

# Lamsdell Lab Handbook

Policies and procedures  
for  
Dr. James Lamsdell's Paleobiology Lab  
at  
West Virginia University  
detailing both  
rules of conduct  
and  
work guidelines



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## Welcome

This document is primarily intended for members of my lab, or for those of you thinking about joining my lab. If, however, you are reading this to get an idea of the kind of policies that are in place for other labs, I hope you find this useful, and am always interested in hearing feedback.

I have attempted to keep this document relatively short so as to avoid it becoming too onerous a read, but there is quite a lot that needs covering; hopefully this succeeds in treading that line. What a person or organization feels is important enough to put into their policy documents can tell you a lot about what they value; I hope that this document communicates that my priorities are the people that make up the lab and the paleontological community and to do excellent, innovative research together. The aim is for my lab to be safe, inclusive, and respectful and to train people the intellectual rigor and scientific innovation is something that can only truly flourish in an equitable and caring community.

Aspects of the policies set out in this handbook have been borrowed and developed from a number of my colleagues, especially Dr. Sarah Sheffield at USF and Dr. Charlie Shobe at WVU.

## Goals

Regardless of career stage (undergraduate, graduate, postdoc, PI), our goals are threefold:

1. Conduct research that excites you and advances the field.
2. Gain skills and experience to advance towards your next career goal.
3. Make a difference in the community (however you define it) through your research, teaching, outreach, and/or service.

## Professional conduct

Our lab is one that should exist as a space for everyone to grow and feel comfortable in, where we can be appreciated and supported as individuals. That means that we honor and respect the uniqueness that every student brings to the lab. We model appropriate language, use correct pronouns, pronounce names correctly, and apologize if we fall short in creating an inclusive lab space.

If you witness, hear about, or are the subject of harassment or abuse, you can (and should) report it to the university. You can do so through the form here:

[https://wvu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0IKdeIGf4QeEUxT](https://wvu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0IKdeIGf4QeEUxT)

You can specify whether you were the victim or not, who the victim was, who the perpetrator was, and give information. Also note that I am a mandatory reporter. If I am made aware of anything that has happened, I am obliged to report it. I will include you in the report, but they only contact the victim and will reach out to the reporter only if more details are required.

You can find more details on reporting and resources here:

<https://diversity.wvu.edu/equity-assurance/resources-and-reporting-options>

Information on the process and procedures: <https://diversity.wvu.edu/equity-assurance/policies-and-procedures>

And what is covered in terms of the sorts of things that can and should be reported:

<https://policies.wvu.edu/finalized-bog-rules/bog-governance-rule-1-6-rule>

Note that this includes all harassment and stalking.

### Safe working environment

It is imperative that the lab be a safe working environment for all members.

Discrimination, harassment, or bullying are unacceptable and will be met with a zero-tolerance policy.

1. Every person deserves a safe and respectful learning and working environment, regardless of sex, gender identity, orientation, race, religion, disability, age, culture, economic status, pregnancy, etc.
2. Harassment can be broadly defined as “reasonably interfering with an employee’s ability to work or a student’s ability to learn or benefit from the university’s programming”; this definition can be interpreted broadly and especially qualifies if the harassment is due to being part of a federally protected group. You do not have to identify as one of the above groups, however, to experience harassment.
  - a. Examples: foul or abusive language; spreading rumors; mockery about cultural practices, age, disability, sexual orientation, etc.; offensive cartoons or jokes; stereotypes or slurs against ethnic or racial groups, etc.; threatening emails or phone calls, etc.
  - b. Sexual harassment falls under this category as well; it can be defined as any harassment that is sexual in nature; examples may include unwanted comments about physical appearances; unwanted physical contact; etc.
3. It does not matter who is doing the harassment- any form of it is wrong and will not be tolerated.

- a. Harassment can be inflicted by students, faculty, and staff
4. If you report harassment to me, it *will* be taken seriously, and you will be believed.
  - a. If you report sexual harassment, faculty members (and many graduate students) are mandatory reporters. This means that we must report what you say to the Title IX office on Campus—they, however, will reach out to **only** you to ask if you would like to make a formal report. After that, it is up to you to decide what to do.
5. Every member of this lab group will show respect for everyone else. We will not tolerate any form of harassment from members within this group towards anyone else.

### Consequences of misconduct

I have a zero-tolerance policy for breaching any of the conditions that are needed for the existence of a safe workplace environment. If I determine that a member of the lab is harassing, bullying, or otherwise contributing to a toxic work environment, I will remove the offending lab member from group lab activities and withdraw my services as their academic advisor. I am under no obligation to continue to advise any student who breaches the expectations for professional conduct, and while they may remain within the program, they would not be welcome within the lab.

In some cases, interpersonal conflicts can arise that impact the functioning of the lab – everyone has different personalities, after all, and some of those gel better than others. It is important to recognize that it is not necessary that everyone like one another in a work setting; however, everyone must be able to work together and treat each other with the basic level of respect you would expect from colleagues. I want to stress the interpersonal issues are not a justification for dismissal from the lab unless bullying, harassment, or discrimination occurs.

### My commitment to group members

It is my job to ensure that you have the best and most fruitful research experience possible, and to help you prepare for the next chosen phase of your career.

Towards that end I will ensure that you:

- meet with me weekly as part of a broader lab group meeting and that I will set regular office hours for when you can drop by and talk to me if you need
- have the option of a standing meeting with me where we discuss your research progress and overcome obstacles

- have career-oriented meetings 1-2 times per year where we discuss your future career path and define strategies to get you where you want to go
- have a permanent office space as well as access to workspace in the lab
- have the computing, laboratory, and field resources that you need to conduct your research
- are able to attend conferences at least once during a Master's degree, multiple times during a PhD, and multiple times during a postdoc.
- are able to meet other scientists in the field to build long-term, collaborative relationships
- get timely responses from me to questions you ask, and to drafts of work (abstracts, paper drafts, thesis drafts) that you send me
- receive reference letters and other key support from me as you head toward your next career goal

## Expectations for group members

I expect that members of the Paleobiology lab:

- treat all students, faculty, staff, and community members with respect
- join the lab discord server for easy coordination of meetings and sharing files
- participate to the extent possible in all group training and meetings as well as WVU G&G colloquium
- come prepared to group meeting as well as one-on-one meetings with materials that clearly illustrate research progress and current stumbling blocks
- take the time to teach and learn from each other by providing research feedback, edits on thesis drafts, help with equipment and software, and other assistance to your colleagues in our group
- proactively apply for external opportunities that will enhance your research and/or career. This includes research funding opportunities, fellowships and scholarships, travel funding.

## Work habits

1. I expect that you should treat graduate school similarly to a job. Meaning, you have a set number of hours that you **do work**, and you have a set number of hours where you **don't work**. There are no expectations that you should be working nights and weekends regularly (though you are allowed to set your own working schedule). I may email you after hours, but that doesn't mean I expect a response. Similarly, you should not expect me to respond to emails outside of university work hours (which are, criminally, 08:15 to 16:45 – in reality you should expect me to be looking at email from 09:00-17:00, Monday to Friday). Sometimes, you may find that you have more deadlines than you have time for, and you may have to work more hours. That's every job, *but* that should mean that you should make sure to take some time off later to compensate.

2. If you find that you are working constantly and never feeling like you're working enough, please come talk to me so we can work out solutions. Often you can fall into the trap of thinking if you work less you will get less done; however, you work much more efficiently when rested and with healthy boundaries. Burn out isn't healthy and I don't want you to adopt nonstop working habits.
3. Please keep in contact with me about your work schedule- when you have classes, when you plan to be working in the office. The reason for this is so that we can schedule meetings and we can make sure to find time to help you if need be. I understand that you have obligations outside of work, so it's okay if your work times are adjusted. Each semester, we will fill out a lab calendar to make this process a bit easier. You are certainly welcome to work outside of the office- at a coffee shop, the library, etc. but you should plan to be in the office at least some of your time each week so that we can keep in touch a bit better.
4. Treating grad school like a job means that you should take a few weeks of vacation/year during the holidays and take time off if you are sick. I do expect that you'll contact me about when you plan to take vacation so that we can make sure to keep schedules aligned. Do note that the summer is when the majority of data collection tends to occur, and so you should expect to spend time on your thesis or dissertation during the university non-instruction periods.
5. For students, your graduate assistantship is 20 hours/week. This means as a teaching assistant you should spend no more than 20 hours each week teaching classes, grading, conducting office hours, and responding to student emails. As a research assistant, you should spend 20 hours each week on research activities as discussed with me. The remainder of your work week should be divided between your classwork and making progress on your thesis or dissertation.
6. You will be given keycard access to the lab. Lab rules are clearly posted and are to be followed at all times.
  - a. Food and drink (other than water in a covered container) are not allowed in the lab space.
  - b. Keep the lab tidy. Specimens should be returned to cabinets the moment you have finished using them for the day.
  - c. Do not leave the door propped open or unlocked if no one is there.
  - d. Do not bring equipment or books from the lab home with you unless you have explicit permission from me.
  - e. Under no exception are loaned museum specimens to leave the building.

## Organizational expectations

Labs take a lot of organization to keep straight, and I have many responsibilities that mean I often cannot respond to developments as quickly as I (or you) would like. In order for the lab to function efficiently, we all my take responsibility for our own organization and inform one another of requirements and deadlines well in advance. The main rule that you should follow is that work must be ready to submit at least a week or two before the stated deadline.

It is expected that I will approve your final grant proposals, conference abstracts, theses and dissertations, and other non-class writing (read more about this in the Research expectation section). If drafts related to theses or dissertations are going to the committee, send them to me to review first. I will generally aim to get to edits as quickly as possible, but it can take up to two weeks to get edits turned around and you should plan accordingly.

When requesting letters of recommendation, do so with two weeks' notice (with the understanding that somethings things come up suddenly and that might not be possible. Please include the date that the letter needs to be submitted by, submission instructions, and any letter specifications. Make sure to indicate what position you are applying for. Also include a most recent copy of your CV. Check in again nearer submission to make sure I haven't forgotten.

## Group meetings and seminars

Group meetings and seminars are important for sharing research updates, keeping up-to-date on current science, and developing as well-rounded scientists.

Weekly lab group meeting is mandatory and should be treated as an important standing commitment in your calendar. We will settle on a mutually agreeable, hour-long time slot every semester. Sometimes you'll have to skip one; just let me know in advance so I can plan for your absence. When group meeting is focused on research updates, I expect anyone scheduled to present to come prepared with a couple of figures, slides, etc. to show the group your recent research progress and help illustrate any current stumbling blocks. When it is focused on discussing a paper or doing a professional development activity, I expect everyone to come to meeting having already read all the relevant material.

## One-on-one meetings

I will offer regular meeting times for lab members that require it and maintain office hours to students to attend on an ad hoc basis. Do not feel like you need to attend every meeting showing progress in your research; research does not progress in a neat linear fashion and you cannot be expected to have new results every week. My responsibility



in these meetings is to help you get past roadblocks in your research and to discuss the literature and aid in interpreting any results you may have. I can only do this if you show up to meetings prepared to show me recent progress, and equally importantly, to be honest with me about where you've been having trouble. Think of one-on-one meetings as a discussion for advancing your research, not a stressful evaluation of your ability as a scientist.

Please come to meetings prepared with 1) an agenda of items you would like to discuss, 2) figures/slides that illustrate any current questions or issues, and 3) a way to take notes on what we discuss. After each meeting, please update our shared research notes document (see Research expectations below) with notes from the meeting that illustrate the best path forward.

### Department colloquium

The WVU Department of Geology and Geography hosts a colloquium series during the academic year where we bring in speakers to talk about their work. I expect group members to attend colloquium (irrespective of whether or not they are registered for the associated class) unless they have a class time conflict or are out of town. Colloquium is important for learning about fields outside paleontology and connecting with faculty, students, and external speakers.

### Lab social activities

I try to foster an informal, collegial environment within the group, but I generally am aware of the issues behind power dynamics and do not expect to interact socially outside of work hours. I may on occasion organize lunch or coffee or some event to mark special occasions, but no group social event will ever be mandatory, and your participation or lack thereof will have no bearing on your science or my enthusiasm for your research and career. There are a thousand good reasons why someone might choose not to participate, ranging from being out of town to childcare responsibilities to background-specific personal preferences. I will do my best to organize, and to let you all self-organize, events that take everyone's preferences into account.

## Research expectations

Research is an important part of your time in the lab and is also the primary way through which our academic productivity is measured. Research activities can be broadly broken down into attending and presenting at conferences, publishing peer reviewed journal papers, and applying for external funding. I expect that all student theses and dissertations will be publishable and that we will work together on publishing them. PhD students aiming to continue in academia should also plan to publish some of

the earlier chapters of their dissertation during the PhD in order to be competitive for postdoctoral and faculty positions.

A few essential research best practices:

- Please keep a research notebook where you keep notes about what you're doing. The purpose of this is that we can go back later and re-trace your steps if any questions come up about how you analyzed your data, etc.
- Similarly, keep (and share with me) a shared document that you update with info from our meetings and discussions. This can take the form of a Google Doc.
- Please keep your work backed up! One option for this is your MIX Google Drive account. You can also store files on the laboratory computers.
- Never submit any formal research product (conference abstract, thesis, paper) from your work at WVU without getting my explicit approval (and approval from any other co-authors) of the final draft. This will feel cumbersome at times, but it's important!
- Similarly, I would like to see a complete practice poster/talk for any upcoming conference presentation [optional for postdocs]. Note that this again means you must have the presentation prepared in advance of traveling to the conference.

### Authorship expectations

1. It is important at the outset of any research project that all collaborators are aware of their role in the project and everyone involved is aware of their position on the author list. Authors should have directly contributed to the study. I expect to work closely with you on your research and that I will be a coauthor on the abstracts and articles submitted as a result of your MS/PhD research.
2. If it is *your* thesis or dissertation, it is expected that conference abstracts and articles based on your thesis/dissertation will be written and submitted by you, with myself and other collaborators as coauthors.
  - a. You should expect to write your dissertation/thesis in a series of articles, as opposed to a traditional product that needs to be rewritten into article format.
  - b. If, when you graduate, you do not make progress towards writing up and submitting the work to an article, or you choose not to continue, I will submit it myself after ~12 months of no progress from you. If that happens, per most journal authorship standards, I will be first author/or corresponding author and you will be a coauthor. This will *only* happen if you do not communicate with me about what you need or the progress you're making or if you directly tell me that you do not want to publish the work. I do not expect or want this to happen.

- c. It is expected that if students collect data, their work will be acknowledged in the product. If they help with analysis and/or writing, they should be coauthors. The most important part is communication and agreements *prior* to the writing of the product who is an author.

### Notes and specimen photographs

I request that you turn in copies of your research notes to me on completion of your degree – this will help with the process of us writing up your research for publication and allow me to make sure the work can be published if you have to step away from it for any reason.

I also require that students share photographs of museum material, either from loans or museum visits. I urge students on research trips to upload photographs at the end of each day to a shared google drive for backup. This allows me to check the images and let you know whether they are publishable or not before you get back and find out there's a problem after it is too late. Images should include all identifying information (specimen number, taxonomic ID, image scale, etc.) necessary for the image to be of use.

### Conferences

The conference that is most relevant for invertebrate paleobiology is the Geological Society of America Annual Meeting in the fall (September-November). There are also other, more infrequent conferences: the North American Paleontological Convention (NAPC, every 4-5 years), and International Palaeontological Congress (IPC, every 4-5 years). These conferences are both international paleobiology conferences. The Palaeontological Association also has an annual conference in the UK. Of these conferences, GSA is the one that I expect members of the lab to attend.

I do want you to work towards presenting at a conference or more than one during your time in the degree program here- for MS, aim for once (maybe twice) and for Ph.D. students, aim for three times (maybe four). It allows you to meet new collaborators or new advisors for future degrees/postdocs and it helps you develop your communication skills.

### Applying for external funding

There are a variety of ways to fund research (both in terms of paying our salaries and traveling, buying equipment, etc.). I will always do my best to find the money you need to do the research you want to do, primarily through utilizing department resources. With that said, one of the best things you can do both to move your research forward

and to enhance your future career opportunities is to apply for external opportunities. These include fellowships (to pay your salary), research grants (to pay for research expenses), and other opportunities like funded field experiences, conference travel grants, etc. Examples include graduate fellowships from NASA and NSF, research grants from the Geological Society of America, Paleontographical Society, Palaeontological Association, and WVU G&G, and travel grants from all major conference organizers and from WVU. I will also announce opportunities in the discord group as I see them come up.

There are many conference funding opportunities that we can identify to pay for conferences! **You are responsible for making sure you know the annual deadlines.**

1. GSA has an annual fund for students, if you are presenting (must be student member). SE GSA (our regional section) also has funding.
2. SEPM gives \$300 for students presenting research (must be student member 6 months in advance)
3. AWG (Association of Women Geoscientists) has national and international grants for women and nonbinary students (must be student member).
4. Time Scavenger's Tilly Edinger travel grant.
5. WVU travel grants (open up twice a year, once in the Fall and once in the Spring).

I do expect you to apply to a few of these-aim for a minimum of 2-3/year to support your funding outside of your last year of the program.

Most require a letter- I need at least two weeks heads up for each application, please.

Here is a link of sed and paleo-focused grants and their deadlines (note: always double check these deadlines, they may change). **You are responsible for knowing the deadlines.** <https://www.dropbox.com/s/3hrgyjfnicz97jy/Small%20Grants.pdf?dl=0>

### Museum specimen loans

All specimen loans must be coordinated through me as the PI, as museums will not loan material to researchers not in permanent positions. If you have specimens you wish to loan, discuss the matter with me and I will process the loan request if I agree it is appropriate.

1. Each museum you receive fossil loans from will come with paperwork- all of this paperwork will be kept in the tray with the fossils. Do not separate the fossils from their paperwork.

2. Keep museum specimen boxes that they were mailed in, so that when we need to mail them back, we don't have to scramble to find packing materials!
3. Under no circumstances are you to prepare or do destructive sampling to museum specimens. Specimens may never be removed from the lab without my express permission and should not be removed from the university premises.
4. If a specimen is damaged, inform me. Accidents happen. The worst thing to do would be to try to hide the damage or repair it.

### Lab group projects

Sometimes we may run a lab group project where multiple lab members collaborate on some research that is not directly related to any one individual's main project. Lab members should not feel pressured to take part in lab projects – involvement is purely voluntary. Students should be aware however that lab projects are a time investment and should consider carefully whether or not they have time to take part in a meaningful way. It is a bad idea to agree to do something that you cannot follow through on.

Authorship expectations should be set out clearly at the start of the project. One lab member who takes the lead on organizing and planning the manuscript will be lead author – this should be agreed upon in advance. As PI, I will be either last author or, if I have to step in and shepherd the project through to completion, I will be lead author. I hold final say on authorship author in the event of any disputes.

### Reading to get you started

These are some of the big papers in our field or papers that I have written to introduce you to some of the research I do. I have divided them up broadly by subject, but you may see some listed multiple times – that's because all these topics are tightly interwoven in my research. I don't expect you to necessarily be interested in all of these topics, or on the taxonomic groups on which I predominantly work, though.

When you are beginning to do broader reading for your research project, you should get familiar with doing keyword searches in google scholar, as well as go through and read relevant papers cited within papers that you have read. It is also worth setting up RSS feeds so that you get alerts for when new papers in relevant journals are published. Our research is very interdisciplinary and so you will likely find yourself reading papers in paleontology journals, broader geology journals, journals focusing on evolutionary biology, and ecology and statistics publications. WVU generally has good access to

online publications; if there is something you do not have access to, you can put in an interlibrary loan request (<https://library.wvu.edu/services/interlibrary-loan>). If there is something you can't get access to it is worth checking whether I have a pdf of it – I have an extensive library of hundreds of arthropod papers, and many more besides on related research topics.

### Phylogenetic Paleoecology

- Lamsdell et al. 2017- Phylogenetic Paleoecology: Tree-thinking and ecology in deep time. *Trends in Ecology and Evolution*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0169534717300630>
- Lamsdell & Congreve 2021- Phylogenetic paleoecology: macroecology within an evolutionary framework. *Paleobiology*. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/paleobiology/article/phylogenetic-paleoecology-macroecology-within-an-evolutionary-framework/881E1CC86FBB977DB0BED1F336EF8299>
- Congreve et al. 2018- Biological hierarchies and the nature of extinction. *Biological Reviews*. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/brv.12368>
- Lamsdell 2021- A new method for quantifying heterochrony in evolutionary lineages. *Paleobiology*. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/paleobiology/article/new-method-for-quantifying-heterochrony-in-evolutionary-lineages/83D03C714E53A22BDB5FAE894617C462>
- Lamsdell 2021- The conquest of spaces: exploring drivers of morphological shifts through phylogenetic palaeoecology. *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology, Palaeoecology*. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0031018221004570>

### Heterochrony

- McNamara 2012- Heterochrony: the evolution of development. *Evolution: Education and Outreach*. <https://evolution-outreach.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1007/s12052-012-0420-3>
- McNamara 1982- Heterochrony and phylogenetic trends. *Paleobiology*. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/paleobiology/article/abs/heterochrony-and-phylogenetic-trends/690BF45C474307EE2E1C2130F451A43E>
- Lamsdell 2021- A new method for quantifying heterochrony in evolutionary lineages. *Paleobiology*. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/paleobiology/article/new-method-for-quantifying-heterochrony-in-evolutionary-lineages/83D03C714E53A22BDB5FAE894617C462>
- Lamsdell 2021- The conquest of spaces: exploring drivers of morphological shifts through phylogenetic palaeoecology. *Palaeogeography, Palaeoclimatology,*

*Palaeoecology*.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0031018221004570>

#### Eurypterids

- Lamsdell & Selden 2013- Babes in the wood—a unique window into sea scorpion ontogeny. *BMC Evolutionary Biology*. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/1471-2148-13-98>
- Lamsdell et al. 2015- The oldest described eurypterid: a giant Middle Ordovician (Darriwilian) megalograptid from the Winneshiek Lagerstätte of Iowa. *BMC Evolutionary Biology*. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1186/s12862-015-0443-9>
- Lamsdell & Selden 2017- From success to persistence: identifying and evolutionary regime shift in the diverse Paleozoic arthropod group Eurypterida, driven by the Devonian biotic crisis. *Evolution*. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/evo.13106>
- McCoy et al 2015- All the better to see you with: eyes and claws reveal the evolution of divergent ecological roles in giant pterygotid eurypterids. *Biology Letters*. <https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/full/10.1098/rsbl.2015.0564>

#### Horseshoe crabs

- Lamsdell 2020- The phylogeny and systematics of Xiphosura. *PeerJ*. <https://peerj.com/articles/10431/>
- Lamsdell 2016- Horseshoe crab phylogeny and independent colonizations of fresh water: ecological invasion as a driver for morphological innovation. <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/pala.12220>
- Lamsdell 2013 – Revised systematics of Palaeozoic ‘horseshoe crabs’ and the myth of monophyletic Xiphosura. *Zoological Journal of the Linnean Society*. <https://academic.oup.com/zoolinnean/article/167/1/1/2420794>

You should also check out the chelicerate volume of the *Treatise on Invertebrate Paleontology*. While somewhat out of date, it can give you a good overview of chelicerate terminology and anatomy. There are also many more papers by other authors out there – use these just as a starting point for your readings.

#### Where to go with questions/problems

- If you have a problem arising from interactions with me, it is appreciated but not required to let me know so I can try to address the issue. With that said, there are many other resources that allow you to avoid talking to me if it would make you uncomfortable to do so. The first point of contact for graduate students is the grad committee. For undergraduates and postdocs, the first point of contact is the Associate Chair. You can always talk to the Department Chair if your initial contacts can't resolve the issue.
- If you have a conflict with another lab group member, grad student, or faculty/staff member, please try to talk it through with them first. If the problem

persists, please come to me privately. If lab members cannot resolve issues between themselves, I will hold a mediation session where the involved parties and I talk through the issues and communicate clearly to each other what the perceived problems are and what each party would like to change. The goal of mediation is to resolve the situation so that both parties can focus on their own work and achieve their full potential.

- For questions about stipend payment, course registration, credits, etc., see Hope Stewart (course issues) and Lisa Lively (payroll issues) in the 3rd floor department office.
- In general, please don't hesitate to come to me with any issue you might be experiencing both in school/work (classes, research, TA assignments, etc.) and outside work (housing, transportation, etc.).

### Mental, emotional, and physical health and safety

Many of us experience mental health challenges during graduate school and that is nothing to be ashamed of. What is important is that you know that mental health is important to take care of, that there is no shame in seeking help, and that I am here to support you in a form that is beneficial to you. Every person is different and finds different solutions that work for them. I urge anyone that is feeling overwhelmed to consider counselling but recognize that counselling may not work for you. It is always good to have someone outside the situation to talk to. I ask that lab members do not use one another as emotional crutches – this is just transferring pressure to someone else within the lab, and often there is a heavy gender bias to the people that end up filling these roles. I have created a list of resources below that are WVU specific.

1. You cannot do well in your job if you are neglecting your health. A balance is necessary. Sometimes, this balance can be really difficult! We all need help with this- never feel ashamed about talking to me.
2. If you are experiencing food insecurity, there is a student food pantry on campus (<https://studentengagement.wvu.edu/the-rack-student-food-pantry>)
3. If you need to locate mental health resources, you can visit the Carruth Center for counseling and psychological services (<https://carruth.wvu.edu/>)

If you are experiencing mental health issues, you are welcome and encouraged to come to me or any of the faculty. In many cases we can take steps to reduce work-related burdens that might be negatively affecting you. If needed, you can take a leave of absence for a semester, during which your progression and funding will be paused to give you time to focus on your wellbeing.



# Lab agreement

I ask that all students sign and return this page to verify that they have read and understood the requirements set out in the lab handbook. Initial for each major section and sign at the bottom of the page.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Has read and agreed to the requirements and expectations set out in the lab handbook.

(initial)

Professional conduct .....

Commitment to group members .....

Expectations for group members .....

Research expectations .....

Where to go with questions/problems .....

Signed: .....

Advisor signature: .....