Student Laboratory Access and Working Alone Policy

This policy and guidance document apply to all lab supervisors who oversee students working in their laboratory, shop, or other technical spaces. Lab supervisors include:

- Principal investigators (PIs) with research students
- Faculty advisors of student projects, including senior design projects
- Lab or shop support staff who supervise student employees or teaching assistants
- Instructors teaching laboratory or shop courses

Student Laboratory Access Policy

Students must complete at least **two levels** of required training before they are granted door access to any laboratories and shops:

1. General Lab Safety Training (online)

- Students must complete the appropriate General Lab Safety course(s) on Camino
- The type of Camino course(s) assigned will depend on the student's project scope or the lab/shop space
- Lab supervisors (PIs, faculty advisors, instructors, lab/shop staff, etc.) must contact the appropriate lab operations director/manager or EHS to assign the appropriate Camino course(s)

2. Lab-specific training (in person)

- Training must be conducted in person, at the lab or shop, covering the safety aspects of the space
- The EHS checklist for Technical Areas should be completed together with the student. Individual labs can create their own checklist that incorporates similar elements, or include additional elements based on the hazards and controls specific to the lab
- Refresher training should be conducted annually, or whenever protocols or equipment change

Additional or specialized training

- Some spaces (e.g. laser labs) or activities (e.g. use of radiation-producing machines, live animals, bloodborne pathogens, etc.) require training beyond the two standard levels

Once all applicable training requirements have been met, the lab supervisor can request the appropriate access manager to grant the student access to the lab or shop.

Access Expectations:

- Students may not let another untrained person (including faculty, another student, staff, or non-SCU individual) into high-risk spaces, unless special arrangements have been approved by the lab supervisor or EHS.
- Students may not leave the lab/shop door unsecured (e.g. propped open) to gain access to unauthorized areas or during unauthorized times. Doors must generally remain closed and locked outside of scheduled class periods, or when the space is unattended.
- For certain high-risk spaces, undergraduate students will not be granted after-hours access (hours outside of 7AM - 9PM Monday to Friday). Additional permission may be approved on a temporary, short-term basis to complete a specific activity or task. See **Student After-Hour Access Guidance** below for further details.

Student After-Hours Access Guidance

Standard laboratory and shop working hours are 7AM to 9PM Monday to Friday. All other times including weekends, holidays, and university closures are regarded as after hours. Work during these hours is generally not advised, and is strongly discouraged in high-risk labs. High-risk labs are defined as labs, shops, or shared spaces containing hazardous equipment or materials.

Undergraduate students are not granted lab access to certain high-risk labs after-hours. For these areas, the faculty supervisor (principal investigator, faculty advisor, instructor, etc.) may request temporary short-term after-hours access; however, this exception must be justified by a proper and specific technical need. It is not appropriate to grant exceptions for activities that can easily be completed during working hours. Approval for after-hours access is at the discretion of the faculty, keeping in mind that **PIs, advisors, and instructors bear primary responsibility and accountability for ensuring students work safely at all times**, including during after-hours activities.

Approval for after-hours access should nominally meet these criteria below:

- ☐ **Clear and specific technical need**: The after-hours activity is necessary for the student's work. The faculty advisor or instructor must confirm that the task cannot be completed during standard working hours.
- ☐ **Acceptable risk level**: The hazards and risks of the after-hours activity have been assessed and deemed acceptable. The benefit of performing the task must meaningfully outweigh the increased risk of working after hours.
- ☐ **Task cannot be performed by a non-student**: It is inappropriate for the faculty or staff to perform the after-hours activity due to a specific reason, e.g. competition rules, or specific project constraints.
- ☐ **No experienced personnel for supervision**: Experienced faculty or qualified staff are not able to accompany or supervise the student during the after-hours period.
- ☐ **Activity boundaries and limitations are defined**: What specific procedure or tasks are the student allowed or not allowed to do after hours?

- ☐ **Student competency**: The student has demonstrated adequate proficiency to perform the task or activity independently in the lab. At minimum, they must have completed all required safety training for general lab access; EHS highly recommends that the student also have substantial experience working in the specific lab before being considered for after-hours access.
- ☐ **Communication plan**: There is an established plan for after-hours communication with the student, including check-in/check-out procedures, periodic updates, emergency contacts, and protocol for reporting lab issues. The communication method must be clearly defined, accessible to the student, and confirmed to function properly.
- ☐ **Emergency preparedness**: The student must demonstrate full understanding of what to do in an emergency.
- ☐ **Compliance with working alone policy**: Student working alone policy outlined below can be met. Note: students who have not met the training or other access requirements are not allowed into high-risk wet labs and cannot be used to circumvent the working alone policy.

To grant after-hours access for your student, please fill out this form to notify the access managers. The student must already have general lab access and have met all minimum lab training requirements.

Student Working Alone Policy

A person is "alone" at a lab or shop when they cannot be seen or heard by another person, at any time, day or night. Working alone is discouraged because immediate assistance may not be available in the event of an incident. Students may not work alone without the explicit approval from the faculty, instructor, or lab supervisor for the specific activity or task. If the student is approved to work alone on a specific activity, the work must not involve hazardous materials or equipment where there is a conceivable risk that the work might cause a serious incident requiring immediate assistance.

Examples of such work are:

- Using high-hazard chemicals, e.g. pyrophoric, reactive, highly toxic or corrosive materials
- Transferring large quantities of moderately low hazard or non-hazardous chemicals, e.g. weak or dilute acids/bases, salt solutions
- Biosafety level 2 (BSL-2) work involving infectious or biohazardous materials
- Experiments involving large quantities of cryogenic materials (e.g. liquid nitrogen)
- Working with or around high voltage systems
- Experiments involving high pressure equipment or compressed gases
- Operating Class 3B or 4 lasers
- Work with heavy objects or moving machinery, e.g. lathe, drill press, overhead steel beams, large concrete specimens
- Performing high heat operations, e.g. welding, furnace
- Working inside the cold room