

# User Policies

## Nanotechnology Research and Teaching Facility University of Texas at Arlington

This document is a reference manual covering the basic operational policies for use of the Nanotechnology Research and Teaching Facility (NanoFab). NanoFab houses state-of-the-art instrument and it serves as a multi-user facility with users having access around the clock. As a result, it is truly important for all NanoFab users to have read and understood laboratory policies before using laboratory equipment.

It is impossible, however, to define a policy for every conceivable situation. Rules and policies are no substitute for common sense. Under these conditions, anyone who fails to act in a professional, safe, and responsible manner while in the NanoFab will be banned from further use of the facility.

Users' suggestions and feedback on the facility, its operation, and its equipment are welcome at all times. Please feel free to direct your suggestions to the NanoFab Director.

### 1. General Procedures

#### 1.1. Categories of Users

- Professional Staff  
Full or part time employees of NanoFab
- Academic Users from UTA  
UTA graduate faculty who benefit from using the NanoFab facilities.
- Other Academic Users  
Faculty and staff members from other academic institutions who benefit from using NanoFab facilities.
- Industrial Users  
Companies which benefit from using the NanoFab facilities. These are companies affiliated with Arlington Technology Incubator (ATI-Companies) or other Companies (Non-ATI-Companies)
- Regular-hour users  
Users working during regular hours Monday to Friday 7:00 AM to 6:00 PM when NANO FAB staff is available for any assistance.

- **24/7 users**  
Users who have been given access 24 hrs a day, 7 days a week. This excludes the the scheduled maintenance times.

## **1.2. Access**

The facility is for the exclusive use of the UTA faculty, and users (See above categories) affiliated with and working on specifically approved research projects. Based upon the successful completion of the training sections for the use of the equipment in NanoFab, the user will be given card access to the clean room. Loaning your access card to others is a serious violation subject to disciplinary action, including access revocatyion. Unauthorized persons are prohibited from accompanying, observing, and helping users at work, unless specifically approved by the NanoFab manager. For users who are inactive for six months, new training sessions are required.

## **1.3. Hours of Operation**

The laboratory is open to qualified 24/7 users both day and night, weekdays, and weekends. It, however, is restricted to normal hours (7:00 A.M. to 6:00 P.M. Monday through Friday) for regular-hour users. Users are encouraged to reserve the use of instruments online. More information is given in section 2.3.

## **1.4. Facility Governance and Appeals**

The NanoFab manager is responsible for the continued operation of the facility. Use of the facility by any user is at the sole discretion of the NanoFab management. The Nanotechnology Research and Teaching Facility manager and the staff are responsible for maintaining and enhancing the equipment resource of the facility, and for assuring that the operational policies of the facility are followed. Authority and responsibility for safe operation of the laboratory flows from the director to the manager and to the staff. On matters involving equipment usage or safety, you must follow the direct instructions of the staff.

The NanoFab Operations Committee (NOC) is a liaison between the users, UTA faculty using the NanoFab and NanoFab Management and also acts in an advisory role to the director for user policies. Three members are elected among UTA faculty using the NanoFab, each with a term of three years. Annually, one member is rotated.

We expect a commitment from all members of the community (university users, industrial users, staff, and faculty) to act in a manner based on courtesy, civility, mutual trust and respectful communication. To report disrespectful or unprofessional behavior, the sequence of appeals is from the NanoFab manager to the director.

## 2. Equipment Use and Availability

### 2.1. Registration

All users are required to fill out the form titled “Application to Use UTA NanoFab Facilities,” and obtain approval to gain access. In addition, Other Academic Users and Industrial Users need to execute the *External Use Agreement for University of Texas at Arlington, Nanotechnology Research and Teaching Facilities – NanoFab*.

Users are required to contact the NanoFab administrative assistant at [tbui@uta.edu](mailto:tbui@uta.edu) to indicate your interests in the use of the NanoFab. You must provide all of the information requested. The staff will justify the potential research projects that you will work on and will further provide the required training sections for the hands-on equipment. Upon evaluation, NanoFab manager can authorize you as a user of the NanoFab for access to the facility and for use of the instrument.

A flow chart for gaining access to the NanoFab facilities is shown on page 5.

**It is not the responsibility of the NanoFab staff to design device architectures, develop fabrication process flows, or perform any of the fabrication steps for the users.**

Much of the equipment in the facility is delicate. We consider hands-on access as an important part of the educational process. We set rules and procedures for the use of any instrument to assure the continued operation of the instrument. Violation of these procedures or carelessness in operation can result in damage to the equipment, downtime and considerable expense. Consequently, careless or damaging use of equipment will result in suspension of user privileges, either for a specific instrument or the facility as a whole. Users and their home institution may be held financially liable for equipment or other property damage if it is found to be the result of gross negligence or deliberate violation of standard NanoFAB policies and procedures.

The wet chemical hoods in NanoFab are also treated as any other "instrument". You must be specifically trained and authorized to use them. You are required to attend these sessions on chemical safety and chemical use prior to using any chemicals in the facility. Use of any chemicals (other than those provided by NanoFab) has to be approved in advance by the clean room manager.

### 2.2. Equipment Charges

Users are charged for the use of the NanoFab equipment. Equipment charges help pay for the expendables and maintenance costs. It is an hourly basis charge. Academic Users from UTA, Other Academic Users and Industrial Users (ATI and Non-ATI Companies) are charged at different rates. Industrial rates for non-ATI Companies are chosen to be comparable to those charged by commercial suppliers of equivalent services

where applicable. Users will be billed at the end of each quarter for accumulated user charges. For UTA users, this is via budget number. Other users should supply a purchase order number against which charges can be billed. Failure to pay user charges will result in cancellation of your project. Please discuss charges with the NanoFab manager if you have any questions.

For Academic Users from UTA only: whenever you change your account number, please inform the administrative assistant of the change. This is the account number to which all your charges are made. If your department provides NanoFab with a replacement account number, we will adopt it. It is important to use current, accurate account numbers at all times to avoid bounced charges and unnecessary bookkeeping. If you wish to charge to multiple accounts, please advise the administrative assistant so special arrangements can be made.

### **2.3. Problems**

Problems with equipment malfunctions, breakage, etc. should be reported to the NanoFab technical staff member responsible for the equipment and the manager. Do not try to fix or adjust anything by yourself. The equipment is very expensive and much of it is very delicate. Considerable damage can be done at a great cost of both money and downtime by careless attempts to fix things. There is no reason for any user to use a tool on anything, with the exception of a small screwdriver for sample mounting. If users misuse the equipment by not consulting the cleanroom staff members or by ignoring the directions provided by the staff members, users are responsible for any damage and will pay for repairs.

Do not call the staff at home in the evenings or on weekends about minor problems with the equipment or your process. It will have to wait until the next morning. Obviously, major problems like fire, smoke, or equipment alarms should be reported immediately. These items should be reported to UTA Campus Police emergency number, which is 2-3003. The police will respond and contact the appropriate parties. For equipment alarms, please call the NanoFab Manager first.

# Road Map to NanoFAB Facilities

