EH&S Recommendations for Minors in Laboratories

EH&S provides the following recommendations for minors working in laboratories, including those who aren’t handling laboratory materials, but have their workstations inside a lab. This document is not a policy and it only covers the most common situations for minors in laboratories. You should check with your local department or hiring administrator regarding local policies and procedures.

General Recommendations
Prior to any minor (i.e.: under the age of 18 years old with no minors under 16 years of age permitted in labs) entering Harvard’s research or instructional laboratory facilities, EH&S recommends that the sponsoring department ensure completion (by the Faculty Sponsor, Parent/Guardian, Minor) of the following forms available from the University’s Office of General Counsel (http://ogc.harvard.edu/pages/model-documents):

- “Proposal for a Minor to Conduct Research or Work in a Lab” (Faculty Sponsor and Department Administrator)
- “Parent Consent” (Parent/Guardian)
- “Emergency Contact Information” (Parent/Guardian)
- “Acknowledgment of Risk and Release” (Parent/Guardian and Minor)
- “Participation Agreement” (Parent/Guardian and Minor)

Supervision
EH&S recommends that the Faculty Sponsor or an explicitly appointed qualified scientific supervisor or supervisors ensure that all of the minors activities are closely supervised at all time.

Minor’s Training
All individuals who are working in a laboratory setting must take the associated trainings for the work that they will be performing. The minor should be added to the Training Management System with a training profile http://www.ehs.harvard.edu/training and complete the EHS and lab- and task-specific training and orientation http://www.ehs.harvard.edu/node/7546

Specific Hazards

Ionizing & Non-Ionizing Radiation
Harvard University’s Radiation Safety Committee has a policy detailing when minors may be in a radiation lab. It can be found in section 8 of the Radiation Safety Manual: http://ehs.harvard.edu/sites/ehs.harvard.edu/files/radiation_safety_manual.pdf

Unless enrolled as a Harvard student, minors may not work with, or in a lab with, radioactive materials.

Biological Hazards
University guidance is that minors may not work with or in the immediate vicinity of infectious agents. EH&S recommends that minors do not work with, and are isolated from the following biological hazards:

- BSL2 pathogens
Chemical Hazards
University guidance is that minors may not work with or in the immediate vicinity of highly hazardous or highly toxic chemicals. Though not exhaustive, EH&S has compiled a list of carcinogens, reproductive toxins, biotoxins, and acutely toxic substances and has provided criteria for defining these categories of chemicals to which minors’ access must be excluded. Http://www.ehs.harvard.edu/node/7532

Observations, Tours, other “non-working” situations
For those minors who are observing work in a lab for a short duration, and will not be performing work the lab should provide appropriate Personal Protective Equipment and review general Laboratory Observation Guidelines (i.e. where to stand, what PPE to wear, what to do in an emergency, etc.) prior to the minor entering the lab and should be chaperoned with an appropriate number of lab members to prevent inadvertent or inappropriate contact with lab materials or equipment.