Integrated Microscopy Facility-Fees, Pricing and Billing

S.O.P.

1. Fees and Billing

   a. **Fees**—Our current rate sheet is available by request and is included in the orientation package. Fees are reviewed annually by the Technical Specialist in consultation with the Biotron senior administration, and compared to similar facilities in the region to ensure fairness. Periodic increases are necessary to keep up with changing maintenance and supply costs. This is a “Self-Sustaining” facility not associated with any one researcher. User fees are intended only to cover the cost of operating the facility, maintaining equipment and staff.

   b. **Billing**—A Western speed code, account #, or PO# must be indicated on the registration form before work can proceed. Fees are billed monthly, generally within the first 2 weeks of the following month.

   c. **Billing Agreement**—The supervisor authorizes the employee or student listed on the registration form to use that account for purchasing ANY instrument or service available at Integrated Microscopy as the research requires, unless otherwise limited in writing. It is the responsibility of the Supervisor/Researcher to update their account information if it changes and to notify us in writing if there is a cap on allowable fees. Between billing cycles, interim totals can be obtained upon request.

   d. **Training Fees**—Training is offered **FREE** to all Western students, however any instrument time used during the training will be billable at standard rates. Staff, researchers, post-doctoral fellows and external users will be billed for training at current technical hourly rates in addition to the billable instrument time used. Please refer to our price lists for detailed pricing information.

   e. **Instrument Fees**—Instrument time is billed according to both the online booking calendar and the instrument log sheets. Users are billed whichever time is greater to be fair to those hoping to book sessions on the calendars.

   f. **After Hours Fees**—“After hours” discounts are applied to some instruments which are heavily booked during the daytime. “After hours” is considered to be use of instruments outside of 8:00 AM-5:00 PM. If a session begins during the daytime, it will be billed at full rates until 5:00 PM. Only level 3, experienced users are offered discounted rates.

   g. **Time Lapse Imaging Fees**—Overnight time lapse imaging is offered on some microscopes at a further discounted rate. We assume that the user will switch off visual lamps and extraneous lasers and light sources to reduce wear on those while the instrument operates automatically, otherwise full after-hours fees will be charged.

   h. **Estimates**—While we try to prepare estimates of project costs for users when requested, these estimates are non-binding due to the variable nature of research work.

   i. **Fee-for-Service requests**—The Integrated Microscopy Facility may take on limited fee-for-service requests as staff are available, but our primary priority is student and user training. Such requests will only be attempted if staff are available. Fees for services are based on the experience level of the staff member providing the service. (See Rate Sheet)
j. **Consumables**— For the convenience of our clients, the Microscopy facility maintains a stock of commonly used supplies and reagents for purchase on an as-needed basis. Please ask staff for assistance with your purchase. Users must refer to the price sheet and complete a sales slip to purchase these. Materials fees are charged at cost + shipping and prices are reviewed annually.

k. **Bench Fees**— To cover the cost of reagents, supplies and waste disposal required for more in-depth sample preparation, “bench fees” are charged on a per-use basis. Please ask staff for directions as to when these fees are applicable, and complete a sales slip for each “run” of samples.

l. **Refunds**— Refunds of charges will only be given in the event of equipment malfunctions or staff errors that cost time or reagents. Users are responsible for preparing samples properly and following their training guidelines.

m. **Dedicated Project Support Services (Western Students Only)**— Students whose projects require extensive supervision by our staff for complex sample preparation and analysis techniques may be asked to apply for enrollment in our Dedicated Project Support Service (DPS). Each term a limited number of students may work in our facility under this program at a discounted technical support rate. Please ask for further information. DPS users still pay instrument time and still receive their equipment training free of charge.

n. **Sample Failure**— Proper sample preparation is the responsibility of our users. Please consult with staff for guidelines unique to each instrument before preparing your samples. **Instrument and technical fees are billable regardless of outcome**, unless instrument failure, staff error or one of our reagents is specifically at fault.

o. **Unusual samples**— We continually strive to work with researchers and industrial clients to develop suitable preparation methods for new and unusual sample types. In the case of unusual or unfamiliar projects or sample types in which outcomes are unsure, a preliminary Memorandum of Understanding will be required. We recommend doing pilot studies with clearly outlined cost limits defined in these cases.

p. **External and Industrial Users (and those without Western safety training) May be Subject to an Operator’s Fee**— Due to liability issues, ANY user who does not have appropriate Western University-specific safety training certificates cannot handle equipment or be left unsupervised onsite. Therefore, external users can chose between these options:

   i. Hire an instrument operator, in which case they will be billed for hourly technical rates in addition to their instrument rental rate

   ii. Enroll as a Western Associated Person. Once they have completed all appropriate Western-specific safety training, they can then register for instrument training and learn to operate the equipment themselves.