

University of Manitoba HCI Lab Guide!

1 Quick Reference: Contacts

- Always feel free to talk to your supervisor.
- Always feel free to reach out to Edwina Shwedyk <edwina.shwedyk@umanitoba.ca> regarding *any element of your grad program or access to resources*. Even if it is not a problem she can handle, she will usually be able to point you to the right person.
- Always feel free to reach out to the Associate Head Graduate (see CS website for current contact)
- The U of M has a Student Advocacy unit, whose role is to help students understand their rights within the University (<https://umanitoba.ca/student-supports/academic-supports/student-advocacy>)

2 Research Lab Culture

We place a high priority on lab culture! We all win when we work together, and when we can rely on each other to help out, give ideas, share experience, and even just to have a chat.

Although everyone has different work styles and constraints, please try to work in the lab regularly, as you will learn a great deal just from understanding what others are working on, what they struggle with, etc. You can also share your experiences with the more junior students.

Coming to lab meetings is really important to show your support. You'll learn, too, seeing others present! Contributing to group meetings, in giving talks, but also in asking questions and giving feedback, is really helpful to all of us. We need to keep sharing ideas and help each other develop our projects, this helps us all win by having stronger research

Talk to your supervisor, as some may require that you be in the lab and or attend meetings.

2.1 Work / Life Balance

Unlike many industry positions, academia doesn't have traditional 9-5 hours, or a boss who is monitoring these hours. People react to this lack of structure differently: some struggle to engage in work full-time without pressing deadlines, others have difficulty maintaining a healthy work / life balance. We expect students to work hard on their research and to take pride in their work, but not at the expense of their health or their life outside of work. Most people can sustain short periods of intense work, but start to become less productive over time if they are solely focused on work. So work hard, but take proper vacations and find activities that you enjoy outside of work.

The best academics and researchers are not burnt out.

Common work styles include:

- Self-imposed office hours (~40 hrs a week) with strict productivity management. Tips include using a time tracker to help be in control of your time use, using headphones to avoid outside discussions, putting up a sign that says “WORKING - Let’s chat at lunch”, or putting time locks on certain websites and games (e.g., Jim needs to stay away from Wikipedia and crossword puzzles)
- Burst style - some people work extremely hard, long days, and long nights, toward a goal or deadline. If this is you, be sure to balance this with time off before and after a tie burst. E.g., take a road trip, buy a new video game, or binge watch that Netflix special.

You also need to be careful to work complementary with your supervisor’s style, and communicate your working time with them.

Note that your productivity is your responsibility and your job. Also, you are the one to reap the benefits of your productivity. If you are struggling with productivity, working all the time is not the solution. Talk to your supervisor, your friends, your colleagues, for ideas. Read a book (e.g., Jim likes https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Getting_Things_Done). Talk to a counselor, etc.

3 Inclusion Policy

Inclusion and support - The HCI lab is fully dedicated to facilitating and creating a positive, inclusive, and supportive space. All members should feel welcome, and all members should feel comfortable expressing themselves and their opinions in a constructive, positive, and supportive manner. All members should feel that they have equal opportunity to engage in the lab and its activities, and to reap its benefits, regardless of individual differences. We accept the fundamental importance of diversity in the lab and research, and that it’s important to involve everyone (regardless of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, background, stage of life, specific abilities, etc.).

- Discuss accommodation needs with your professor. Funding is available for needed equipment, etc.

Family support - The HCI Lab is a family and life-choice friendly space. Many members have major life transitions, including changes in relationship or family structure (e.g., new relationships, new children, breakups, etc). The lab is dedicated to supporting you to navigate new life changes, so please talk to your professor about your needs and what supports can help as you navigate these new changes.

No tolerance for bad behavior - We have a zero tolerance policy for activities, behaviors, comments, etc., that are intended to belittle, coerce, put down, or otherwise bully, individuals or groups, whether the target is a member or group in the lab, or not. We will not tolerate insulting, offensive, abusive, violent, aggressive, or intimidating behavior.

- Immediately discuss any problems with your advisor, even if you are not sure if it is a problem or not. It's better to discuss concerns openly.

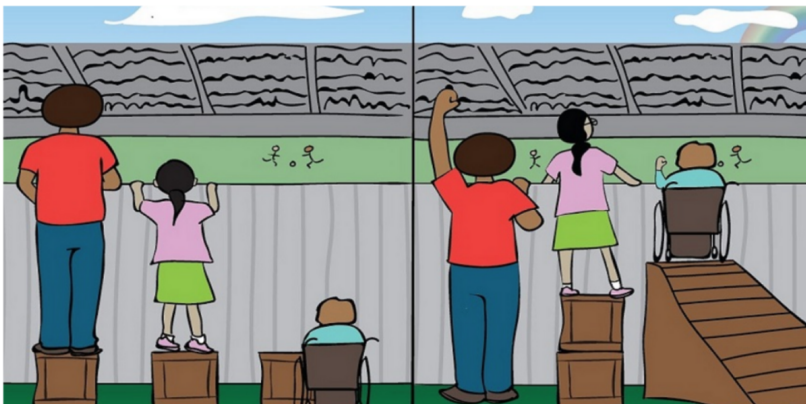
Be nice to each other! While we welcome open debate and discussion, the focus must always be on academic components and on developing arguments and opinions, and not on personal attacks. Debates must be held in a collegial manner. This includes during in-lab hours and activities, as well as after-hours interactions outside of the lab or university.

3.1 EDI - What is it, and why care?

The term EDI is getting a lot of attention these days, and you may have started hearing about it. It stands for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. These are three distinct prongs to the broader understanding that working toward including everyone in research, in all stages, is not only the right thing to do, but it leads to better work and results.

“Equity” is about ensuring that all people have equal access to opportunities. Equity isn't equality: rather than giving everyone the same resources, equity is more about giving everyone the resources they need to have equal opportunity. While one person may require noise-canceling headphones to be able to focus in a busy space, another person may require a specialized keyboard, additional time to work through a project, or to meet during certain times of the day due to other constraints.

- We are dedicated to working toward equity by providing support and accommodations you need. Please talk with your supervisor about any concerns you have relating to equity and your specific challenges.



Equality

Equity

(www.equitytool.org)

“Diversity” is about accepting the fundamental importance of having diverse ideas and perspectives reflected in a group, and in research. This isn't just about having different opinions, but highlights that it's important to have all kinds of people (race, gender identity, sexual

orientation, religious beliefs, socioeconomic status, background, stage of life, specific abilities, etc.) represented in a group. Diverse opinions and perspectives lead to better research.

- Feel free to talk to your professor about diversity deficits that you see, as we may not be aware of a specific angle you notice.
- We have zero tolerance for behavior or actions that reduce diversity, or hinder it. This includes negative attitudes toward any group.
- Feel free to come to your professor with any questions you might have surrounding aspects of inclusion.

“Inclusion” is about ensuring that all people are included and have the ability to benefit from equal opportunity. This includes ensuring that no group is discriminated against or favored, and no one is left behind. For research, this also includes ensuring that as many groups as possible are represented in your research. Try to include people from different backgrounds, sex and gender identities, race, age, abilities, etc. in your research design and participant pool whenever possible.

- Try to move away from the homogeneous participant pools (e.g., UG science students) often targeted in research. Consider if you can specifically involve under-represented groups in your work.
- When generating design personas, try to create personas that represent diverse populations. The more personas, the better!
- Follow tech bloggers who are diverse (people who identify as LGBTQ, people of colour, women, people with disabilities) - you will learn a lot!
- [Nothing about us, without us.](#) - Be sure to involve members of groups that you target with your work in your process as much as possible.

3.2 Relationships and Personal Harassment

While romantic and sexual relationships can develop within the lab, it is important to note that these are exceptions and not the rule and not common. Always assume interactions in the lab are of a professional and friendly nature only. Sexual or romantic advances do not belong in the professional environment.

Sexual and relationship-related harassment will not be tolerated and will be dealt with extremely seriously. Any reported harassment (even those one may consider “minor”) will be, in consultation with the person reporting, immediately reported to the department for investigation.

If you are the victim of personal harassment, sexual harassment, or sexual violence, *talk to someone*. Note the [University of Manitoba’s Sexual Violence Resource Centre](#)

4 Student Expectations and Responsibilities

The lab is home to many different people with different abilities, life goals, and challenges. That said, there are key expectations for all lab members.

During your first semester, you should, together with your supervisor, complete the graduate student-supervisor agreement that is available on the graduate studies portal. If your supervisor does not remember to do this with you - remind them!

4.1 Be Respectful and Inclusive

(see the above Inclusion Policy)

4.2 Contribute to the lab beyond your project

- Help out by volunteering for outreach events, tour days, etc., to represent the lab
- If you are assigned a lab duty, make sure you fulfill your responsibilities with respect to that lab duty, and if for some reason you are unable to, find someone else to cover for you and/or talk to your supervisor if this is an ongoing issue
- Take the time to talk to external students about the lab and opportunities
- Take the time to talk to new members to help them integrate into the lab
- Show up and contribute at lab meetings, presentations, etc., when others are presenting!

4.3 Educate Yourself

All students are responsible for educating themselves on the relevant university and lab policies. If you are unsure, always ask your advisor, or the CS office.

Students are expected to complete the following courses and modules during their time as a graduate student:

- [Intro to GenderBased Analysis Plus \(GBA+\)](#)
- [Unconscious Bias Training \(CRC Module\)](#)
- [TCPS CORE 2 certification](#)
- Take the [Harvard Implicit Bias test](#) to understand how all of us have biases we need to fight against

The following document is an excellent primer on learning about gender, the many variations of it, how to talk about gender, how to be respectful of people who are not on the traditional gender binary, etc.:

- <https://www.morgan-klaus.com/gender-guidelines.html>

The university also has excellent resources for learning about Copyright and IP issues:

- <https://umanitoba.ca/copyright/copyright-support-for-students>
- <https://umanitoba.ca/partnerships-and-innovation>

For information on your program requirements and expectations:

- <https://sci.umanitoba.ca/cs/graduate-programs/policies-and-forms>

You should discuss with your supervisor about support for for-fee courses including English or writing classes, professional development classes, workshops, etc.

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