Policy for Instructional Laboratory Safety
Department of Computer and Software
McMaster University

Revised: July 23, 2024

1 Introduction

This document describes the policy for the safe operation of the instructional laboratories of the Department of Computing and Software (CAS). The purpose of the policy is threefold:

1. To ensure that the CAS instructional laboratories are a healthy and safe environment for the students using them.

2. To instill in the students in CAS programs a culture of safety that they will take with them after leaving McMaster University.

3. To establish how the responsibility for health and safety in the CAS instructional laboratories is shared among the students, Teaching Assistants (TAs), instructors, and the Department administration.

2 Course Guidelines

The CAS document "Guideline for Instructional Laboratory Safety" is a guideline for the healthy and safe operation of the CAS instructional laboratories. It contains safety information that is common to all the CAS instructional laboratories.

Each instructor for a CAS course that utilizes a CAS instructional laboratory is required to use the Guideline as a template to produce a *course*

guideline for instructional laboratory safety in his or her course.[1] The instructor puts in the Appendix of the Guideline document a description of laboratory hazards and operating procedures that are specific to the course. See the Guideline document for details of how a course guideline is produced from it.

The course guideline should be disseminated to the students of the course via the course web site or via Avenue to Learn.

3 Student Instruction

The instructor and TAs for a laboratory course are expected to have completed all required University Health and Safety (UHS) training and to know all the information in the course guideline. The first lab session of the course should include an hour-long lecture on health and safety in the instructional laboratories used for course. The lecture should contain the following three components:

1. An introduction to importance of safety in the work of engineers and computing professionals.

2. A presentation of the material in the course guideline common to all the CAS instructional glaboratories.

3. A presentation of the material in the appendix of course guideline specific to the course itself.

The lecture is just as important for courses that utilize computer labs as courses that utilize labs with significant safety hazards. The goal should be to instill a culture of safety in the students even when safety hazards are minimal.

At the end of the lecture each student in the course must pass a quiz on the information given in the safety lecture. A student will be permitted to use the course instructional laboratories only after the quiz has been passed. The records of the quiz results shall be kept by the instructor and the Department for a least seven years.

[1] This includes instructors for courses that utilize only inherently safe laboratories like computer labs.

4 Laboratory Supervision

The Guideline document delineates how the responsibility for the supervision of CAS instructional laboratories is shared among students, TAs, instructors, and the CAS administration. Department oversight of the instructional laboratories is provided by the Department Laboratory Supervisor (who is also the Chair of the Department Lab Committee) with the assistance of the Department Laboratory Instructor.

The Department Laboratory Supervisor must ensure that the CAS instructional laboratories are healthy and safe and that the instructors of courses using instructional laboratories are performing their health and safety duties. The Department Laboratory Supervisor reports on health and safety issues to the Department Chair.

The Department Laboratory Instructor oversees the laboratories on a daily basis. The Labratory Instructor also conducts a formal inspection of each CAS instructional laboratory once a month and submits an inspection report to the Department Laboratory Supervisor.

Instructors and TAs report health and safety concerns to either the Department Laboratory Supervisor or the Department Laboratory Instructor. Concerns of a serious nature should be reported to both the Department Laboratory Supervisor and the Department Chair.

See the Guideline document for further details.

5 Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed by the Department Chair at the end of each academic year in consultation with the Department Supervisor and the Department Health and Safety Committee (HSC).