



## University Center for **Teaching and Learning**

### **Open Lab member policies & handbook**

The policies contained in this document are meant to keep you safe, keep people around you safe, keep the equipment safe, and allow the Open Lab to keep functioning efficiently and sustainably with the resources available.

#### **General policies**

Be respectful.

- Everyone in the Pitt community – students, faculty, and staff – is welcome to be a member of the Open Lab! Whatever your gender, race, orientation, socioeconomic status, ability, etc., as long as you follow these policies, you belong here.
- Be respectful of the people staffing the Open Lab, and listen when they tell you to do or not do something. We reserve the right to ban people who are not complying with our policies.
  - When you have an atypical problem or question, the staffers may not know how to solve your problem, but if they have time, they can help you to search for the answer. Always feel free to ask, but be aware that “I don’t know” is a possible response.
- Be respectful of other members of the Open Lab – you are a community and have a lot to learn from each other.

#### **We’ll teach you how to do it yourself.**

Open Lab staff will teach users how to make but will not make for you, except:

- If you need a thing for use in teaching a Pitt course, we are willing to make that for you (if we have time).

#### **We provide materials for you to learn the technology.**

- We stock free materials to allow you to learn and practice using the lab equipment. You may use the materials we have in stock for general usage for any type of project PROVIDED you use the materials in our equipment. For example, you may only take plywood if you are laser cutting it, and you may only take printable vinyl if you are

cutting it in the vinyl cutter. (Scissors and the paper cutter don't count as equipment.)

- Be reasonable in your use of our free materials. Don't make 300 vinyl stickers to sell on Etsy.
- Choose your material responsibly. If you're building a 4ft x 4ft bookshelf, consider using plywood, a more sustainable and affordable material, as opposed to glitter acrylic. If you're making a small pendant, go for the glitter acrylic. If you're making a two-color sticker, use two colors of more affordable standard vinyl instead of printable vinyl. If your design has a range of colors and must be durable and waterproof, go for the printable vinyl. An Open Lab staffer can help you make good material choices.

### Become an approved user.

Before you may use any of our equipment, we require you to go through our training before we will designate you as an approved user for that piece of equipment. Some trainings are available on a drop-in basis, and some require scheduling in advance. Use the Start Here form on [our website](#) to plan your training.

### Clean up after yourself.

- When you are done with your project, make sure that everything is the way you found it:
- You have cleaned the equipment and gotten it ready for the next user
- You have put all small tools and materials back where they are stored
- You have cleaned up any mess you made, including putting trash in the trash can and recycling in the recycling can, and wiping off your work surface if necessary

### Know whether you need a reservation or an appointment.

Some, but not all, of our equipment can be reserved in advance. Likewise, some training requires an appointment with a person. To determine if you need a reservation or appointment or if you can just drop in, use the Start Here form on [our website](#). This will help you avoid wasting your time.

### Don't stand us up.

Three strikes: If you cannot use your reserved time on a piece of equipment or make it to a scheduled meeting with a staff member, you must cancel that reservation or meeting

before it starts. This is only polite. If you fail to do this three times, you will be banned from reserving equipment in advance.

## **3D printer use policies**

### **No printing weapons.**

Open Lab 3D printers and resources may not be used in the process of making a weapon, a part of a weapon, or anything closely resembling a weapon.

### **Reserve a 3D printer.**

- You must reserve a printer before using it. You may reserve up to a week in advance, and if there is a printer un-reserved, you may reserve it at the time of use. Use the Start Here form on our website to make a reservation.
- You must slice your 3D model file before you can reserve a printer, so that you have an estimate of how much time you need to reserve. We recommend a free program called [Cura](#).

### **3D printing can be a trial and error process for you.**

When you are 3D printing using our printers, there is NO GUARANTEE that your print will go correctly. If you have a deadline, build in time for troubleshooting! This is part of the learning process. If your print fails:

- If it is obviously the fault of the printer (ex: the filament got tangled) we will restart your print if there is enough time remaining on your printer before the next reservation starts.
- Otherwise, we will email you, and you must make a new reservation to try again. It is usually recommended to try to figure out what may have gone wrong, and alter that setting so it doesn't simply go wrong again the same way.

### **PVA should be used sparingly.**

We can print in, and stock, PVA, a material that dissolves in water. This is both expensive and gums up the print heads, requiring costly maintenance. Please use this material only when your design calls for it – when you need support structures that can be removed from a delicate or intricate shape without a trace left behind.

## **Vinyl cutter & heat press use policies**

You must use the vinyl cutter to use vinyl.

To reiterate the general materials policy above, we provide vinyl cutter materials so that you can learn and practice use of the vinyl cutter. You may not, for example, print a design on printable vinyl, cut it out using scissors, and leave. You **may** learn how to set your design up so that you can cut it out using the vinyl cutter, and create your sticker that way.

See [the decision tree](#) to help you determine what material you may and should use.

Turn the heat press off when you are finished.

The heat press is hot, as one might guess, and could burn someone or start a fire if left unattended. You **MUST** remember to turn it off as soon as you are done using it.

## **Laser cutter use policies**

Only use appropriate materials in the laser cutter.

Certain materials are dangerous to use a laser on, including but not limited to:

- Vinyl & PVC
- Containers under compression

All of the materials we provide for use in the laser cutter are safe, but if you bring in your own, please work with us to ensure that it can safely be lased.

Monitor the laser cutter while it is running.

As the laser cutter produces a risk of fire, you must stay and monitor it the entire time it is running. This can be over an hour for large, complex jobs.

Know how and when to use the fire extinguisher, located next to the laser cutter, before you use the laser cutter.

Reserve the laser cutter.

You must reserve the laser cutter before using it. You may reserve up to a week in advance, and if the laser cutter is not already reserved, you may reserve it at the time of use. Use the Start Here form on [our website](#) to make a reservation.

## **Virtual Reality station use policies**

### **Protect yourself from excessive motion sickness.**

If you start to get overly nauseous while using a VR headset, close your eyes and pull off the headset. Please don't get physically ill on our carpet.

### **Clean the station before leaving.**

Use a Purell wipe to wipe down the parts of the headset that touch your face (not the lenses) and the hand controllers. Throw the wipe in the trash.

## **360 degree camera use policies**

### **Protect the lenses of the camera.**

Do not put the camera down with a lens touching any hard surface. Try to avoid touching the lenses with your hands. If a lens needs cleaning, clean it with the lens paper included in the camera kit, not with your shirt.

### **Borrow a camera kit from the Hillman Equipment Room.**

Once you have received Open Lab training and are designated an approved user of the 360 degree camera, you may borrow the camera kit, including tripod, from the [Hillman Equipment Room](#) for up to three days. If you have a reason to need it for longer, please talk to the Open Lab staff in advance.