Laboratory Notebook Guidelines

Purpose of a Laboratory Notebook

A laboratory notebook provides a permanent record of research, ideas, concepts, data, analysis, and/or observations. It is a legal record of your work and may be used as evidence for patent filing, patent protection, or other legal purposes. Documentation and maintenance of your records is a fundamental part of GLP (Good Laboratory Practice) and is essential for the management and protection of intellectual property rights. The proper use of a laboratory notebook will ensure that the progress from conception to reduction to practice can be retraced in a chronological and logical manner, thus providing a solid basis for patent purposes. Moreover, the contents of the laboratory notebook must be able to withstand any challenges to their validity or accuracy.

General Guidance

A laboratory notebook should be permanently bound and tamper evident with sequentially numbered pages. Pages must never be removed or tampered with.

A laboratory notebook is a legal document and must be handled accordingly. Entries should start at the top of each documentation page. Spaces, which are free of entries, must be crossed out. Do not start a new page until the previous page is full or has been marked so that no additional entries can be made on it. Do not write outside the documentation area. If an entry will be continued on the next page, this should be noted in the spaces provided.

Entries must be made in ink, preferably archival ink. Never use pencils or any non-permanent writing instrument.

It is permitted to affix entries, such as raw data tables, folded graphs, or computer printouts to the documentation pages in an appropriate, chronological location. This must be done so that the entry is permanent. Initial both the affixed entry and the notebook page. The purpose of these supplemental entries should be clearly described nearby.

Never attempt to remove, obliterate, blot out or erase entries. Before a page is signed and dated, you may correct an entry by marking with a single line through the specific error and add your initials next to it. It is important that the error is still legible.

Every laboratory notebook page must be signed by the author and countersigned by at least one corroborating witness. This witness should not be directly involved in the documented activities. The witness confirms with their signature and the date that she/he understood the entries and that the activities performed took place on a certain date.

After a page is signed and dated, no further changes, interlineations, deletions, or additions are permitted. If an entry must be corrected subsequently, use a new page and refer to it in your new entry.

The person assigned the laboratory book is responsible for its content and safe keeping. Entries by a third party are not permitted, with the exception of the witness when signing and dating a page.

Immediately enter your work in a clear, concise, structured and legible manner. Entries should be recorded with the intent of an independent person, who is skilled in the art, being able to comprehend and reproduce your results.

Record all experimental work, calculations, sketches, diagrams, and any other related information directly into the notebook.

Retain a consistent language, numbering system, and indication nomenclature throughout the laboratory notebook in order to avoid confusion. Abbreviations must be defined and remain constant throughout the entire book.

Provide figures and equations with numbers or letters and refer to them within the description.

TITLE		BOOK NUMBER	1
PROJECT		DATE	

Continued from page:

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Continued to page:

PROJECT			DATE	
SIGNATURE	DATE	WITNESSED AND UNDERSTOOD BY	DATE	

PROPRIETARY INFORMATION