

Some Hints on Lab Journals

EE492

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Why keep a lab journal or notebook?

- Project organization and documentation
- Data repository for subsequent reports
- Demonstrate authenticity and basis
- A legally admissible record (patent support and defense)
- Avoid duplication of effort due to lost or forgotten procedures
- Often a job requirement!

What should be included?

- *What* you did
- *When* you did it
- *Why* you did it
- *Who* was involved, and in what capacity
- Who suggested the approach or technique
- The raw data, including both good and bad
- Results and conclusions
- What follow-up work is indicated

What should be included? (cont.)

- A continuous, uninterrupted, chronological record
- Charts, graphs, sketches
- Detail sufficient for understanding by someone “skilled in the art”
- Meeting notes and outcomes
- Half-cooked ideas and schemes
- Indirect observations and suggestions
- Corrections, updates, and explanations

What should be avoided?

- Negative *opinions* about the project, results, patentability, or utility of the project
- Comments regarding the remaining effort necessary to commercialize the project
- Torn-out pages, erased or obliterated entries, or other permanent alterations

General Guidelines

- The journal/notebook must be bound with consecutively numbered pages.
- Use the first page for the table of contents and a summary of abbreviations.
- Write in pen with permanent, waterproof ink.
- Use good penmanship: scribbled or illegible writing will be useless later.
- Sign each page with your full name and full date (day, month, year)

General Guidelines (cont.)

- Maintain authenticity and integrity (no alterations or subsequent additions)
 - Make entries consecutively.
 - Never erase or obliterate notebook entries. Draw a single line across the incorrect data and note the location of the correction and the reasons for making the correction.
 - Do not leave blank spaces: draw a line through deliberate gaps.
 - It is desirable to have a witness sign and date each notebook page within one week. The witness must have basic technical knowledge to understand the work.

EE492 Journal Evaluation

- Journals will be collected three times during the semester (Feb. 2, Mar. 9, Apr. 6) and along with the final project documentation (May 3)
- Grading will be on the scale: *superior, acceptable, marginal, unacceptable*
- Basis:
 - Format and content guidelines
 - Content scope and quality
 - Frequency and regularity of entries