Transdiagnosic Addiction Laboratory Manual

TALab Team

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Table of contents

Part I

Welcome

Welcome to the Transdiagnostic Addiction Laboratory at Dalhousie University - we are glad to have you!

This is the comprehensive guide for students and trainees working within the Transdiagnostic Addiction Laboratory at Dalhousie University. Dalhousie University is located in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq. We are all Treaty people.

The goal of this document is to provide you with a detailed guide on navigating programs at the University, as well as providing you with the general rules and expectations you should follow while working in the lab. We also provide some resources both for the program and for setting up and conducting research.

This document was inspired by several other documents (see here and here) and is a work in progress. If you have feedback and/or suggested updates, please reach out to the lab manager at jacob.belliveau@dal.ca.

1 Mission statement

Research at the Transdiagnostic Addiction Laboratory focuses on factors that influence the development, maintenance, and treatment of substance abuse, and behavioral addictions such as gambling. We are particularly interested in the co-occurrence of addiction and other psychiatric disorders.

1.1 Our research

Current projects within the lab cover the following topics:

- We are interested in understanding the mechanisms of how individuals and populations develop and recover from addiction, with a focus on cannabis, alcohol use, gambling, and video gaming.
- In collaboration with the Canadian Research Initiative on Substance Misuse (CRISM), we are developing a comprehensive evidence-based online platform for screening, self-management and referral to treatment for individuals curious about their substance use habits.
- A large part of our research investigates the co-occurrence and interaction of addiction and other mental health disorders with the goal of accounting for real-world conditions where most individuals struggle with multiple comorbid disorders.

Part II

Getting Started

Before you begin working in this lab, all members are expected to do the below.

Read this manual

This manual contains all of the policies and expectations you are expected to follow while working in the lab, and provides you with many resources you may need throughout your research journey. Our goal with this document is to add in resources as they come up through working with students on different research projects.

It is good practice to consult this manual before asking Igor for assistance on a specific topic.

Complete Ethics Training

As an incoming student in the lab, part of your on-boarding will be to complete the TCPS 2: CORE Course on Research Ethics. You will not be permitted to participate in research within the lab until you have completed this course and emailed proof of completion to the lab manager, Jacob at jacob.belliveau@dal.ca.

Get Access

The Department requires that the hallway leading to the lab spaces remain locked 24/7. This door is only accessible by keycode associated with your DalCard. The lab manager will need to set up this access for you.

Before you can enter, even if you have been granted access by the Department, you will need a PIN code associated with your DalCard. If you lived in a residence or otherwise have had access to an area on campus that required you tap your DalCard and input a PIN, this door will use the same PIN. Otherwise, if you have not set up a PIN already, you can set one on the DalCard website.

Review the Below

Depending on whether you are an incoming Volunteer, Honours or (In)dependent project student, or Graduate student, you may have further steps you should consider. Please consult the relevant sections.

2 volunteer Students

Volunteers within the lab must sign the volunteer agreement form and return it to the lab manager, Jacob.

Generally, students are expected to commit an average of 3 hours per work to working within the lab. This work need not be completed on campus if the nature of your work permits you to work from home; however, all students are encouraged to work on campus if possible. Working on campus is a great opportunity to meet your fellow labmates, make new friends, and learn about research going on in the lab.

3 Undergraduate students

3.1 Honours students

Honours students are expected to...

3.2 Dependent or independent project students

These students are expected to...

4 Graduate students

Graduate students within the lab are expected to recruit undergraduate (Honours) students to assist them with their comprehensive (if running a new study) and dissertation projects. These students will be co-supervised by you and Igor. This will provide you with both supervisory experience, and invaluable labour from the undergraduate student to further your research.

Part III

Policies & Resources

There are several general rules and expectations students are expected to follow while working within the lab, as well as several resources collated here which students are expected to consult before asking Igor for assistance. Please review the sections below!

5 General lab policies

5.1 Respect

Please be respectful of not only the people you're working with, but also the spaces you're working within and the equipment you are using. Students should follow the Dalhousie Code of Student Conduct, and researchers must follow the TCPS 2 Code of Ethics (see Ethics Training).

Please note that students are not permitted to smoke or vape anywhere on campus, especially indoors, as per Dalhousie policy. Under this policy those who wish to smoke are asked to **leave university property**.

When using the lab spaces, please be sure to clean up after yourself and leave the space as you found it. If you notice that the trash or recycling bins are full, please empty them in the communal bins in the hallway and replace the bags (if applicable). Cleaning and sanitizing supplies are available for you to use - please feel free to use them! And if you notice that any supplies are running low, please notify the lab manager.

5.2 Safety & Security

It is important to be aware of how to ensure the safety of not only yourself and others working on campus, but also the data with which you are working.

5.2.1 Physical safety

> **!** **In case of an emergency**
>
> **In case of an emergency, Dalhousie Security should be your first point of contact**. You can contact them using the app above or by **calling 902-494-4109**. **Do not call 911** - Dalhousie Security will call 911 if need be and will ensure that emergency services are capable of navigating to the correct area on campus. If you call 911 on your own, emergency services will have great difficulty locating you.

All students should have the DalSafe app on their mobile devices and be familiar with the services offered in the app. This app allows you to get in contact with security, and allows you to send text messages to security in case you need to be discrete. There is also a "Working Alone" feature which makes Dalhousie Security aware of where you are and allows them to check in on you.

As per department policy, please do not share your Banner (B00 or B01) number and PIN with anyone. When accessing the human research area on campus (where the lab spaces are located), please do not let anyone in who you do not know.

5.2.2 Running participants

> **! Research participants should never be run alone.**

Always have someone else within earshot when running participants. This can be an undergraduate student, volunteer, graduate student, or the lab manager. If the study design requires you be alone in a room with the participant, there should be no locked doors keeping you and the extra person apart. There are a few reasons for this, not all strictly related to safety:

- In the event where someone (either you or the research participant) is made to feel uncomfortable by the actions of another, having an extra perspective or witness to the situation can be helpful to resolve disputes.
- Unfortunately, there have been incidences in the department where participants have acted maliciously towards researchers. Having a second person nearby to assist you is imperative, and may discourage assailants outright.
    - On this topic, the department has been working toward establishing a resource containing banned participant names and contact information. To date, this has not been established, but the lab manager Jacob may have resources for you. Please reach out and ask before you begin recruiting participants.

5.2.3 Data safety

All data collected or datasets which you have access to are not to be shared with anyone. Data and research materials should not be stored on your personal computers - all materials should be stored on the lab OneDrive account. Resources are permitted to be saved to lab computers; however, these documents should also be stored on the lab OneDrive.

All physical research materials (from questionnaires to equipment) should not leave the lab space without explicit permission from Igor.

6 Igor's philosophy on supervision

7 Funding opportunities

8 Lab space and resources

9 Resources

9.1 Setting up GitHub

For more information and tutorial websites/videos, please see the below.

Col1	Col2
Setting up R projects to GitHub	A short step-by-step video on how to add your existing projects to GitHub.

9.2 Using R

For statistical analyses, students are able to use any analytic platform with which they are comfortable. However, Igor strongly recommends that students learn R and conduct analyses using R.

If you've never used R, you will first need to download R and then an IDE (**I**ntegrated **D**evelopment **E**nvironment). Simply downloading R is not sufficient for using R. There are several IDEs that can be used for R, the most common and specialized being RStudio. You are free to use any IDEs you would like - however, the content in this manual will assume you are using RStudio.

Part IV

Setting up your project

10 Initializing your project

11 Data management

12 Analysis

You are free to choose the software you wish to use to carry out analyses. However, Igor recommends all trainees learn how to use R.

Part V

Clinical program resources

13 Comprehensive projects

14 Practica

15 Program resources and guidelines

16 Residency

References