

BioMedical Engineering Research Core Laboratory (BMERCL) Procedures

Welcome to the BMERCL Facility. This is a Department of Mechanical Engineering multi-user laboratory with state-of-the-art instruments for biomedical research. To manage this facility and provide for the maintenance of the BMERCL equipment, the following rules, guidelines and good practices have been established. Above all, only those people who have been previously authorized are eligible to enter and use the equipment within the BMERCL.

Authorized Users:

1. Anyone requesting access to BMERCL needs approval from the Director of the BME Program, Dr. Matthew Franchek.
2. Once Dr. Franchek has approved the user, he/she will need to submit the following information to Dr. Laura Gutiérrez:
 - Full Name
 - Cougar One Card ID and color (red/black)
 - PI's Name
 - Department and Division
 - Title: Undergraduate – Graduate - Post-Doc – PI – Other (please specify)
 - Email
 - Phone Numbers (office, home and cell)
 - Laboratory Room and Building
 - Photograph
3. All users will have to sign a BMERCL Equipment Agreement and show proof of appropriate Safety Training from UH-EHRM (Chemical Safety, Hazardous Materials, Biological Safety, etc. as required for their research).
4. The BMERCL Equipment Agreement is also to be signed by the PI for each User. The PIs are ultimately responsible for all the Users under their supervision.
5. Damage to the BMERCL equipment is the sole financial responsibility of the Principal Investigator (Mentor). The details of this responsibility are provided in the BMERCL Equipment Agreement.
6. The User can only utilize the equipment for which they have been approved. Additional equipment may be added once additional BEMRCL Equipment Agreement Forms have been signed and the User has been approved by the PI.
7. Proper PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) is to be worn at all times while working in the Laboratory: closed-toe shoes, lab coat, gloves, safety glasses/goggles (as needed).
8. No food or drinks are allowed beyond the entry area (2nd set of doors).
9. The User must employ every precaution so not to contaminate any equipment (e.g., Ethidium Bromide on agarose gels)
10. The User must clean all the equipment and surrounding/set-up area before leaving the laboratory.
11. The User must report any problems with the equipment to the Lab Manager immediately (bmercl@uh.edu)
12. The User must report any spills to the Lab Manager immediately (bmercl@uh.edu), no matter how minor. The User will need to help clean/decontaminate the area as needed.

13. Training: The PIs are wholly responsible for training their Users on all matters of equipment operation and clean up, protocols and good laboratory practices. All manuals are located next to the Instruments. If the PI or User does not feel comfortable utilizing the instrument, he/she should contact the Lab Manager and arrange for more formal training. Any new User should be supervised for the first 2 weeks by a trained User, before he/she is to use the instrument on their own.
14. Consumables and Accessories: The PI needs to provide all the consumables required to use the Instruments; e.g., disposable blades and embedding medium for Microtome and Cryotome. Instrument accessories (e.g., cryocassettes) may be borrowed when the Instrument is being used, but must be cleaned and left in the BMERCL when done. **No one is to take any accessories back to the PI's laboratories.**

Observers:

1. An observer is defined as a person accompanying an authorized User to observe and/or learn how to perform experiments or use the available instruments. An observer is **not** to perform any experiment or utilize any equipment while in the BMERCL. An observer is **not** to be left alone, unsupervised in the BMERCL.
2. Any authorized User wishing to bring an observer into the BMERCL must contact the Lab Manager ahead of time and provide the following information:

About the Observer:

- Full Name
- PI's Name
- Department and Division
- Title: Undergraduate – Graduate - Post-Doc – PI – Other (please specify)

About the Visit:

- Purpose of Visit
 - Authorized User accompanying the Observer
 - Date(s) and Time(s) of visit
3. The observer cannot enter the BMERCL until the visit has been approved.

Visitors:

1. A Visitor is defined as a person accompanying a PI to tour/view the BMERCL Facilities.
2. A PI does not need prior authorization to bring a visitor into the BMERCL Facility. Out of courtesy, the PI should inform Dr. Franchek and/or the Lab Manager about this visit. If possible before it happens, if not after the fact.