

Le Pen Lab Compact

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Purpose

This compact is a shared understanding between the PI (Jérémy Le Pen) and all lab members to foster a productive, inclusive, and supportive research environment. It is not a legal contract but a living document that outlines mutual expectations, values, and practices. It will be revised over time, and every lab member is encouraged to propose modifications.

Lab Mission

To pursue major scientific discoveries in virology and immunology that serve public health.

General lab member responsibilities

- Value open, honest, and respectful communication.
- Work hours are flexible, but we generally expect all lab members to be present in the lab during core hours: Monday to Friday, 10:00–16:00. These shared hours are important for fostering both scientific and social interactions, and for ensuring that lab members can easily get help when needed.
- Contribute to shared lab responsibilities.
- Take ownership of their project(s) and maintain a sense of urgency.
- Seek feedback and integrate it constructively.
- Mistakes are seen as learning opportunities and transparency is encouraged.
- Maintain a collaborative spirit and actively contribute to a supportive team environment. This includes sharing expertise and resources, offering constructive feedback, helping troubleshoot experiments or analyses, collaborating on projects, and celebrating one another's successes.
- Identify opportunities for external collaborations and discuss them with the PI.
- Identify opportunities to attend conferences and discuss them with the PI.
- Identify fellowship opportunities and discuss them with the PI.
- Other responsibilities are discussed below.

General PI responsibilities

- New lab members will receive a written and comprehensive onboarding package.

- **Open-door policy:** while scheduling a meeting is often the most efficient way to ensure focused time, lab members are always welcome to drop by the office when the door is open.
- Provide scientific, technical, and career development guidance.
- Help lab members adhere to deadlines and meet project completion goals.
- Provide guidance on funding applications.
- Offer timely feedback on manuscripts, proposals, and other materials—typically within two weeks, unless otherwise agreed upon.
- Take group members' views into consideration before recruiting a new lab member.
- Advocate for mentees within and beyond the institution (e.g., write and send reference letters on time).
- Reflect on and continuously improve mentoring practices, notably through regular meetings with the department chair and faculty mentoring committee.
- Actively seek grant opportunities and additional funding for the lab.

Meetings and seminars

One-on-one meetings

- **Regular check-ins:** The PI commits to regular one-on-one meetings (biweekly with students, monthly with staff and postdocs) and expects lab members to come prepared to discuss progress and concerns. These meetings are led by the lab member and are meant to encourage strategic thinking about ongoing and future work. Even when there's little new data to show, it's valuable to reflect on behind-the-scenes efforts, ideas in development, or challenges encountered. Using slides to structure the discussion is encouraged. The PI also welcomes feedback from lab members during these meetings to improve the lab experience.
- **Annual career development meeting:** Each lab member will have an annual career meeting with the PI to discuss their Individual Development Plan (IDP). This meeting is an opportunity to reflect on career goals—whether academic, industry-related, or otherwise—and to identify actionable steps for progress. The IDP, prepared by the mentee, serves as a framework for this conversation and should include short- and long-term goals, current strengths and gaps, and a plan for progress.

Lab meetings

- All lab members are expected to attend lab meetings and actively participate. Virtual attendance is acceptable if joining in person is very impractical.

- Lab meetings require everyone's full attention. Use of laptops or phones should be kept to a minimum and limited strictly to activities directly related to the meeting (e.g., looking up relevant data or taking notes). Out of respect for the presenter and your colleagues, avoid unrelated tasks and distractions.
- If a lab member cannot attend a lab meeting, they should notify the PI and the presenter in advance.
- Presenters are expected to come well-prepared to help the rest of the lab understand the topic and contribute meaningfully. This includes sharing thoughtful content and leaving time for discussion.
- Lab members are encouraged to speak up if something is unclear—simple questions are welcome, and we recognize that we come from diverse scientific backgrounds.
- Presenters have the right to postpone extended discussions to maintain flow and timing.
- After each lab meeting, presentation slides should be saved as a PDF and uploaded to the shared “Lab Meetings” folder on the lab's SharePoint (OneDrive). This ensures that meeting content is archived and accessible to all lab members.

Seminars

- Lab members are expected to attend the IID Department Seminars and Research Updates (Wednesdays at 12 PM in FXB301).
- Lab members are welcome to attend the Microbiology Monday talks (New Research Building Room 1031 or via Zoom), though attendance is not expected.
- We strongly encourage all lab members to sign up for the following Zoom seminar series:
 1. International Virtual Seminars on Arbovirus Biology. To register for the Zoom link, send an email to any of the organizers: Clive McKimmie – Clive.Mckimmie@hymms.ac.uk; Tuli Mukhopadhyay – sumukhop@iu.edu; Tom Morrison – thomas.morrison@ucdenver.edu; You can also follow the series on Bluesky: @arbovirus.bsky.social.
 2. [Systems Virology Journal Club](#)

Data management

- The department requires Benchling as the standard Electronic Lab Notebook (ELN). Benchling is searchable and time-stamped. The departmental Benchling workspace can be accessed at hsphiid.benchling.com; do not create an account at benchling.com—join directly through hsphiid.benchling.com instead.
- Lab book entries should be titled using the lab member's initials followed by a number, e.g., *JLP637: Alpha vs Omicron growth curve in PLSCR1 KO Huh-7.5 cells*.

- All related files (e.g., datasets, graphs, images) should begin with the same index (e.g., *JLP637_cell_count.xlsx*) and be organized in a dedicated directory (e.g., '/Work/Experiments/JLP637').
- Each lab member's main Work directory should be automatically backed up to a cloud platform (e.g., Microsoft OneDrive, iCloud, or Dropbox). The department recommends using Microsoft OneDrive and provides all members with a free account.
- The lab also maintains a Microsoft SharePoint account, which serves as a central cloud-based drive for general shared lab documents. It is accessible through OneDrive and used for materials such as shared scientific resources, meeting slides, onboarding documents, and more. Every new lab member will be shown how to connect to the lab SharePoint during onboarding.
- Large files (e.g., sequencing or imaging data) should be stored in S-drive as cold storage at '/Volumes/shared/IID-Le Pen Lab/cold_storage' and properly indexed in the lab's SharePoint at: '/General/Data archive/Metadata table.xlsx'.
- All data, protocols, and analysis scripts should be clearly documented to enable reproducibility.

Reproducibility, and ethical conduct

- **Ethics compliance:** All research involving animal or human materials must follow approved protocols and comply with biosafety regulations. Required ethics and safety training must be completed and kept up to date. When in doubt, ask the PI and/or the lab manager.
- **Scientific objectivity:** All experiments should be approached with an open mind. No experiment should be conducted with a predetermined expectation of the result. All lab members—including the PI—are expected to be open to unexpected or inconvenient findings.
- **Biological replicates:** Experimental findings must be supported by sufficient biological replicates—that is, experiments repeated independently at different times. These should not be parallel repeats (which are considered technical replicates), but rather separate experiments. In some cases, exciting initial findings—already discussed with the PI or shared in lab meetings—may not replicate, and that's okay. All outcomes, including inconsistent ones, are informative.
- **Research integrity:** Fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism are strictly prohibited.

Lab operations and shared responsibilities

- All lab members should adhere to the lab inventory system managed by the lab manager.
- All lab members should keep Harvard trainings up to date.
- All lab members are expected to actively contribute to maintaining an organized, efficient, and welcoming lab environment. This includes regularly updating or improving access to shared information (e.g., in the Le Pen Lab OneDrive shared directory named “Lab Guidebook”), making lab management suggestions, and more generally helping to keep a well-run, “tight ship”.

Manuscript authorship guidelines

- Authorship should reflect substantial intellectual or experimental contributions. The PI will discuss authorship roles and order with all contributors early in the manuscript planning process and revisit as the work evolves.
- First authorship is reserved for those who lead and execute most of the work.
- Co-first authorship is possible—and even encouraged—when two or more contributors have made equivalent and complementary efforts. This reflects the collaborative nature of modern science.
- The PI will make every effort to clarify co-first contributions in reference letters, emphasizing that co-first authors are full first authors and highlighting the lab member’s leadership and hard work in collaborative projects.
- A scientist who has performed a substantial amount of work toward a project—even if the specific data do not appear in the final version of the paper—should be included as an author. Effort matters as much as outcome.
- Giving credit is essential to maintaining a collaborative and productive environment. Lab members are expected to acknowledge meaningful contributions from others in the lab.
- When in doubt, lab members are encouraged to raise questions about authorship early and constructively.
- All authors should review and approve the final version of the manuscript before submission. This process should be completed promptly—typically within one week—unless otherwise discussed.

Work–life balance

- Taking time away from work for family, friends, hobbies, rest, and self-care is essential to long-term well-being and success.

- Lab members are expected to take regular time off, including for vacation and medical care when needed.
- Days out of office should be entered in the “Le Pen lab” calendar.
- Responding to messages outside of normal working hours is not expected, except when dealing with an urgent deadline—though this should remain the exception.
- Harvard’s Office of Work/Life (617-495-4100, worklife@harvard.edu) supports the well-being of benefits-eligible faculty, staff and postdocs as well as their partners and dependents.

Community, Belonging, and Support

We strive to build a lab culture where everyone can thrive, regardless of background, identity, nationality, or career goals. Fostering a respectful, inclusive, and supportive environment is a shared responsibility across the lab.

Open communication and psychological safety

- Lab members are encouraged to provide feedback or raise issues as they arise.
- Open and respectful communication is valued, and no concern is considered too small.
- When appropriate, lab members are encouraged to address misunderstandings directly and respectfully with the individuals involved.

Confidential conversations

If an issue feels uncomfortable or is difficult to address directly, lab members have several confidential pathways:

- Speak with the PI
- Speak with the lab manager
- Contact the HSPH Office for Community and Belonging (ocb@hsph.harvard.edu; 617-432-9322)

Institutional support resources

In addition to lab-level support, Harvard provides a range of specialized resources:

- Harvard Office for Community Support, Non-Discrimination, Rights and Responsibilities (www.csndr.harvard.edu): Assistance on issues related to discrimination, harassment, and rights.
- SHARE Confidential Hotline (617-495-9100): Available 24/7 for issues such as sexual harassment, stalking, domestic violence, and dating concerns.

- CAMHS Cares Line (617-495-2042): Available 24/7, including evenings, weekends, and holiday. Support line for students with mental health concerns. Whether in immediate distress or simply needing to talk.

Signatures

Trainee: _____ Date: _____

PI: Jérémie Le Pen _____ Date: _____