 50% of the rate of the whole session.

- 5.9. No-show penalty: In the event that a user fails to show up for a booked session, a no-show penalty of 100% of the charge rate for the entire session will be imposed.
6. Equipment operation and usage
 - 6.1. If a smartcard reader has been installed for an equipment, users should wave their staff or student cards to begin the booked session and wave the card again to sign off. The system will automatically calculate the charges.
 - 6.2. Users are not permitted to book UCEA equipment on behalf of others.
 - 6.3. Users must operate UCEA equipment according to the instructions provided by UCEA staff during equipment training or briefing sessions, as well as any notices placed near the equipment or sent via email.
 - 6.4. Unauthorized reconfiguration, removal, and/or relocation of any hardware or software is strictly prohibited.
 - 6.5. When using certain equipment or opening doors, users should avoid wearing gloves.
 - 6.6. Users are responsible for maintaining cleanliness and ensuring the equipment is in good working order. After each use, they should reset the equipment to its original configuration and tidy up the work area.
 - 6.7. Users must dispose of glass, sharps, animal, infectious, and/or clinical waste in their own laboratories. The UCEA does not handle the disposal of these wastes for users.
 - 6.8. Any damage or malfunction should be reported immediately to the UCEA during office hours or noted in the 'Remarks' field on the log sheet.
 - 6.9. Users are required to sign the log sheet if available, filling in all the necessary fields, after each use.
 - 6.10. Users are advised to promptly copy their data after experiments. Experimental data stored on computers connected to UCEA equipment for more than 14 days may be deleted without prior notice.
 - 6.11. Suspension of online booking: Users who misuse equipment will receive warnings. Continued offenses may result in the suspension of their online booking account and access to UCEA equipment.
 7. Charging scheme
 - 7.1. A charging system is implemented for UCEA equipment. Details are available on the UCEA webpage.
 - 7.2. Supervisors' accounts will be charged for equipment usage, overtime usage, no-show penalty, training, consumables, technical support, and other running costs.
 - 7.3. Charges for equipment usage are calculated based on the records from the online booking system.
 - 7.4. Subsidized rates for equipment usage are offered to internal users and collaborators.
 - 7.5. "Internal users" refer to current PolyU staff members and students with a valid PolyU NetID.
 - 7.6. "Collaborators" refer to users from other UGC-funded tertiary institutions and users from companies with ongoing collaborative projects with principal investigators at PolyU.
 - 7.7. "External users" refer to users from companies without ongoing collaborations with PolyU and those who do not fall into the categories as defined in Clauses 7.5 and 7.6.

- 7.8. The UCEA reserves the right to make final decisions on determining which group a user belongs to and whether or not a subsidized rate is offered.
 - 7.9. All charging rates are subject to change without prior notice. The current charging scheme is available on the UCEA webpage.
 - 7.10. Equipment usage will be charged from the beginning of a booked session until the user signs off. Any booked but unused timeslot thereafter will be charged at 75% of the original rate.
 - 7.11. A 150% charge rate will be imposed for the overtime segment of a session.
 - 7.12. If a user fails to show up and sign in for an entire booked session, a no-show penalty of 100% of the charge rate for the whole session will be imposed.
 - 7.13. A notification is sent by URFMS to all supervisors about the recorded equipment utilization on a monthly basis. Fund transfer from the supervisor's designated account will be made at the end of each month.
 - 7.14. An invoice will be generated for external users without PolyU charging account based on the equipment utilization recorded in the UCEA booking system, following the UCEA charging scheme.
 - 7.15. Payment against the invoice should be arranged using one of the methods listed in the UCEA invoice within 1 month from the invoice date. Failure to return the invoice by the specified date could result in the suspension of all associated online booking accounts.
8. Obligations and penalties
 - 8.1. Supervisors have the responsibility to inform users about the university and/or departmental safety policies, as well as the potential hazards and safety precautions associated with each experiment.
 - 8.2. Misuse of equipment or misconduct by users will result in warnings, which can be verbal or written. If such offenses are repeated, the user's online booking account and/or access to UCEA equipment may be suspended.
 - 8.3. Supervisors are accountable for the cost of repairing and/or replacing damaged equipment caused by the users' misuse.
 - 8.4. If a supervisor fails to settle the charges in a timely manner, the online booking account and/or access to UCEA equipment for all associated users may be suspended. In such situations, the UCEA will contact both the users and the supervisor to resolve the matter.
9. Acknowledging the UCEA
 - 9.1. As the use of UCEA equipment is heavily subsidized by the University, users are requested to acknowledge the UCEA in their publications, including but not limited to journal publications, conference papers, and theses.
 - 9.2. The acknowledgment serves as a measure of how UCEA equipment is utilized to advance research activities in the University. The statistics derived from these acknowledgments are crucial for understanding research needs and trends among users, as well as securing funding for the operation of the UCEA and the acquisition of new equipment in the future.
 - 9.3. Credits for equipment usage will be awarded upon receipt of the acknowledgment details. For each journal publication, users will receive credits for 3 hours of equipment usage. Similarly, for conference papers and theses, users will be awarded credits for 1 hour of equipment usage.