

DIRECTIVES, ORDINANCES

General Laboratory and Workshop Regulations of the University of Vienna

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General Laboratory and Workshop Regulations of the University of Vienna

The General Laboratory and Workshop Regulations define framework conditions and basic rules of conduct. They lay down general rules, provide recommendations for conduct in work environments that present potentially straining conditions and hazards and govern the handling of hazardous work equipment and substances.

The Laboratory Regulations are based on all applicable legal stipulations and rules, particularly the Austrian Worker Protection Act (ASchG) including all relevant directives as well as the General Fire Safety Regulations and House Rules of the University of Vienna.

The Laboratory Regulations also apply to storage rooms in which materials for laboratories and workshops are kept.

1. General Provisions

The General Laboratory and Workshop Regulations are applicable to all laboratories, workshops and storage rooms housing hazardous substances that are part of the University of Vienna's organisational structure.

At the University of Vienna, areas in which experiments, tests, analyses and measurements are carried out are referred to and marked as laboratories. Workshops are those areas in which existing tools and machinery are used to manufacture, process or repair objects.

Every workshop and laboratory must draft special laboratory and workshop regulations in cooperation with accident prevention staff, which form an integral part of these Laboratory Regulations. The laboratories are categorised based on their equipment, the work materials or instruments used and the work methods applied.

The General Laboratory and Workshop Regulations and the pertaining special regulations of the University's laboratories and workshops must be posted in the respective organisational units and subunits and made available to all employees and students working in the laboratories/workshops in a digital format.

The safety regulations apply to all those present in the laboratories/workshops regardless of whether they are employees, students, affiliated with the University of Vienna in another way, guests or staff of external companies.

All people in a laboratory/workshop have to abide by the respective laboratory's/workshop's applicable safety rules.

1.1. Laboratory and Workshop Management

The responsible person is the head of the respective organisational unit, who can delegate responsibility to the head of the subunit to whose building or organisation the laboratory/storage room/workshop belongs. This person is responsible for publishing the Laboratory Regulations and ensuring compliance. They are also responsible for the facilities and technical equipment and their soundness, for organising maintenance work and posting mandatory, prohibition and information signs. The person responsible must ensure that compliance with the Laboratory Regulations is monitored during operation and that a potential defect or shortcoming is reported by employees qualified for this purpose (laboratory or workshop managers).

The head of the respective organisational unit is responsible for assigning all laboratories, storage rooms and workshops within their unit to qualified employees (laboratory or workshop managers) in accordance with the heads of the subunits. These assignments and any changes to them must be reported to the University management in writing.

If laboratories/workshops are jointly used by several organisational units or subunits, the head of the organisational unit in whose rooms the laboratory or workshop is located is responsible for appointing a coordinating laboratory manager (or workshop manager). All measures aimed at preventing physical harm to people employed in the laboratory or workshop as well as protecting the environment and conserving resources must be discussed and coordinated.

The contact information of the laboratory/workshop manager as well as other people who may be contacted in case of an emergency must be posted at all entries to the laboratory/workshop.

If a facility poses particular hazards to the people present, the competent organisational or subunit head can draft additional rules for the laboratory or workshop as well as work instructions in cooperation with the competent accident prevention staff to be heeded within this unit. The Rectorate is entitled to suspend such additional rules at any time.

2. General Laboratory and Safety Guidelines

Access

Anyone who accesses or works in the various laboratories/workshops must be supervised or undergo prior instruction with regard to the General Laboratory and Workshop Regulations and the respective special laboratory/workshop regulations.

Access by third parties

Anyone not affiliated with the University, such as guests or employees of external companies, may only access laboratories/workshops under supervision or if instructed prior to their visit. The instructions of the employees must be followed at all times.

Instruction

The scope and kind of instruction provided must match the work to be conducted and the associated hazards and potential strains as well as the prior knowledge of the person receiving the instruction.

All people working in laboratories/workshops must be instructed by the competent laboratory/workshop manager before their first day in the respective facility and subsequently once a year. This must be documented including the contents of instruction. Such instructions must cover specific hazards and potential strains in addition to safety precautions, conduct in case of fire or another emergency and information on mandatory personal protective equipment (PPE).

Furthermore, all concerned people must receive instructions on safe use before handling work equipment which pose hazards or might give rise to potential strains for the first time, in the event of changes to work processes and if there are new insights (for instance following a near miss).

The intervals of such instructions are set in cooperation with the respective safety representative and safety personnel but must not exceed a year.

Repeat instructions are not necessary if the people to be instructed have acquired adequate knowledge about work procedures and handling work equipment/substances in the course of their education or past professional experience.

The people instructed must confirm in writing that they have received, acknowledged and fully comprehended the instructions. This documentation must be stored by the subunit and as part of occupational safety and health documentation.

A clean and tidy workplace

All people working in the laboratories must act in a way that prevents hazards as far as possible. If a task that poses a high risk is carried out, anyone working in the immediate vicinity must be informed.

Cleanliness, tidiness and hygiene throughout all laboratory/workshop areas promote safety and are thus a top priority.

It is strictly forbidden to consume food or beverages in a laboratory/workshop.

Work equipment that is no longer needed, such as any kind of laboratory glassware used, must be cleaned and returned to their spot after a task has been completed.

Waste must be collected, sorted according to the fractions specified by the waste representative and brought to the location specified for disposal.

Any shortcomings must be reported to the laboratory or workshop manager without fail. The safety representative or safety personnel will provide assistance in correcting these shortcomings. They must also be informed about constructional modifications and the use of new work equipment and substances.

Laboratory and workshop doors must be locked when not occupied.

The people using the laboratories and workshops are responsible for cleaning them. An exception only applies to the areas in which cleaning staff who has not been instructed accordingly will not come into direct contact with hazardous work equipment or substances.

Attention

It must be ensured that alarm systems can be heard and seen in all laboratory and workshop areas at all times. It is forbidden to play loud music or listen to it using headphones or earbuds. Any obligation to wear personal protective equipment is not affected by this rule.

Working alone

Whether working alone is permissible depends on the type of laboratory or workshop and the task completed. The laboratory or workshop manager lays down in writing which tasks can in principle be completed while working alone.

When working outside of operation hours or during the weekends, effective safety precautions and measures ensuring supervision must be taken so that first aid could be provided within an “acceptable time” following a potential accident or sudden sickness. If this cannot be ensured, working alone is not allowed.

Whenever anyone completes a task with an increased risk of accident that would require immediate first aid, another person **must** be within eye- **and** earshot. If this is not ensured, it is prohibited to work alone. For some risks, working alone is always prohibited as the maximum time by which aid must be provided is, at zero to a few minutes, extremely short (this applies to, e.g., risk of suffocation or losing consciousness upon exposure to chemical substances/gases, etc.).

Unsupervised experiments and processes

These must be approved by the laboratory management following a hazard analysis (e.g. in the event of a power or cooling water outage, etc.). As a minimum, the contact information of the responsible person, hazard notices and instructions on how to safely disassemble the experiment in case of an emergency must be posted in a clearly visible way.

Protection of pregnant and breastfeeding women

The Austrian Maternity Protection Act (MSchG) as amended applies to pregnant and breastfeeding women employed at the University of Vienna. It stipulates that they are not allowed to work with hazardous substances, biological agents, in rooms with ionising radiation or wherever they would be exposed to further risks pursuant to section 4 para. 2 (see general maternity protection evaluation for laboratories). The types of activities a pregnant employee may complete depend on the outcome of an individual evaluation pursuant to the Maternity Protection Act undertaken by an occupational healthcare professional of the University of Vienna.

The stipulations of the Maternity Protection Act analogously apply to all other pregnant or breastfeeding women (including students) who access a laboratory or workshop. They are obliged to discuss potential risks with their physician. If there are potential hazards, they are prohibited to work or attend a practical course held at a laboratory or in a workshop.

3. Handling Noise and Vibration Hazards

Particularly the Austrian Ordinance Governing the Protection of Workers from Hazards Caused by Noise and Vibration (VOLV) as amended – see list of legal sources – applies to all laboratories and workshops that are part of the organisational structure of the University of Vienna in which noise and vibration occur and is an integral part of the Laboratory Regulations.

4. Handling Hazardous Substances

The respective regulations of chemicals as amended are part of these Laboratory Regulations and apply to all laboratories and workshops integrated in the organisational structure of the University of Vienna

- in which experiments, tests, analyses and measurements are carried out;
- in which hazardous substances are handled.

Substances denote all materials, preparations and biological agents used for work. To 'use' also encompasses obtaining, producing, accruing, arising, consuming, using up, modifying, processing, bottling, re-filling, mixing, disposing of, storing, keeping, stockpiling for use and transporting within the unit.

Hazardous substances can be solids, liquids or gases. The Laboratory Regulations furthermore also apply to dusts regardless of type and origin and to aerosols.

Handling biological agents

The Austrian Ordinance on Biological Agents (VbA) and further subject-specific legal sources as amended – see list of legal sources – apply to all laboratories within the organisational structure of the University of Vienna in which biological agents are used and are an integral part of the Laboratory Regulations. In particular, the organisational measures outlined in these documents must be implemented.

Handling radioactive substances

Legal stipulations and individual administrative decisions by the competent authorities lay down the safety rules for handling radioactive substances.

5. Handling Ionising, Optical and Electromagnetic Radiation

Particularly the Austrian Ordinance on Optical Radiation (VOPST) as amended, the Austrian Ordinance on Electromagnetic Fields (VEMF) and the Austrian Radiation Protection Act as amended – see list of legal sources – are an integral part of the Laboratory Regulations and apply to all laboratories and workshops within the organisational structure of the University of Vienna in which such radiation occurs. Where applicable, a laser safety representative must be appointed.

6. Work Equipment

6.1. General Provisions

Only work equipment that satisfies the applicable legal stipulations with regard to design, construction and further protective measures may be made available.

If new work equipment is purchased that is labelled according to the applicable legal stipulations, it can be assumed that it satisfies European safety standards with regard to design, construction and further protective measures.

A work tool bearing the CE marking can be considered to meet the required standard. For work equipment without CE marking, the competent subunit head must conduct or commission a **hazard analysis** including documentation, which must be stored together with the work equipment. Documentation must include potential strains, hazards, required measures, safety precautions and content to be mentioned in instructions. The hazard analysis can be carried out by competent employees in collaboration with the laboratory management and, where necessary, safety personnel of the University of Vienna and may involve internal and external staff.

If **work equipment is modified** or used for a purpose other than the one for which it was originally intended, the CE marking is no longer valid and a hazard analysis must be carried out.

6.2. Duty of Care

All work equipment must always be used or employed properly, according to the manuals and exercising due care.

If there are safety hazards, suitable protective measures must be implemented to rule out accidents at work.

Safety equipment may only be dismantled, bypassed or removed by qualified personnel for a limited period of time, for instance to carry out maintenance work. In such a case, adequate organisational and personal protective measures must be implemented.

6.3. Inspection Obligations

Always carry out a visual inspection before putting work equipment to use. It is forbidden to operate damaged facilities and machines.

For work equipment subject to a regular test of their functions, the tests must be carried out in the prescribed intervals. Any damage to work equipment detected must be labelled, reported and repaired.

Test books and protocols must be kept and made available to the subunit's head.

The following applies:

- Tests must only be carried out by competent, respectively trained and authorised personnel of the University of Vienna, chartered engineering consultants or companies according to their respective authorisation.
- These tests must be carried out in compliance with the applicable standards and rules and using state-of-the-art methods, all of which must be documented in the test protocols.
- The intervals for tests stipulated by the law and the respective distributor must be abided by.
- Written test documentation and protocols must be kept, and a copy must be stored together with the safety and health documentation.

7. Fire and Explosion Protection

The General Fire Safety Regulations of the University of Vienna lay down basic rules of conduct, which are binding for everyone at the University. Furthermore, there are side letters on fire safety for individual buildings providing guidelines for conduct at these locations.

Fire safety equipment must not be turned off. It is prohibited to wedge open fire doors.

Tasks that pose a fire hazard must be authorised in writing before they can be carried out. Tasks that exceed regular activities carried out in a laboratory or workshop (e.g. use of a Bunsen burner) may only be completed upon authorisation by the competent fire safety officer. If deemed necessary, a person should be appointed as fire watch, also beyond the completion of the task.

If a fire is detected, the fire service must be contacted immediately. Instructions by evacuation officers must be followed at all times.

8. Conduct in an Emergency and First Aid

If an alarm has been set off, operations in the laboratory/workshop must be stopped without delay in an orderly way that minimises hazards and everyone must leave the University building via the marked escape routes.

In case of a fire or if an alarm has been set off, organisational and/or technical measures must be taken to enable people with a sensory impairment or reduced mobility to leave the University building quickly and without encountering obstacles.

See the respective appendix to these Laboratory Regulations for basic first-aid principles.

The substances used for work in laboratories and workshops include substances with a high risk potential. Depending on the substance, different kinds of first aid must be provided; see the specialised first-aid instructions on the safety data sheets for details.

In the event of an accident involving a hazardous substance, give the respective safety data sheet and, where applicable, the work documentation to the injured person or, if this is impossible, the paramedics.

Always keep the following in mind:

- Protect yourself!
- If there are injured people, provide first aid and immediately call for more help. Call an ambulance if needed (in case of doubt, call one).
- In the event of an accident in which a person has inhaled or swallowed and/or had skin contact with a hazardous substance, call the Austrian **Poisons Information Centre (+43(0)1 406 43 43)**.
- Accidents and near misses must be reported without delay.

9. Final Provisions

The General Laboratory and Workshop Regulations are a Rectorate guideline.

Appendixes:

See <https://rrm.univie.ac.at/en/downloads/>

1. Laboratory and Workshop Managers
2. Noise and Vibration
3. Hazardous Substances
- 4a First Aid
- 4b. First Aid in a Suspected COVID-19 Case
- 5a Handling Toxins
- 5b. Handling Toxins / Process Description

List of legal sources:

See <https://rrm.univie.ac.at/en/downloads/>

The Vice-Rector:

Hitzenberger