



# Westwood Lab Manual



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#### **About Westwood Lab**

#### Overview

This document was created by members of the Westwood Lab, for members of the Westwood Lab. It is an evergreen document that reflects an ongoing agreement to each other on how we occupy space as members of the lab and how we treat each other in that space. We commit to an annual review of those agreements, initiated by the Lab Head, to ensure the voices of all present lab members are heard and represented in the lab manual and implicitly the lab culture, values, and practices.

### To whom does this document apply?

This document applies to the Lab Head (Alana R. Westwood), who is responsible for the financial, human resources, and administrative oversight of the lab. This document also applies to:

- Undergraduate Honour's thesis students for whom the Lab Head is their supervisor or co-supervisor;
- PhD and Master's students in a thesis-based program for whom the Lab Head is their supervisor or co-supervisor;
- Postdoctoral Fellows, Research Assistants, Research Associates, Lab Managers, and other Grant-Paid Employees hired by the Lab Head or through grants administered through the Westwood Lab.

This document applies to people in these categories whether they are affiliated with Dalhousie University or another institution.

This document does **not** apply to:

- Students in classes or taking Directed Studies courses with the Lab Head;
- Master of Resource and Environmental Management (MREM) students for whom the Lab Head is their degree advisor;
- Students for whom the Lab Head is a member of their supervisory committee, but not their supervisor or co-supervisor.

## Treaty statement and commitments

We acknowledge that the Westwood Lab is an institution based in Kjipuktuk, Mi'kma'ki, the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Indigenous peoples. The lab was founded by uninvited guests on land that was cared for and called home by the Mi'kmaq from time



immemorial. This unceded land holds great historical, spiritual, and personal significance for its original stewards, the Native nations and peoples of this region. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship," which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) people first signed with the British Crown in 1725. We vow to acknowledge this as truth, and continually support and advocate for the sovereignty of the Indigenous peoples in this territory and beyond. We affirm that we are all Treaty people.

Land acknowledgements like this are a starting place for non-Indigenous (Settler) lab members in affirming the colonial past, but they can be meaningless and performative if they are unsupported by action toward reconciliation. Settler lab members commit to learning about our obligations under the Treaties of the lands on which we live and fulfilling our obligations to them to the best of our abilities. We also commit to regular and repeated conversation about how we might approach our work in a decolonial way and how to conduct our work in a way that upholds our Treaty commitments.

### **Values**

At the lab, we strive to achieve our ideal values. However, we recognize that the ideal is not always within our power to achieve. Our lab is embedded in a systemically exclusionary society that negatively affects racialized people, gender and sexual minorities, disabled, and low-economic status individuals in particular. The lab values are presented in two categories, first, our ideals and second, how we enact striving for those values in practice.

#### Ideals

We acknowledge that our ideals are not always possible or within our control to achieve, thus, we uphold our ideals and do what we can to work towards those.

#### 1. Justice

Acknowledging that current Canadian structures systemically disadvantage and politicize certain identities, we agree to take action to make systems more equitable in ways that consider the historical and cultural injustices that have and continue to take place.

#### 2. Trust

Trust in yourself and trust in your community is vital to functional work environments. We are committed to doing everything in our power to establish trust among lab members in our work and relationships.



#### 3. Diversity

Communities influenced by diverse perspectives are proven to be better informed, and contribute to more creative, innovative, and impactful outputs. We intend for our community to reflect a diverse set of experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives.

#### 4. Wellness

It is important to care for our physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing and to prioritize our individual and collective health. Wellness includes physical safety in lab work and fieldwork, as well as acknowledgement of risk in conducting controversial research.

### Values that guide our research

We are committed to orienting our research work to bring scientifically rigorous, inclusive solutions to real-world environmental challenges.

#### 1. Applied research

Our work focuses on real-world environmental and social problems. We prioritize work and studies that can inform research and evidence based decision-making and action to support environmental conservation as well as sustainable management of natural resources for healthy communities.

#### 2. Coproduction

Our work is guided by the perspectives of those who are affected by the issues we study and/or who are responsible for managing them. Every effort will be made to be inclusive of those people, while being cognizant of practical constraints and willingness to enter relationship. Where possible, when we enter research partnerships with institutions or persons external to the lab, we will do so with the intent of an enduring, mutually beneficial relationship. When publishing reports and papers, we will take a thoughtful approach to author order (e.g., <u>Liboiron et al. 2017</u>) that involves a consensus-based model to the degree possible.

### 3. Scientific integrity

We commit to principles of <u>scientific integrity</u> in the conduct and communication of our research work. These include rigour, openness, transparency, honesty, fairness, and, when appropriate, replicability.

### 4. Spirit of inquiry

We are committed to the pursuit of knowledge, and to preserving humility in our approach to research partnerships, our assumptions, understandings, and lines of inquiry. We question our own findings before accepting them as fact, and trust our intuition when challenges arise.



### Values that define our community

We are committed to protecting space for all lab members to work and live safely and comfortably.

#### 1. Compassion

At the lab we are committed to radical acts of kindness through compassion that we hold for ourselves and for each other to dismantle the constraints of perfectionism and hustle-culture.

#### 2. Courage

We commit to courageously proactive conflict management. This means asking questions, challenging assumptions, and holding brave spaces for lab members to be their authentic selves and express their honest thoughts and feelings in a supportive community.

#### 3. Inclusion

An inclusive community space means all lab members must commit to participating in the lab community to grow reciprocal and supportive relationships where all people and their uniqueness is celebrated and encouraged.

#### 4. Respect

We commit to always demonstrating respect for ourselves, and for each other in our work and in our relationships by honouring each others' time, space, capacity, boundaries, and interests. We do not mock or degrade or dismiss each other in our personal conversation, or in our workspaces.

### Values that we practice in everything

Above all, we are committed to learning and growing together.

#### 1. Advocacy

At the lab we are committed to advocating for ourselves, on behalf of each other, and on behalf of the broader community and natural world we serve, particularly those whose voices have been systemically marginalized or are often ignored.

### 2. Equity

Not all equal treatment is equitable treatment. We commit to doing everything in our power to ensure compensation and opportunities are equitably distributed among lab members while acknowledging it is not always possible to remedy imbalances since we do not all start from the same place.



#### 3. Transparency

Our commitment to transparency in our communications applies both to our research as a part of preserving scientific integrity and inform how we communicate with each other about our capacity and interest. However, honesty does not come before safety, thus, we practice transparency within reason to establish trust without sacrificing the wellness of lab members themselves and while respecting research partners' autonomy over their own information and data.

#### 4. Individuality

We recognize that people have different styles of communication, ways of working, and varying learning styles and personalities. Our goal is always to ensure there is not only space for each lab member to work in the way they prefer, but also to celebrate those differences that make us unique.

# What the lab promises you

#### Place of work

The Westwood Lab primarily operates virtually via Microsoft Teams to accommodate members not local to Kjipuktuk (Halifax, NS). Dalhousie University provides this platform, including tools for file storage, video-conferencing, online collaboration, and more. Upon starting your position at the Lab, you will receive an invitation to the platform. Lab members are free to use whatever platforms they wish for digital communication and file management related to their own projects, but Teams will be used for centralized Lab business and communication.

Physical desk space, equipment, and a computer equipped for GIS processing is available for lab members to use in located in the 'Annex' portion of the Kenneth C. Rowe Building. Shared offices may be available for use by lab members upon request. Efforts will be made to prioritize access to the lab computer for members with limited access to sufficient personal computing equipment.

If you require specific accommodations to conduct work as a lab member virtually or in the physical lab space, Dalhousie students must request accommodations through the <u>Dalhousie Accessibility Office</u>. Lab members not primarily affiliated with Dalhousie University, as well as part-time employees, will be offered accommodations on a case-bycase basis. In this situation where accommodations are not coordinated by the institution, we will do everything in our power to accommodate lab members.



### Pay

Salary bands ensure that relatively equitable pay is distributed among lab members. The salaries set out below are not within full control of the Lab Head, as many external factors associated with grant funding agencies and scholarship administration contribute to how these are determined. Our goal is to ensure that lab members are compensated to the best of the lab's abilities and to ensure compensation is not out of line with members of other labs at Dalhousie University. The Lab Head and many members actively advocate for fair compensation for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows through initiatives such as Support Our Science.

We strive for balanced pay, with the primary objective of ensuring that average per-year salary over the course a lab members' time with the lab falls within their respective salary band. The Lab Head will proactively support lab members in applying for scholarships, grants, and other funding sources by providing a list of these sources and reviewing drafts of applications. The salary bands below are guidelines, not absolute rules. Fluctuating year-over-year academic funding means that annual pay may fall outside of each band.

If the Lab Head has allocated grant money towards the stipend of a graduate student and because of other funding sources the student's total stipend for all years of the degrees exceeds the maximum amount as described in the salary bands, the grant funding will be withdrawn from stipend. If grant budgets permit, these funds will be prioritized to support research and outreach expenses for that student's project.

Salary bands for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows are subject to annual 2% rate increase and are set before tuition, which will be extracted from the total amount. Graduate students should also be aware of Dalhousie University's <u>funding caps</u> in place for scholarships managed by the Faculty of Graduate Studies (\$27,000 for Master's students and \$40,000 for PhD students). Hourly wages for Research Assistant rates were based on the 'Marker' and 'Teaching Assistant' classifications in the <u>CUPE Local 3912 2024</u> <u>agreement</u> and are adjusted 2% annually for inflation. Depending on the Lab member's employment classification, they may be paid biweekly, monthly, or in a lump sum once per academic term.

For graduate students, the following salary bands are defined in terms of scholarships and grant stipends earned to support you in conducting your thesis work and research. Any hired work as a research assistant (at Westwood Lab or elsewhere), a teaching assistant, or a marker/demonstrator is not counted towards a thesis students' salary band.

Paid work (that is unrelated to thesis students' research) with external organizations is also not counted towards the salary band. For additional funding opportunities, see optional positions as a teaching assistant, research assistant, marker/demonstrator, or student aid.



**Undergraduate Honour's students** – Not salaried. Where possible based on budgets of grants held by Lab Head, undergraduate Honour's students in the lab will be offered RAships at an hourly rate of pay of \$24.48/hr. Health, dental, and travel benefits and insurance are provided Dalhousie to Dalhousie Students.

**Graduate students – Masters** – Annual salary band is between \$20,400 and \$35,000 for the 2024/25 academic year. Where possible based on budgets of grants held by Lab Head, Master's students in the lab will be offered RA-ships at an hourly rate of pay aligned with current CUPE3192 Teaching Assistant (TA) Rates (\$30.05/hourly). Health, dental, and travel benefits and insurance are provided by Dalhousie University to Dalhousie Students.

**Graduate students – PhD** – Annual salary band is between \$26,010 and \$50,000 for the 2024/25 academic year. Where possible based on budgets of grants held by Lab Head, PhD students in the lab will be offered RA-ships at an hourly rate of pay aligned with current CUPE3192 Teaching Assistant (TA) Rates (\$30.65/hourly in 2024-2025). Health, dental, and travel benefits and insurance are provided by Dalhousie University to Dalhousie Students.

**Postdoctoral fellows** – Annual salary band is between \$50,000 and \$75,000 for the 2024/25 academic year. Your health coverage, benefits, and union membership depends on whether you are hired as a <u>"PDF Employee" or a "PDF Scholar"</u>, as determined by the source of the funding for the position. PDF employees are covered by the <u>PSAC local 86001 collective</u> agreement.

**Research Assistants** – These employees will be paid an hourly wage commensurate with their education level. Employees with a Bachelor's degree will be paid \$24.48/h, whereas employees with a Master's degree or higher will be paid \$30.65/h. The Lab Head will communicate regularly with these employees about the number of hours available for their employment and the time periods over which they are to be undertaken. These positions do not include health, dental, or life insurance benefits.

**Research Associates and Lab Managers** (full-time, contract or permanent) – Salaries are not fixed. These rates will be determined on a case-by-case basis as they depend on position responsibilities and qualifications. These positions include health, dental, and life insurance benefits and are unionized as <u>Grant-Paid Employees</u> at Dalhousie.

Cost of living estimates and tuition calculators, along with other financial tools and resources can be accessed via <u>money matters</u> on the Dalhousie University website.



#### Forecasting salary bands

	Rate of pay (Academic year)			
Position	2025 - 2026	2026 - 2027	2027 - 2028	2027 - 2028
CUPE Markers	\$24.96/ hourly*	\$25.46/ hourly*	\$25.97/ hourly*	\$26.49/ hourly*
CUPE TA	\$31.26/ hourly*	\$31.88/ hourly*	\$32.52/ hourly*	\$33.17/ hourly*
Masters	\$20,808	\$21,224	\$21,648 -	\$22,081 -
	\$35,700	\$36,414	\$37,142	\$87,845
PhD	\$26,010	\$26,530 -	\$27,060	\$27,601 -
	\$51,000	\$52,020	\$53,060	\$54,121
Postdoctoral	\$41,616	\$42,448	\$43,297	\$44,163
	\$76,500	\$78,030	\$79,591	\$81,182

<sup>\*</sup>Estimate

## Personal and professional opportunities

Lab members are expected to lead their own project and take advantage of the autonomy they have to whatever degree they desire, including proactively building relationships with external partners or pursuing relevant training opportunities. However, many opportunities will be provided through the lab.

### Opportunities for networking and collaboration

As a member of the lab, you will be offered opportunities to collaborate on different projects with other lab members to expand your network and work experiences outside of the realm of what is expected of you in the confines of your own work or project. Networking and collaboration are emphasised and encouraged at the lab. As a member of the lab, you will have the option to benefit from those additional opportunities and offers, but will not be expected to take on additional work outside of your capacity and interest.

Some examples of what this could look like include:



- Contributing to another lab member's work by helping analyze data, edit a paper, copresent a research project, draft a press release to alert the media of a new publication, etc.
- Giving a guest lecture in a course at Dalhousie
- Attending a networking or training session hosted by another lab member
- Posting an update on an award, scholarship, or publication on the lab website
- Write and publish a blog post
- Attending networking and training hosted by other lab members
- Working with external groups

#### Training

Every effort will be made to ensure each lab member has access to all training that is required for their project. On occasion, additional training opportunities will be offered or suggested based on relevance or interest. Where possible, grant paid employees will have training and development as part of their paid duties.

Some examples of these trainings include, media training, facilitation training, wilderness first aid, and C-CPR.

If there is a specific training you are interested in, you can request this of the Lab Head. Often, other lab members will be interested in the training and the Lab Head can arrange a learning opportunity accordingly. Lab members are all encouraged to pursue trainings and growth that interest them.

**Note:** The Lab Teams space hosts several lists of other relevant opportunities for lab members including lesser-known scholarships, placements, and learning or job opportunities.

#### Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Coordinator

In pursuit of the lab's JEDI goals, each fall members will select one lab member to act as their *JEDI learning coordinator*. This volunteer role will displace a comparable amount of other lab duties, to be determined with the Lab Head at the beginning of the year. The *coordinator* will be responsible for facilitating a discussion early in the academic year to identify individual and collective learning goals within the group. Based on these goals, the coordinator will arrange 2-3 learning sessions with guest presenters throughout the year and/or share relevant news items, events, and other resources that will support lab members' learning. Near the end of the academic year, the coordinator will facilitate an evaluation discussion during a lab meeting to identify if learning goals were met, and to support lab members in consolidating their learning on the subject.



#### Travel

Where possible, based on budget availability, support will be provided to travel to present research work in conferences, guest lectures, webinars, and other venues.

# What you promise the lab

In general, expectations of work are the same for all full-time lab members and for all parttime lab members. In every case, labour is expected proportional to your level of involvement at the lab (i.e., expectations for grant-paid employees are different than for graduate students but they are both full-time lab members).

### Lab meetings

Lab meetings are a space for creating opportunity to connect and learn about each other's work.

The lab meets bi-weekly during the fall and winter semesters (September – April) and once a month during summer (May – August). The meetings are virtual unless determined otherwise, and the day of the week and time are set in accordance with all lab members' schedules each term to the extent possible.

All full-time lab members/full-time students supervised by Dr. Westwood are expected to make every effort to attend all meetings, with allowance for time off due to illness or vacation. If a meeting is missed for any reason, lab members are expected to review the minutes and action items before the next meeting. Meeting attendance is optional for part-time research assistants, and whether their attendance counts towards paid hours is to be negotiated between the research assistant and the Lab Head.

Each full-time lab member will be encouraged to be responsible for facilitating and taking notes (as minutes captain) on a rotating schedule. New lab members will not be expected to fulfill these roles until they have attended a few meetings to get a sense of the duties. All lab members have the option to request a co-facilitator if preferred.



Facilitator	Minutes Captain	
Before the meeting: - Draft an outline of the meeting agenda - Remind other lab members of the upcoming meeting and offer the opportunity to add any additional agenda items	During the meeting:  - Take notes under each agenda item on the discussion (most take notes in real time to avoid missing any important details throughout) *	
During the meeting:		
- Introduce and close each agenda item and time keep to ensure the meeting agenda is completed in the allotted timeframe		
- Use the last couple minutes in the meeting to go over any action items	*Whenever the minutes captain is speaking or presenting, the facilitator will step in to take notes	
- Take notes on behalf of the minutes captain when/if they are the one speaking or presenting		

Each full-time lab member will also be expected to lead one to two presentation(s), activities, or discussions at lab meeting(s) per term. Part-time lab members (undergraduate honour's students, research assistants, etc.) are encouraged to opt-in to lead a presentation, activity, or discussion. Some examples of past presentations are included below.

- Presentations are typically research- or work-focused and can be practice runs of
  presentations required outside of the lab context, i.e., thesis defence presentation;
  poster presentation; class presentation; guest lecture; pitch for conference; etc. For
  presentations of this nature, feedback from the Lab Head and lab members can be
  requested.
- **Discussions** are also typically work- and research-oriented. In past meetings, research papers or articles that are of interest have been shared with the lab, and the 'presenting' lab member has led a discussion with the lab on the implications or recommendations or research methods used in the article.
- Previous activities have included virtual yoga class, online games, and tutorials on gamified versions of research tools and technologies.

All full-time lab members will be expected to meet with the Lab Head bi-weekly, or as determined on a case-by-case basis, and to come prepared for those meetings by providing



an agenda ahead of 1 on 1 meetings. If needed, additional meetings may be requested by lab members, but may not necessarily be granted depending on timing and capacity.

#### Work hours

Ensuring each lab member's comfort with their own definition of work/life balance is a priority at the lab and being able to define it is a privilege. We acknowledge that life, including emergencies and major life events, happen. In those cases, our intention is always to create space to honour those realities and changes to accommodate for them.

Unless otherwise determined and approved by the Lab Head, lab members will be expected to complete all the work pertinent to their project/contract/position in the timeline determined by the program, course, or contract. All additional work opportunities offered via lab membership are optional.

Required work generally does not take place outside of weekdays (Monday – Friday) between 9am and 5pm Atlantic Time (AT), however, there may be exceptions (e.g. fieldwork, travel for conferences). Each individual member's working hours are set by the individual and vary by local time zone. As a lab member, you will be expected to respect the working hours of others when waiting for an email response, booking meetings, etc. You may send communications at your time of preference but should not expect response outside of the recipients' working hours.

At the beginning of each year, Lab members will discuss whether and how to have shared core lab hours. These are hours during which members can expect responses on Teams and where Halifax-based members will be on campus.

**Note**: You can use the "schedule send" feature to ensure messages sent by email or Teams are delivered during work hours.

Unless you notify the Lab Head that you are not available, you are expected to respond on Teams within 24 hours (weekdays) and to emails within 48 hours. If you are taking leave you are expected to notify the Lab Head in advance (within reason).

#### Socials

Lab members will be invited to attend 1-2 social events per term, planned by lab members on rotating basis. We encourage social connection at the lab as much as we encourage professional networking opportunities, to celebrate each other and each other's milestones in particular. However, lab socials are optional to plan (individually or collaboratively) and attend. Efforts to include non-local lab members will be made to the best of our abilities.



### **Community Support**

In general, it is an expectation that as a member of the lab you will hold space for community relationships that reflect the lab's shared values and offer support (within reason and within your capacity) to other lab members. The lab is built on principles of co-production, community, and a desire to learn and grow together which includes participating in preserving a holistic community space that prioritizes inclusion, celebrating each other and ourselves, and wellness for all.

### **Data Management**

Reasonable privacy and confidentiality are expected of all lab members pertinent to their own research projects, and the projects being conducted by other lab members whose information they are privy to. Generally, we expect responsible file management including backing up data, organized files, and no interference with files that do not belong to you. All data collected should be password protected on any device used to access it.

Upon termination of a project, all data should be transferred to the appropriate individuals or groups. In the case of projects involving approval by Dalhousie's Research Ethics Board (REB), this should be done in accordance with the specific data management protocol approved by the REB. Lab members are expected to meet all ethics requirements set by the REB at Dalhousie and seek approval on research projects involving humans or animals.

Basic training on these will be provided on a case-by-case basis (more information about this is included in the onboarding package provided to all new incoming lab members).

## Concluding with the lab

Under ideal circumstances, lab members will conclude their time in the lab with projects that are fully complete. This may not always be the case (e.g., personal circumstances arise that require a lab member to step back from their degree program).

Regardless, prior to leaving the lab:

- Return all field/safety equipment that is owned by the lab or by other lab members (default location is the Rowe building lab space unless specified by the Lab Head).
- For projects without REB implications: save finalized or working copies of datasets, spatial data layers, scanned copies of paper field sheets (if relevant), and any other relevant project data in a folder on the desktop of the lab computer and the locked hard drive.
- For projects that required REB approval, ensure that all files have been saved in accordance with the data management protocols included in the approved ethics application. Make sure to include an easy to locate ReadMe file that explains folder architecture as well as data destruction and retention protocols.



• Save final or working copies of proposals, theses, and defense presentations in the relevant 'lab examples' folder within the lab Teams channel.

# Resources for new lab members

On the lab's 'Resources and Admin' tab in Teams, you can find more information on:

- Dalhousie University Resources (policies, organizations and unions, student services, and student centers, clubs, and activities)
- Taking care of equipment
- Field work instructions
- Accessing the lab
- Booking the lab computers
- Booking the Hayes room (shared meeting space)



### 2024 / 2025

Mary's Farewell – April 2025



Ben Ph.D. Comprehensive exam – July 2024



Mary Thesis presentation – April 2025



Holidays! – November 2024



EFRI Kick-off workshop September 2024





Laser tag vs. the FOME Lab – October 2023

Guest lecture in ENVS Capstone - February 2024



Master's thesis defense! – July 2024





Field trip to Conrad's Beach - October 2023



Cumulative effects conference - November 2023







2022 / 2023

In-person Lab Meeting – April 2023



Summer Fieldwork – July 2023



Env Mgt Field Course – August 2023



Lab Retreat! (cont'd)

Lab Retreat! - March 2023

