

Laboratory Notebook Policy

Based on the Laboratory Notebook Policy used at Applied Biosystems, Thermo Fisher Scientific, Inc.

Why is proper record keeping in a bound notebook important?

In the United States, the first person to conceive and show diligence to develop an invention, product, or process is awarded the patent for that product or process. Notebooks that are properly prepared, maintained, and witnessed are legal evidence of conception and diligence to practice an invention.

Record-Keeping Procedures

1. Use only your official biotechnology notebook to record your work. All work must be recorded in the notebook and in no other document. _
2. Date and sign *every* page. Sign and date at the end of an experiment. _
3. Maintain a Table of Contents as you make entries in the notebook. The first page of every lab investigation should be listed in the Table of Contents. _
4. Make all entries legibly *only in black permanent ink*. No pencil entries are permitted. The use of colored pens or pencils is acceptable in some cases, as approved by the supervisor. _
5. *Do not erase, ink over, or white out any errors*. Draw a single line through errors so they can still be read. Place your initials and the date next to the correction. _
6. Briefly state the objective or purpose of each experiment, and reference previous work or projects. _
7. Use “from...” or “go to...” statements to tie together sections of a lab report or continuous work.
8. Record all directions, materials, and quantities used, plus reactions or operating conditions, in sufficient detail and clarity so that someone of equal skill could understand or repeat the procedure if necessary. _
9. Avoid abbreviations and codes when possible. Only the standard abbreviations for metric measurements may be used universally. Any coding or special labeling on samples or in procedural notes should be fully recorded and explained in the notebook. _
10. List all persons from whom samples or data were obtained, shared, or transferred. _
11. Attach as much original data as is practical in the notebook. Where it is not practical to attach original data, attach examples or images and make clear reference to where the original data are stored. _
12. When procedures, data, conclusions, etc, are continued from previous pages, each page must have a “from page ____” listed. When continuing to another page, there should be a “go to” statement directing the reader to the next page of that work. _
13. For important entries, such as key conclusions or new ideas, have a coworker sign and date the entry. Be sure the coworker is not a co-inventor, but someone who is capable of understanding the meaning of the notebook entry. _
14. Write/print clearly so there is no ambiguity about the information recorded. Skip lines between data tables, graphs, and important conclusions to make it easier to find and read recorded information. _