



**WPI**

Department of  
Physics

# Lab Policies and Guidelines

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# 1 Welcome to Introductory Physics Labs!

Welcome to Introductory Physics Labs! Physics is an experimental science and the laboratory experiments are intended to provide hands-on illustrations of the physics laws you will learn in physics lectures. The Physics Labs will help you develop laboratory skills such as performing measurements, experimental design and troubleshooting, analysis and presentation of the results, error analysis as well as effective collaboration. This term you will perform five lab experiments on topics related to the Introductory Physics lecture content.

## 2 Lab Policies and Classroom Expectations

### 2.1 Equipment and Space

Introductory Physics Labs utilize different sensors with the corresponding interface, and the Logger Pro data collection and analysis software, developed by Vernier Science Education. The LoggerPro software is free and you can download it from the Canvas links as follows:

LoggerPro for Windows

Logger Pro for Mac

We may use the new version of web-based Vernier data collection software Graphical Analysis

Hundreds of students use the laboratory rooms each week. Please demonstrate respect for the environment and the equipment in the room and clear your workspace before you leave the lab.

- Make sure that the equipment is left organized at your station and report any equipment malfunction to your TA.
- Lab stations are numbered and you should not replace equipment/parts from one station to another. If you suspect any equipment malfunction, please let your lab instructor know. They will test and replace the faulty part in a timely manner.

- Before you leave, please switch off and/or disconnect all equipment except the computer at your station.
- The computers are part of the lab equipment and must be handled with care as well.
- **No food or drinks are allowed in the Lab.** You can have a sealed water container which can be consumed away from the lab station.

## 2.2 Rules of Conduct and Lab Safety

All students and TA's have the right to feel safe and respected in WPI Physics Labs. Students and TA's are expected to behave in professional manner. PH1120 Labs are on Electricity and Magnetism and you will be using different Vernier sensors and the corresponding interface. Your Lab instructor will review the basic lab safety in the beginning of each lab. In addition there is a Lab Safety document you need to read and a Lab Safety Quiz posted on Canvas that is due before the first Lab class.

Please know that lab ends on the 1 hr and 50 minute mark, so please try and keep any breaks you take short enough that you finish your entire lab experiment. The PH11XX Labs are designed in such a way that you should be able to complete all data collection during the lab period. In most cases you will probably be able to finish a good part of the data analysis too.

Make sure you know the name(s) of your lab instructor and their email(s). **If you are writing an email to your lab instructor(s), please make sure you start with the number of your section.** You lab instructor(s) may teach more than one lab section.

## 2.3 Attendance and Make-up Policies

**Introductory Physics labs are in person.**

**You are required to attend ALL lab classes. If you miss a lab class, you will receive a zero for this lab.** Make your best effort to arrive for the lab on time as your lab instructors will discuss the experiment and the relevant physics concepts in the first 15 minutes of the class.

An excused absence is a lab absence where the student has notified their lab instructor in advance of their absence. Students are required to arrange a make-up lab session. **You cannot make up more than TWO Labs.**

- If you miss a lab we will not re-schedule a lab time for you. You can NOT attend another lab section without receiving explicit permission from your lab instructor(s) and the lab instructor(s) in that second lab.
- If a student misses class it is their responsibility to reach out to their lab instructor and arrange for another possible time to carry out the lab experiment. It is not the Lab Instructor's job to find them to make up the lab. Please know that there are many lab sections that use the same lab space which may limit the possible times for making up the lab experiment you missed.
- In the rare situation a student has missed more than one lab experiment due to documented long term illness as described in **Medical Excuse WPI policies** you need to email both your lab instructor and the lab manager Dr.Veneta Tountcheva at vtountchva@wpi.edu.
- In the event of inclement weather you will be notified in advance about the Lab make up plan
- In the case of an excused absence (as described above) you need to email your lab instructor(s) to schedule potential make-up lab time. **You need to make up the missed lab within one week after your absence.** If you are not able to make up the lab within one week after the absence you need to contact the Labs manager Dr. Veneta Tountcheva at vtountcheva@wpi.edu.
- WPI Physics Labs provide Open Lab time (for a make-up or finish an experiment you have started but not completed) as per corresponding Lab Schedule posted each term on Canvas). The open lab session will be in a designated Lab space and may or may not be staffed with TA/PLA. If the TA/PLA is not available and you need some assistance with the lab, please email the Physics Lab Manager Dr.Veneta Tountcheva at vtountcheva@wpi.edu or stop by their office OH 125.

## 2.4 How to prepare for the Labs

Some of the lab experiments may not be on the same weekly lecture topic, i.e. the experiment may be perceived as somewhat disconnected from what

you are currently learning in your lecture section. In order to carry out the experiment in the allocated lab time you need to be familiar with the concepts covered in the corresponding experiment. One way to do this is to read the Lab handout posted on Canvas in advance and review the relevant concept(s) in your textbook.

Each Lab consists of the following:

- **PreLab:** a Pre Lab activity/quiz is posted on Canvas and must be completed before attending the lab class. The questions in the Pre Lab activity/quiz are designed to prepare you for the experiment and sometimes review the relevant physics concepts. This is a part of your lab grade.
- **Introduction:** your Lab instructor will give you a short (10-15minutes) introduction to the lab experiment, lab safety and the analysis of your experimental results
- **Lab Experiment** described in the handout: this is the most important part of each lab and you are expected to make your best effort to carry out the experiment and collect the data you need. This will be done in a team of two students (rarely three) and you **MUST** complete the experiment before you leave the lab. The data analysis can be done outside of the lab class. You will use these results to perform the required data analysis and complete the worksheets/reports posted on Canvas. Make sure you save all your data in a shared with your lab partner(s) document which also may be a Logger Pro file.

## 2.5 Getting Help

If you need extra time to complete the Lab experiment you can use the Makeup time (check the weekly announcements on Canvas). You can also email **your lab instructor** with additional questions or to request help to complete the lab worksheet/report. Make sure you know the name of your Lab instructor(s) and their email.

### 3 Due Dates and Grading

All Lab worksheets/reports must be submitted within one week after the Lab class.

For example, if you have lab on Tuesday, your lab is due the next Tuesday by 9:00pm. If you have lab on Wednesday your lab is due the next Wednesday by 9:00pm. There are sometime exceptions to this, for example a holiday or the end of the term, but generally your lab is due 7 days after you perform the lab.

All grading is done via rubrics that are posted on Canvas submission link. All submissions will be graded within 1 week (at most) of submission.

Your Lab grade includes the following:

- Lab Policies, Guidelines and Safety Survey - 5 pts
- PreLab Quiz - 5 pts(if any, may vary for different Labs)
- Lab Worksheet with Data Analysis and Questions or Report - 20 pts (may vary for different Labs)
- TA End of Term Feedback Survey - 2 pts extra credit

At the end of the term we sum all of the points you have accumulated throughout the term and that is your final grade in points. That grade will be converted to percentage and sent to your lecture professor to be scaled to whatever percentage lab grade is as a proportion of their course.

**If you are submitting a past due lab worksheet/report your Lab Instructor will apply late penalties 1 point per day.**

### 4 Extensions

**The maximum allowed number of extensions per term is TWO. If you ask for a third extension you need to specify the reason for it and you may be asked to show proof of visit if the reason specified is medical.** If you are unable to complete the Lab worksheet/report on time (as described in the previous section) you must email your Lab Instructor. Our general working hours are from 9 - 4pm, Monday through Friday, and we typically respond within **two working days**. If you email on the weekends or after hours you will not hear back until the next working day. **If you**

**send us a Canvas message we might not respond at all, so please send us messages via email.**

If it is a question about lab scheduling please ask your Lab Instructor first and if they don't know, please contact the Labs Manager Dr. Veneta Tountcheva vtountcheva@wpi.edu.

If it is a personal or sensitive topic please feel free to reach out via email to your Lab Instructors or Labs Manager. This includes requests for accommodations, grading issues or concerns about safety in lab. If you have **any** concerns about personal safety please email Veneta (vtountcheva@wpi.edu).

Dr.Veneta Tountcheva has office hours Friday 10-12 OH125 or in some occasions via Zoom. Students who come to office hours with administrative questions will be given priority, but if you wish to ask for help with the labs themselves you are welcome to do so as well. If you message Veneta on Canvas she might not see it, so please email her at vtountcheva@wpi.edu.

If you have any questions about the labs please do **not contact your lecture course professor**, please contact your Lab Instructors or Labs Manager.

## 5 Lab Submission Rules

- Lab materials (including Canvas quizzes) are due by 9:00 PM on the day they are due, according to the schedule described in section 3 Due Dates and Grades.
- Labs must be submitted on Canvas as a PDF file. Please convert your lab into a PDF before submitting your lab. Each partner must submit their own copy of the lab on Canvas. **Though numerical data and calculations may be shared between partners, any conceptual questions must be answered separately.** If you are not sure whether a question qualifies as conceptual, ask your Lab Instructor. Identical lab reports will receive a grade of zero for both lab partners! After you submit your lab, check whether your lab was correctly uploaded and that it is not blank or corrupted.
- You must show all work, such that someone reading your lab would be able to replicate all of your calculations. Make sure that your graphs have captions and all your axes are labeled and all labels are big enough to be read when you copy them into your lab report. In LoggerPro, this

is easily accomplished either by shrinking the graph before you copy it or by increasing the font size. Every answer should be presented in scientific notation and will have the appropriate number of significant figures, including uncertainties. Answers given without units will not receive full credit.

- Lab submissions must be black text on a white background.
- **Your physics grade depends on attending and submitting ALL labs in this course. Failure to complete labs may result in an NR for your course.**

## 6 Accessibility

Please reach out to the Lab Manager ([vtountcheva@wpi.edu](mailto:vtountcheva@wpi.edu)) if you want to talk about accessibility of the labs. We are happy to support students with physical, learning, sensory, psychological, developmental, and other disabilities, whether you have official accommodations or not.

### 6.1 Accessibility statement from WPI

Students with approved academic accommodations should plan to submit their accommodation letters through the Office of Accessibility Services Student Portal. Should you have any questions about how accommodations can be implemented in this particular course, please contact me at [vtountcheva@wpi.edu](mailto:vtountcheva@wpi.edu) as soon as possible. Students who are not currently registered with the Office of Accessibility Services (OAS) but who would like to find out more information regarding requesting accommodations and what that entails should plan to contact them via email: [AccessibilityServices@wpi.edu](mailto:AccessibilityServices@wpi.edu) and/or via phone: (508) 831-4908.

### 6.2 Possible Accommodations (NOT EXHAUSTIVE)

- Logger pro offers assistance if you are low vision.
- If you need more time we have open lab hours. There might not be a TA there to help, but Veneta is across the hall if anything goes wrong.

- If you miss a lab please contact your TA or Veneta, often we will either ask you to go to open lab hours, or perform the associated remote lab.
- Please feel free to take breaks during lab, and you do not have to ask your TA if you can leave.
- If you're having trouble hearing your TA or peer's they will be happy to speak up, or we have speakers we can equip our Lab TA's with. Please contact Veneta or your lab instructor ahead of time to ensure the speaker for your class.

**For those on limited screen time:**

- You can write out your written responses on paper, and submit a photo of that work. Or hand it to your Lab TA (or in Veneta's mailbox) if that's easier.
- Your lab partner can work the computer, and submit graphs and or Python code on both of your behalf.
- We can offer verbal lab reports where you answer the questions out loud to your lab instructor, and they grade you there.

**For those with noise or light sensitivity:**

- You are welcome to request the lights to be dimmed, as the overhead lights can be far too bright for anyone, even without being light sensitive.
- If you need a quiet space you are welcome to step into our spare lab, Olin 114, which is often unused. We can even setup an experimental setup there if you prefer to work in a quieter space (with your lab partners too if you prefer to work with someone).
- Alternatively you can come in at another time (say open lab) and work on the lab in an empty room. Just pop in to ask Veneta in OH125 if you need any help.
- Things taking longer than normal: We are always happy to grant extensions for however long students need, for any reason. If necessary we offer an 'open extension' where students have until the end of the term to submit the labs.

## 7 Academic Honesty

Please review WPI's policies on Academic Honesty. What this means for lab is that your words and your work should be your own. Below is a list of possible common misconceptions regarding academic honesty. This is not an exhaustive list, and if you have any questions/concerns, please do not hesitate to contact you lab instructor(s) and/or the labs manager.

- Lab partners cannot have **identical** answers to theoretical questions (the questions where we require you to write a few sentences), and we would consider answers that are exactly the same academic dishonesty.
- Lab partners cannot have **similar** answers to theoretical questions. **Paraphrasing is a form of copying and is not allowed.** Similar conceptual answers will receive a grade of zero for both lab partners!
- Do not send other students your lab reports, even your partner or your friends. If someone copies the lab report you sent them you can also be held responsible for an academic honesty violation (facilitation).
- Sharing a google doc of your written work that your lab partner then submits is considered an academic honesty violation (facilitation).
- Students should share their data taken in lab with their in person lab partner. Lab partners should not share data with students who did not attend lab even if these students are their partners in this lab section. If you miss a lab, please review the make-up policy described in section 2.3 Attendance and Make-Up Policies.
- Submitting data you did not collect will be considered academic dishonesty.
- Students who work together need to include their partners names at the top of their worksheets. If you are not sure and have concerns about what can be considered academic dishonesty please talk to your Lab Instructor! You will not be punished for asking!
- **Generative AI usage policy:** If you decide to use Generative AI it should be supplemental to your own work. You cannot give an assignment prompt as input and paste the output as your submission. The

latter is an academic integrity violation unless the assignment explicitly states doing this as part of the assignment. You cannot use Generative AI to paraphrase the answers of your partner(s). This is also a violation of WPI academic integrity policy. Last but not least if you decide to use Generative AI please be advised of the following policy WPI AI interim policy.

- Within Canvas we are using Turnitin Similarity checker. If Turnitin flags your work above 35 percent similarity or reports AI usage we may ask you to rewrite your report the first time. The second time you will automatically receive zero for this report. Using Grammarly will also raise the Turnitin flag and you should not use it when writing your report. You can use the Microsoft Word spelling checker instead.

If you are not sure about our academic integrity policy, please ask your lab instructor(s) before you submit your work. You can also check your work for similarities on Canvas.

## 8 End of the Term

In order to grade late submission within the corresponding term **All labs need to be submitted on the day specified in the Labs Calendar**. If the Lab worksheets/reports are not submitted by that date, we cannot guarantee your work will be graded on time for grade submission as specified by WPI registrar.

After the term has ended you should contact your lecture professor about an incomplete if you still have outstanding lab worksheets/reports you wish to submit.

An incomplete gives you the opportunity to earn credit for the past due lab worksheets/reports. If that is your situation please reach out to the lab manager, vtountcheva@wpi.edu **after you talk to your lecture professor** so that your lab grade can be updated accordingly. For more information on what an incomplete means for financial aid purposes please see . Again, we cannot promise that labs submitted after the term has ended will count towards your final grade without the extra time to grade and record the grades.