

LEAF accreditation guide

BRONZE

Using this guide

This guide is an accompanying resource for teams attempting the UNSW Bronze LEAF accreditation. Each row corresponds to a bronze accreditation criterion (1-18), the columns provides information to help achieve that criterion.

UNSW audit standards: This column is used by the LEAF administration team when assessing accreditation submissions. Teams should use this column to ensure they are meeting the minimum required standard to pass each criterion.

Submission guidance & examples: This column offers ideas and example actions for teams to consider when completing criteria. It also provides guidance on how teams can structure their written responses and what information to include

The information presented in this column has been collated from successful UNSW LEAF teams. Teams are **not expected** to implement all actions described in this column. Often, implementing one listed action is enough to pass the criterion.

This column is **not an exhaustive list** of every way a team can complete criteria. If your team uses a method that is not described in this column, that is acceptable and encouraged

Please do not copy and paste information from this guide into your team's written responses. Contact LEAFlabs@unsw.edu.au with any questions or to request support.



Criteria	UNSW audit standards	Submissions guidance & examples
Waste 1. The lab possesses required waste bins (possibly clinical, glass/ sharps, hazardous etc.), as well as recycling/general waste bins with appropriate and clear signage. Standard operating procedures for the management of lab waste are available to all lab users who will have been made aware of the procedure to follow for correct waste disposal.	✓ All necessary bins are present. ✓ Recycling streams have been considered and implemented where possible. ✓ There is clear signage for all bins, explaining what type of waste they are used for (using the correct coloured bin liner is acceptable). ✓ Details of how this has been communicated can be evidenced.	Ensure all required waste bins are present within your lab. They should possess clear signage that limits the possibility for staff confusion and waste contamination. Ideally signage would have pictures of the appropriate items for each bin type. In colour coded waste bins (biological, clinical, cytotoxic, etc.), the correct liners must be used. Common waste streams include:: • Domestic waste (red lidded bins with black bin liners) • Paper & cardboard (blue bins) • Sharps/ glass • Biological (yellow bins with yellow bin liners) • Cytotoxic waste bins (purple bins and purple bin liners) • Chemical waste • Mixed recycling (yellow bins in office spaces) Consider implementing recycling streams for high volume waste products, such as: • Polystyrene • Soft plastic (clear bin liners) • Battery recycling • E-waste • Gloves • Clean plastic • Food waste (in corresponding office spaces) • Ice packs • Glass bottles • Lab specific products (silicon wafers, metal offcuts, kits, powders, etc) If recycling streams cannot be implemented, be prepared to justify how you came to that decision. In labs where contamination is an issue (PC2, PC3), setting up a designated unpacking station that allows users to remove and recycle packaging material before it enters the laboratory is a great solution. If recycling streams cannot be implemented, be prepared to justify how you came to that decision. Explain how lab users are made aware of correct waste disposal procedures e.g. inductions, online training modules, standard operating procedures. For more information on waste management and recycling, check out the: • LEAF library • UNSW recycling page

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People 2. The lab has a mandatory sustainability induction procedure in place for all new arrivals, explaining the sustainable practices to take. The induction would benefit from being documented to allow users to revisit the training and refresh their knowledge.	✓ There are viewable induction materials for all new laboratory members. ✓ Inductions should include explicit references to sustainable lab practices.	Describe the sustainable practices that you have included in lab inductions and training material. For example: • Shutting the sash on fume cupboard • Turning equipment off • Operating freezers efficiently • Correct sample and chemical management • Waste and recycling processes Explain how these practices are communicated. Is it in person, during online induction sessions, training courses, or through reading material? Although many sustainable lab practices also align with standard lab best practices, it is important that training explicitly reference sustainability as a reason for why these practices are required. Make sure to provide new lab users with all necessary sustainability materials from your lab. Inform them that they can access more information at the UNSW Environmental Sustainability Website.
3. The lab has a system in place to clear or track materials left by departing staff. All lab users have been instructed on what to do with their materials when they depart.	✓ There must be an explained system in place to ensure old materials are appropriately managed and disposed.	There are various systems labs can use to fulfill this criterion. You may find one or more of the below systems works best in your lab. • Exit checklist – by requiring departing staff to complete an exit checklist, laboratories can ensure that materials are tracked, redistributed and/or disposed. The checklist may require departing staff to dispose of material themselves or just make lab members aware of what is being left behind. • Inventory database – many labs use an online inventory database to track their chemicals, samples and materials. This database could be a simple excel spreadsheet or a dedicated lab management platform. • Jaggaer - the most common system used by UNSW staff to manage chemicals is the Jaggaer Chemical Inventory Management system. This provides a complete chemical management life cycle from sourcing through acquisition, receipt, tracking, and disposal. • UNSW mySample - this system provides a single, secure, cloud-based solution to catalogue all research samples at UNSW. See the public mySample SharePoint page for more information. • Audits – regular audits or clean-outs are a good way to ensure unneeded material left by departing staff doesn't build up. At a minimum, teams should be holding these audits annually. • Shared materials – when materials are shared and managed collectively, as opposed to individuals owning their own items, there is a reduced chance of materials being forgotten about when staff leave. • Designated lab storage – assigning dedicated physical storage locations (cupboards, shelves) to staff makes it simple to dispose materials upon their departure. • Agenda item – many LEAF teams have a standing agenda item in recurring lab meetings to discuss outstanding materials left by departing staff

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People 4. The lab has either a nominated person or group to drive sustainability forward. They should all be lab members within the online LEAF platform. Sustainability has been added as a standing agenda item into lab and/or departmental meetings and/or relevant networks (e.g. Health & Safety)	✓ The lab has nominated one or more members to lead sustainability efforts in the lab. ✓ The name(s) and role of the nominee is communicated to all members of the lab. ✓ Teams have considered adding sustainability as a standing agenda item in meetings. If not achievable, justification or an alternative method of engagement should be given.	Teams should name the individuals who have committed to driving sustainability within their lab. It is recommended that these individuals complete the MyGreenLab - Ambassador program. This is an optional, free, and engaging learning module that gives lab users useful information to be a successful LEAF member. Describe your LEAF team structure – i.e., an individual effort, a team, a working group. If you have joined other sustainability groups or networks explain that too. Explain how your LEAF team has communicated its formation, members, and goals to your broader lab. It is important that your colleagues are aware of your team's efforts to achieve LEAF accreditation. This can be done during a lab meeting, over email or on Teams. Consider and describe how new LEAF representatives will be appointed upon your departure (this is particularly important in student teams). This could be a simple commitment by senior staff to appoint a LEAF representative or to include sustainability responsibilities in future job descriptions. You must seriously consider adding sustainability as a standing agenda item in regular lab meetings. If this cannot be achieved or you believe it unnecessary, explain your choice or provide an alternative strategy.
5. The lab (or relevant group) has taken part in 1 team activity of sorts over the course of the year, or one is imminently planned.	✓ The lab can evidence at least 1 social activity done within the past 6 months or have one imminently planned.	This activity should be a social team event, not laboratory work. It also does not need to relate to sustainability. E.g., pub trivia, beach trip, lunches, social sport, board games. The goal of this criterion is to foster an environment of collaboration and friendship within the LEAF team. This will make implementing lab changes more effective and will help ensure the continuation of LEAF after the initial driving members leave. Ideally, this activity will involve all members of your lab, but at a minimum, it should include all members of the LEAF team. Committing to a recurring activity (i.e. a monthly book club) is preferable to one-off events.

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Purchasing 6. Energy and materials consumption have been considered during the purchase of new materials. Ideally users should request life-cycle assessments (LCAs), though should be prepared for vendors to not have these available. Lab users have received information or know where to find out how this should be approached.	✓ Teams can describe their sustainability considerations when purchasing new equipment and consumables. ✓ In the absence of any recent purchases, teams should explain how they plan to purchase sustainably in the future. ✓ Applies only to equipment in which more efficient options are available which won't affect the equipment's output.	Describe how the purchasing of consumables and equipment occurs within your LEAF team. Do you have complete autonomy, some input, or no control over purchases? What are your lab's sustainability considerations when purchasing materials? For example: • Energy efficiency • Water consumption • Effective lifetime • Maintenance requirements • Packaging • Consumable efficiency for equipment • Locality and shipping distances • Sharing or borrowing items first • Bulk ordering • Renting equipment Provide examples of any recent sustainable purchases made in your lab. Have you formalised these considerations in your procurement practices? For example: • A sustainable procurement policy or guide • A sustainability checklist when purchasing Do you request life cycle assessments from suppliers? What is your experience with this? Even if you cannot always procure the most sustainable option, it is important to put market pressure on lab suppliers by requesting LCA's and other sustainability information. For more information check out our procurement guide in the LEAF library.

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Equipment 7. There is a system in place to ensure that heat sources on cold storage equipment (fridges, -20 and ULT freezers) are not blocked, and any filters are cleaned regularly. Details of responsible person(s) for ensuring this is done are communicated to all lab users in a way that allows others to easily identify who they are.	✓ Heat sources on cold storage units must not be blocked and have at least 10-20cms of clearance. Under bench units may be excluded. ✓ There must be regular cleaning of freezer filters (e.g., every 3, 6 or 12 months).	Perform an inspection of your lab's cold storage equipment. Checking that equipment has: • Approximately 20cm clearance on all sides where possible (particularly for -80 ULT freezers) • Nothing blocking heat sources or vents (boxes, equipment, storage containers) • Clean filters Is the cold storage unit kept in a temperature-controlled room (often called a freezer room)? These rooms reduce the strain and energy requirements of cold storage equipment. Implement a cleaning roster to ensure filters are regularly cleaned (ideally every 3 months). Affixing a cleaning checklist to fridges and freezers is an effective way to remind users of their responsibilities. For more information on cold storage best practice (operation, cleaning, maintenance and sample management) check out our ULT freezer guide in the LEAF library.
8. There is a system in place to ensure that cold storage equipment (fridges, -20 and ULT freezers) and ovens are only operated when they are as full as possible. The need to do this and reason why has been communicated to all lab users either as part of their induction or as they start using the equipment	✓ There are no ovens, incubators, freezers, fridges or similar equipment in use at less than 50% capacity, unless required. ✓ All lab users are aware of this policy.	Teams should confirm if all cold storage, ovens, incubators, and similar style equipment are being operated at near full capacity (minimum 50% full). Is this a lab policy? Explain how this is enforced and how lab users are made aware of this policy. Do they get told during inductions, via training, with signage, or in SWP's and SOP's? When this style of equipment is not needed, how does it get turned off? What process would a general lab user need to follow to get an empty piece of equipment turned off (particularly incubators)? Provide examples for how this criterion has been achieved. For example: • Team members have a packing schedule to coordinate efficient oven operation. • Samples have been consolidated into one freezer, allowing another to be turned off. In situations where this is not possible, provide justification. For example: • Empty backup freezers for emergency use • Quarantine incubators

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Equipment 9. There is a system in place to ensure equipment and lights are turned off when they are not needed. Equipment this applies to is clearly marked and staff receive regular reminders to turn off the lights when they are not needed. Your response should include how you do this.	✓ A system to ensure equipment and lights are turned off is present and described. ✓ All lab users understand the system and their responsibilities.	Describe the system your team uses to ensure equipment and lights are turned off. All lab users should be aware of this system or at least understand their responsibilities. Where possible, equipment should be switched off at the power outlet. You may find a combination of the below systems works best in your lab. • Signage or stickers – a common and effective strategy to encourage users to turn equipment off. Students and new lab users are often unsure what can and can't be turned off, and so to avoid mistakes they opt to leave equipment on. The Environmental Sustainability team provides free 'Switch off' stickers for equipment. Submit a request for these stickers on the LEAF products page. • Automated – particularly for lighting, many labs use motion sensors or have lighting schedules that automatically turn off ceiling lights at set times. Make sure you understand which lights are automatic and which need to be switched off. Do not assume all lights in your lab are the same. Reach out to emgeneral@unsw.edu.au with questions, to change lighting schedules or to request lighting upgrades. • Training – when training or inducting staff on the use of equipment specify if and when they can turn it off. Demonstrate correct shutdown procedures. • Process manuals – many labs use SOP's or SWP's to ensure staff complete procedures correctly. Where possible, include descriptions for how and when to turn equipment off in these documents, induction materials and general lab manuals. • Routine checks – perform regular equipment checks to ensure items are switched off. Often this occurs at the end of the day. Equipment checks can be the responsibility of a whole lab team or a specific individual. This is also a good opportunity to identify and educate the offenders leaving equipment on. • Lab exit checklist – some teams use a physical checklist to ensure equipment is switched off before exiting the lab. • Outlet timers – these are particularly useful for equipment that is left on indefinitely. Often this occurs because the equipment has a slow starting procedure, or needs to warm up before use (e.g., water baths, ovens). The timers can be set to turn off at the end of the day and switch back on in the morning before staff arrive. Consult with all users prior to timer installations, and ensure they understand how to circumvent the timer or change schedule when necessary. The Environmental Sustainability team provide free outlet timers for equipment. Submit a request for outlet timers on the LEAF products page. • Custom systems – Some LEAF teams have employed a customised, automated systems for their equipment. For example, labs with centrally managed equipment can require users to tap on using their UNSW ID cards and then tap off when they leave. This system requires an initial investment to get started but is very effective when implemented. It has the added benefit of providing user data logs to lab managers as well. For more information on how these systems work at UNSW contact LEAF@unsw.edu.au.

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IT 10. There is a system in place to ensure that computer monitor brightness settings and computer time-to-sleep have both been minimised. Where lab users are unsure of how to do this, competent staff (in local or through central IT departments) have been identified that can provide support.	✓ Monitors are not left on when not in use for more than 15 mins. ✓ Display settings should be optimised. ✓ Details of communications or support provided to ensure this can be evidenced.	Consider implementing these rules for shared computers & monitors: • Screen savers are not used. • Brightness settings are as low as possible, without causing eye strain. • Monitors are turned off when not in use. • Time to sleep settings are as low as practicable. Aim for 3 minutes, if possible, 15 minutes maximum. The simplest way to optimise these settings on Microsoft computers is by going to Settings> Systems> Power & Battery> Energy recommendations. Apply all recommendations. For large lab groups it is important to consult all lab users and communicate expected settings of personal computers. Provide information and guidance on changing these settings. If your team has a large quantity of computers and monitors, consider engaging your IT representative first. Check what the preset display settings are, and request to use more efficient settings. For computers and monitors connected to lab equipment, the same switch off rules and systems in criterion 9 should apply.

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Sample & Chemical Management 11. All samples and chemical containers have legible labels, or there is a system in place to ensure that going forward all samples will be consistently labelled.	✓ A consistent labelling system must be in place. ✓ There should be no unlabelled or illegibly labelled chemicals or samples. ✓ Lab groups must pass a spot check during LEAF accreditation.	Describe your team's system for ensuring samples and chemicals are properly labelled. See the systems other LEAF teams use below: • Audits – regularly auditing stored chemicals and samples helps ensure all labels are present and legible. Describe how often these audits occur (annually, quarterly, monthly, etc). Sometimes it can be useful to conduct random audits to ensure lab users are always prepared. • Policies – labelling requirements should be formalised in laboratory policies, manuals or codes of conduct. • Barcodes – some teams use barcodes or QR codes to help automate certain aspects of their labelling. • Training – it's necessary to conduct specific training that ensures users are aware of correct labelling practices and their personal responsibilities. • Templates – Providing pre-printed labels, stickers and templates is an effective method to ensure chemicals are labelled correctly and consistently. • Jaggaer - the Jaggaer Chemical Inventory Management system provides a complete chemical management life cycle; from sourcing through acquisition, receipt, barcoding, tracking, and disposal. • ChemAlert – it is highly recommended to use the ChemAlert database when labelling chemicals. ChemAlert allows you to search for a chemical then access and print off safety data sheets (SDS), ChemAlert reports, GHS reports or labels. • UNSW mySample - this system provides a single, secure, cloud-based solution to catalogue all research samples at UNSW. See the public mySample SharePoint page for more information. Understand how the below considerations may affect the efficacy of your labelling system. Describe how you have addressed these points in your criteria response. • Responsibility – who is responsible for the correct labelling of chemicals and samples (individuals, teams, team leaders, technical staff)? • Lasting legibility – it is necessary to ensure the lasting legibility of your labels, especially when kept in cold storage. This can be done through lamination or using freezer and chemically resistant labels and markers. • Required information – Consult HS429 Labelling of Hazardous Chemicals Guideline to ensure the correct information is present on your chemical labels.

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Sample & Chemical Management 12. The lab has a system in place for sharing chemicals between users within the lab group. The procedure for identifying which resources can be shared has been communicated to all lab users. Your response should include the approach you use and how you tell people about it.	✓ A system for chemicals to be shared is present (within and across lab teams). ✓ All lab users understand how to request and share chemicals.	Describe how chemicals are managed within your lab. Do individuals purchase their own chemicals or are chemicals centrally owned and shared? What system do you use to share chemicals between lab users? You may wish to use some of the below solutions: • Jaggaer - The Jaggaer Chemical Inventory Management system can provide a complete list of chemicals currently owned by your school. A record of the owner and location of the chemicals is available. Use this to determine if new chemicals need to be bought or if they can be borrowed and shared with other groups. Consult with you lab manager, if you do not know how to use this functionality. • Communal spaces – the simplest method for sharing chemicals is by designating locations as shared chemical storage. This allows users to access shared chemicals without having to ask permission and gives a second life to unneeded or left over chemicals. It can be a shelf, cupboard, a dangerous good cabinet or a storage room. Make sure to clearly label the space so there is no confusion.ory allows lab users to search up and locate chemicals they require before purchasing new. LEAF teams commonly use ChemAlert, OneDrive, excel, and laboratory management software for this. • Digital chemical inventory – using a shared, open-access digital inventory allows lab users to search and locate chemicals they require before purchasing new. LEAF teams commonly use ChemAlert, OneDrive, excel, and laboratory management software for this. • Bulk production – commonly used solutions, like buffers, can be made in bulk and shared between all lab users, saving time, money and wastage. • Redistribution – regular chemical audits can be used to identify unused chemicals and redistribute them to new homes. Consult staff and students to co-design and communicate this system. Use signage, regular communications, training, and announcements to ensure users are aware of chemical sharing options. To be successful, it is important and necessary that senior lab members encourage and demonstrate a culture of material sharing within the lab.

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Research Quality 13. Common protocols and methods are documented and stored on a shared facility to make them available to all lab staff. Their location and process for updating or adding new methods has been communicated to all lab members.	✓ Lab members performing common processes and methods have standardised and shared their protocols. ✓ Lab members must be able to evidence a folder (physical or digital) in which common protocols are shared.	Describe the platform your lab uses to share methods and protocols. Is it easily accessible to all lab staff and students? Examples of open-access platforms used by some LEAF teams include: • Lab Archives • Shared drives/ folders • SharePoint • Salus • Microsoft Teams • OneDrive Sometimes it is beneficial to have hard copies of protocols available at workstations or equipment where that protocol commonly occurs. Describe the process lab staff and students go through to update or add new protocols to this system. How and when are protocols reviewed and approved? How are lab users made aware of this
14. The lab has had its pipettes, scales, and any such equipment calibrated in the past year, or has them scheduled to be done. The procedure for doing this, including the person responsible for organising, the schedule and results (where necessary) are communicated to all lab users. Your response should include the method you use to do this.	✓ There is a system in place to regularly calibrate pipettes, scales, and measurement equipment. ✓ Calibrations are up-to-date and performed on a regular schedule. ✓ At minimum, there is a plan in place to calibrate, if not done in past 12 months. ✓	Confirm with lab managers or tech teams if these equipment types have all been calibrated within the last year. Are calibrations performed in house or through an external contractor? Describe how your team ensures the calibration of these pieces of equipment remains up to date. Do you use a software or management system that schedules calibrations for equipment? Other equipment that requires calibration includes pH meters, spectrophotometers and centrifuges. If your lab does not contain any of this equipment, you can describe the maintenance schedule of any other piece of equipment.

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Ventilation 15. There is a system in place to ensure that any issues that Estates must address have been reported. This includes ventilation, room pressure, water leaks, heating & cooling, etc. This may include a nominated person(s) to whom faults are reported locally and who is responsible for alerting Estates or a central system for everyone to report on.	✓ There are no present, unreported issues with cooling, heating, or ventilation. ✓ should be able to demonstrate their understanding of how to report estate issues.	Describe the process or 'chain of command' when lab users report facility issues within your lab. When and how are new staff trained in this process? Provide examples of any recent or current estate issues in your facility. There should be no unreported estate issues during a LEAF audit. For repairs, relocations, waste, cleaning, complaints or general enquiries, you can request assistance through Archibus or by submitting an online service request form.
16. Fume cupboards and safety cabinets possess signage encouraging good practice. Where local exhaust systems are present instead, equivalent measures are taken to promote good energy management.	✓ There is clear signage encouraging researchers to lower fume cupboard sashes and to turn off safety cabinets when not in use. ✓ The use of fume cupboard sash alarms has been considered.	List the measures you have taken to encourage good fume cupboard practises. For example: • Sash stickers – the Environmental Sustainability team provides these stickers if needed. Submit a request for these stickers on the LEAF product page. • Sash signage – Making your own signage can provide more detail than stickers alone or highlight lab specific protocols for users.. • Switch off stickers – For more information and to submit a request, visit the LEAF products page. • Training – Explain any training or induction procedures that cover this topic. • Sash alarms – the Environmental Sustainability team provides these stickers. Submit a request for these stickers on the LEAF products page. Not all fume cupboards on campus can be turned off, make sure to consult your lab manger or building manager to clarify what is possible in your lab. There are three general types of fume cupboards. It's a good idea to understand which type is in your lab. • Constant volume • 2-speed – should have sashes lowered and lower speed engaged when not in use • Variable-air volume (VAV) – these are the most common unit type at UNSW and depend on users lowering the sash.

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Waste 17. Lab users disposing of hazardous/ radioactive wastes have received specific training and records of this are kept. Training gives consideration to what to do in the event that it is discovered that hazardous/ radioactive wastes have been incorrectly disposed of.	✓ Training records are available.	Explain what training is provided for the disposal of hazardous/radioactive waste. Some examples of training might be: • Chemical and hazardous waste storage room training • NSW radioactive materials training • Moodle courses • Specific laboratory or school training. Are records kept of who has received this training? Where are they kept and who is responsible for ensuring this? Explain how this training considers what to do in the event hazardous/radioactive material is incorrectly disposed.

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People 18. The lab has taken action to address the energy and environmental impacts of their lab operations under normal operating conditions, abnormal conditions e.g. small chemical spills that can be safely controlled locally, and emergency conditions e.g. large chemical spills that require external help. Existing documentation is updated as part of its review cycle to support this process.	✓ The lab has undertaken a review of how it is operated e.g. when/how equipment is used, through risk assessments and COSHH forms as required to determine its impact and users are aware of efforts to reduce this in all eventualities.	Undertake a review into how your lab is operated (e.g. when/how equipment is used) during: • normal conditions • abnormal conditions • emergency conditions This review should be done using the groups knowledge and by referring to relevant risk assessments, SOP's or SWP's. The goal is to determine the labs impact during all eventualities and for users to be aware of what efforts can be taken to reduce this impact Teams should then look to incorporate prompts into their risk assessments or SOP templates to address these impacts. See example prompts below: • What actions should be taken in the event of a spill? • Once the spill has been cleared up, where should the tissue/mop/absorbent padding go?" • Can the item used to absorb the spill be rung out into the sink? (therefore, the liquid enters the sewers) or does it need to go into a bin? • If the chemical is used in the fume cupboard, is there a sink hole in the fume cupboard that needs to be blocked in the event of a spill? • If there is a spill in the fume cupboard, do you need to allow the chemical to vent? if so, how long is suitable? (as many fume cupboards or safety cabinets can't be turned off the most efficient way to use them is as much as possible so if the FC is being left for 5 hours to vent, this isn't a good use of time when it might only require 1 hour, and if they can be switched off then leaving them to vent for hours is an inefficient use of energy). • is there a back-up sample storage option? what temperature or liquid nitrogen level is this kept at - can it be kept at a higher temperature or using less LN2? • Has the compatibility of racking between the main storage space and the back-up storage space been considered? (e.g. Racks that fit in one ULT freezer may not fit in the other increasing time samples are out of the cold whilst being transferred - can a plan be put in place beforehand to reduce the impact of this?) Teams should answer these prompts in their next risk assessment or next written SOP – this may occur whilst writing a new RA/SOP or during an annual review of existing RA/SOP. To ensure equipment is only turned on when needed. You may wish to add instructions in SWP's that indicate how long before use a piece of equipment needs to be turned on. For example - a refrigerated centrifuge needs to be turned on 10 minutes before use to reach 4C, or this specific oven needs to be turned on 30 minutes before use to reach 90C. An SOP or RA doesn't necessarily have to include all these items but there must be clear evidence that teams have started to consider the impact of their work during various conditions.