

Policy Guidelines for the Introductory Physics Labs

In order to provide for consistency in policy and grading practices across the various sections of the introductory physics labs, the Department of Physics has adopted the following guidelines.

Attendance

- Students **must** attend the lab section for which they registered. Requests to change lab sections after the beginning of the term will, in general, be **denied**.
- An **unexcused absence** from a scheduled laboratory will result in a student receiving a grade of **zero** for that lab, without possibility of make-up. A student who presents documents indicating that their absence from a lab should be excused will be given the opportunity to make up the missed lab during the final week of the regular academic term. A maximum of two (2) excused absences may be made up in this way. In rare cases in which a student has an excused absence from more than two labs in one term, an instructor may, if circumstances warrant, grant a grade of incomplete to allow the student time to make up the missed labs.
- The definition of an excused absence shall be an absence for which the Dean of the appropriate college would be willing to offer a written excuse.

Grading

To insure fairness and uniformity across lab sections, labs will be graded on an absolute scale from **zero to eight points**. These points will be earned through performance on a pre-lab summary, quiz grade and the laboratory report.

A short quiz will be given before each lab to insure the student is prepared for the lab.

To familiarize students with the nomenclature, equipment, and procedures for each lab, students will be required to submit a short (one half page) summary of the lab to be completed. These summaries will be due at the **beginning** of the lab period to which they correspond. The summaries should be concise and should contain a description of the goal of the lab and the basic concepts. Points for the prelab summary will be allocated as follows:

Pre-Lab Summary:

- 0 points No prelab summary submitted or unsatisfactory prelab summary.
- 1 points Satisfactory prelab summary.

The lab report itself should address each question asked in the lab manual and should include any required tables and graphs. In addition, the lab report should include a short discussion of the procedures used in the lab, possible sources of error in the results, and

any relevant calculations or derivations. Lab reports will normally be due at the end of each lab period. **In some cases** the TA may give the section an additional day (24 hours) to turn in the lab report. In such cases, the student must bring their lab reports to the TA's office or other location as directed by the TA. **It is the responsibility of the student to deliver the lab report to the correct place at the proper time.** Points for the lab report will be allocated as follows:

Lab Report:

- 5 points Lab completed with a nearly flawless report.
- 4 points Lab completed with only minor errors or omissions.
- 3 points Lab completed with more substantial errors *or* omissions.
- 2 points Lab completed with substantial errors *and* omissions.
- 1 point Lab not completed and/or serious omissions and errors.
- 0 points No lab report submitted.

The total grade for a given lab will be the sum of the prelab summary grade, quiz and the lab report grade, for a total of eight possible points on each lab. The final grade to be submitted to the instructor at the end of the term will be the average of the total lab grades for that term. Each instructor will interpret this grade according to his/her own grading policies.