Innovation Core Guidelines

Please review the following policies and procedures carefully before making your first reservation.

Access Policy

Only users trained by core staff may operate the Weill microscopes. Trained users **may not** train others or book equipment on their behalf.

The core relies on user honesty. **Do not use or stay on an instrument without a booking**—violations will result in loss of access. If you have trouble booking, email me for assistance even after hours/weekends.

Plan reservations carefully to avoid cancellation fees. Cancellations or modifications within **48 hours** of the start time will incur a fee (% of the reservation cost), cancellations after the start of your reservation are full price.

Book microscopes and workstations through **iLab (Weill Innovation Core)**. Do not book under another user's account, even if using the same payment source. To transfer a reservation to someone else in your lab, email me.

General Use Rules

Respect the equipment and other users. These instruments are expensive and require careful handling.

If something is not functioning properly or a system is left dirty, **report it immediately** via email.

No gloves are allowed when handling microscope enclosures, controls, or acquisition PCs.

End your session on time. Stop imaging early enough to save/transfer data and clean up before the next user's scheduled time. If another user delays your access at the start of your session, **let me know**.

If no one is booked after you, you may extend your session by making a new reservation in iLab before your initial one ends. Add **"last minute"** in the notes so it does not count against your weekly limit.

In **LASX**, use the **pre-calibrated "carrier" settings** whenever possible to prevent objective damage, especially for 20X and higher magnifications. Ask me if you need help with this.

At the end of each imaging session:

- Lower the objective turret and switch to the lowest magnification. Turn off the system (and PC for some)
- Fully close the enclosure. Turn off gas and temperature controls if used.
- Clean up (remove oil, spills, and put waste in trash bins).

Booking Rules

You can find these rules stated above each instrument calendar: Each instrument may be booked for up to **12 hours per week (8 AM–8 PM)**, up to **14 days in advance**. An additional **12 hours per week** may be booked for nights and weekends.

Last-minute bookings (same-day or next-day after 6 PM) do not count toward your weekly limit. Mark these as **"last minute sign-up"** in the reservation notes.

Unauthorized bookings exceeding the weekly limit **will be deleted without notice**. If you need an extended booking beyond 12 hours per week or further in advance, email me for approval.

Communications

After training, you will be added to the **Weill Innovation Core MS Teams Channel**, the **only** platform for core-related communications. It is mandatory for users to **set up email notifications for the channels of the instruments they use to** ensure you receive updates without needing to check Teams frequently. Instructions can be found here. The MS Teams channel also contains helpful resources, including **equipment guides and documentation**.

Acknowledgments

Acknowledgments are crucial for securing funding and maintaining the core. Please remember to acknowledge the "Innovation Core at the Weill Institute for Neurosciences" in any **publications/presentation/grant application that include data acquired/to be acquired at the core**. Please see guidelines here, Email me when publishing or receiving funding using core data so I can add them to my list.

Safety

Keep your **laser safety training** up to date. After the initial laser safety training, valid one year, you can take a laser safety refresher course (valid 3 years).

Research involving live samples with **recombinant DNA, infectious, or pathogenic biological agents** requires a **BUA approved by UCSF**. Remember to list the BUA number in your training request. This is not required for fixed samples. Your BUA must list the Innovation Core rooms as authorized locations, and you must follow all approved SOPs.

File Storage

Save all files **at the end of each session**. Acquisition PC **image/data drives are for temporary storage only**. Files older than **30 days will be deleted without notice in room 451J.** That limit is 15 days for the **HTai, and one week for the SmartSPIM.**

In cases of limited storage, I may need to delete more **recent** files (especially on **widefield and HTAi systems**). Always **backup your data**.

All acquisition PCs (except the manual stereo microscope) have a **link to the Innovation Core Server (WINC on the Z drive)** for **medium-term storage**. This allows easy access from the workstations. **Do not rely on the server as your only backup**.

Workstations

Instrument training grants **automatic access** to the two **451J workstations**. Available software includes **Fiji, CellProfiler, MicroManager, Imaris Free Viewer** (open-source software)

Workstation 1 has a Full **LASX** suite, including a **FLIM analysis module.** Please favor Workstation 2 if you do not plan to use LASX.