The CNS User Program FAQ

1. What do I do if I read this document and cannot find the answer to a question that I have regarding CNS? Contact us at the email address: info@cns.fas.harvard.edu

2. How do I become a CNS User?
You go to the URL: https://cns1.rc.fas.harvard.edu/become-cns-user

3. How do I know if I am a Harvard User or a Non-Harvard User?
CNS determines whether someone is an HU or Non-HU User based upon the billing instrument as opposed to one's own affiliation. If you are planning on using a 33-digit internal Harvard billing code, you would be considered a Harvard User by CNS. If you are paying for the user fees using a purchase order from any other institution, you would be considered a Non-Harvard User regardless of HU affiliation..

4. Where is the one place that has the most information regarding CNS and the CNS User Program?
That is the User Info section of our website at the URL: https://cns1.rc.fas.harvard.edu/user-info/. That section contains information that covers everything from our basic policies, our rates and billing policies, all of our User program related forms, how to cite CNS when you publish and important training pathway info regarding the various facilities areas.

5. What will happen once I have turned in a completed enrollment packet?
Within 1 -3 business days, you will receive the official confirmation email from us. That email will contain your CNS UN and PW along with additional instructions on how to get your training and project underway. If you are a Non-Harvard User and do not have a HUID, you will get a second email. That second email will contain important information on how to claim both a Harvard Key and physical HUID card.

6. What can I do after I receive the official new user confirmation email?
Once you have received the confirmation, you will be able to sign-up for instrument trainings at our training web page (https://cns1.rc.fas.harvard.edu/training-sign-up/) and log-in to the CNS User Portal (https://cns1.rc.fas.harvard.edu/apps/NNIN_users/). We also recommend that all new CNS Users carefully review the information in the User Info section of our website: https://cns1.rc.fas.harvard.edu/user-info/ as User are responsible for being aware of and following CNS policies and procedures.

7. Once I am enrolled as a CNS User, how long will I be considered a CNS User?
The CNS User program year runs from March 1st – February 28th/29th. We have a simple online renewal process in place for those whose projects will take them into the next User Program year. This process is announced in early February each year.

8. How are trainings done at CNS?
Some CNS trainings are held online at the Harvard Training Portal, in lecture rooms here in the LISE building, via Zoom, or downstairs in our labs. For information regarding upcoming trainings, please see our training sign-up page at the URL: https://cns1.rc.fas.harvard.edu/training-sign-up/

9. What do the different training designations mean?
CNS Users Only – These trainings require a CNS UN and PW in order to sign-up for them, so after you receive the confirmation email, you will be able to sign-up for these trainings.

LISE Cleanroom Users Only - These trainings are held inside the LISE Cleanroom and require that folks undergo the cleanroom qualification process before they can sign-up for trainings with this designation.

10. How does one become LISE Cleanroom qualified?
The LISE Cleanroom qualification steps can be found in the User Info section of our website under the tab, "Nanofabrication Facility Use."

11. How do I find out what trainings that I need as part of my project?
The best place to start is the User Info section of our website: https://cns1.rc.fas.harvard.edu/user-info/
For Nanofabrication and associated instrumentation see the tab, "Nanofabrication Facility Use." For Imaging and Analysis Facility instrumentation, see the tab, "Imaging and Analysis Facility Use."

12. Does one need to become LISE Cleanroom qualified if they are not planning to use instruments in the main LISE Cleanroom?
No, only those whose project will involve instruments in the main cleanroom need to become LISE Cleanroom qualified. Please note that the Soft Materials Clean Room (SMCR) is a separate facility area with its' own training.

13. Can I sign-up for CNS User Only trainings before my enrollment is fully complete?
No, only fully enrolled CNS Users can sign up for these trainings. If you are in a rush to get started, please work with your PI and/or admins to get the enrollment completed. We cannot allow "placeholders" for upcoming training events.

14. Can I sign-up for LISE Cleanroom User Only training events prior to being fully cleanroom qualified?
No. One must be a fully qualified LISE Cleanroom user in order to sign-up for instrumentation trainings within the cleanroom.

15. Can a group member sign-up for a training as a placeholder for me if I am not able to sign-up for it yet?
No, that is against our policies and is not allowed under any circumstances. Contact the CNS Admin Group at info@cns.fas.harvard.edu with any questions or concerns regarding training.

16. What do I do if a training that I am interested in is showing as full?
We recommend that you contact the staff member conducting that training, which will be in the listing of that training event. They may be able to add you to the training event. There will be cases where the cannot, due to physical space restrictions, but it is always worth it to at least ask the question.

17. What to do if you find the staff members' name who is conducting the training, but do not know their contact info?
You would go to the Staff Directory section of our website at the URL:
https://cns1.rc.fas.harvard.edu/staff/

18. Does the training sign-up page show every instrument and training that CNS has to offer?
No. While the online sign-up includes all of our more common, reoccurring training events, there are some instruments that only get intermittent requests for trainings. As such, there may only be an official sign-up for one every so often.

19. What is recommended in a case where you look ahead on the training schedule and do not see a training for something you are looking for training?
It is our general recommendation to look ahead by about two weeks. If you do not see a training for something that you are interested in during that timeframe, we recommend that you ask about it. It is always best to ask the technical staff member in charge of that instrument. That information can be found within the facilities sections in our website. However, if you are ever unsure who to contact, please contact us at: info@cns.fas.harvard.edu

20. Does CNS charge for training events?
Yes. Some of the real basic safety trainings (such as the LISE CNS Safety Training or the LISE Cleanroom Orientation) that are held at no charge, but the majority of our training events will have a charge associated with it. Information on how CNS bills for training events in general can be found in the User Info section of our website under the tab, "CNS User Fees." When you go to sign-up for a specific training event, the cost for that specific training event will appear in the window that opens when you click to register for that training.

21. Will I receive a notification once I have signed up for a training?
Yes, you should receive an email notification from our system upon completion of the training sign-up process. You will also receive a reminder email from our system one business day from the training event.

22. How do I cancel a training that I have already signed-up for but can no longer attend?
This can be done in one of three ways: Clicking the cancel link on the original confirmation, Clicking the cancel link on the reminder email, or through the User Portal by going to My CNS Trainings - > Scheduled Trainings

23. What happens after I have been trained on an instrument?
Once you have been fully trained on an instrument to the CNS technical staff members satisfaction, they will mark you as trained on that instrument in our system. You will know they have done so once you can see the training reflected in the User Portal under My CNS Trainings -> My Training Records. As soon as you see it there, you will be able to schedule time for the instrument's use.

24. Once trained on an instrument, will I have access granted to the lab it is in immediately?
When a staff member marks someone as trained in our system it does allow immediate access to schedule the instrument. However, the card/iris scan access resides on a different, third party system. There can be up to a 24-hour delay in getting physical access to the lab after a training is entered by the technical staff (not taken, but entered into our system).   Please allow one full business day from the time you see that you have been marked as trained on a tool in the User Portal to when you can safely assume that you will have physical access to the space.

25. Where do I schedule time for instruments once I have been trained on them?
The Scheduling Tool, which resides in the User Portal.

26. What do I do if I am trained on an instrument and it is not on the Scheduling Tool?
While all of our major instrumentation is on the Scheduling Tool, there are some smaller pieces of equipment that are not. Those are considered walk-up instruments that are on a first-come, first-served basis and they cannot be reserved in advance.

27. How do I know how long I can make a reservation for a particular tool?
Every instrument has its' own set of scheduling parameter associated with it. Those can be found in the scheduling page for the tool by clicking on the tab: Show Me Tool Info.

28. How late can I cancel a reservation for an instrument?
That varies by instrument depending on how the scheduling parameters are set for it. The scheduling parameters for an instrument can be found at the scheduling page for the tool by clicking on the tab: Show Me Tool Info

29. What if I need to use an instrument for longer than the normal scheduling parameters will allow?
If ever you have a special case where you need additional time than the instrument will normally allow, please contact the technical staff member in charge of the instrument. They have the ability to make reservations in the name of Users that can go beyond the normal scheduling parameters. They can assist you if you have special needs for a longer than usual run on a particular tool.

30. What do I do if I want a technical staff member to be present to assist me for a particular tool usage session?
In such a case, you would NOT make a reservation in the Scheduling Tool, but would instead contact the technical staff member in charge of the instrument. They would reserve the instrument for such an assisted session.

31. What is the CLEAN system?
The CNS Laboratory Equipment Access Network or CLEAN is the electronic logbook system that we use to record log-in and log-out time on our major instrumentation.   It is located on all of the lab computers. If the system is connected to the CLEAN system, you must use CLEAN to record your log-in, log-out on that instrument.

32. What do I do in the case of an instrument malfunction?
It is very important to note that CNS does NOT waive user fees based upon any notes in the comments fields within the CLEAN system. Those are read by the technical staff only to better track their instruments' performance over time. If a machine fails, crashes, or is otherwise rendered unusable to you due to no fault of your own, please complete a User Fee Waiver Form. These can be found in the User Info section of our website under the Forms tab. Once you have signed it, you would hand it in to either the technical staff member in charge of the instrument OR to the CNS Admin Office. The form requires a signature from both the technical staff member and the CNS Admin Billing Team, but they will coordinate for both CNS required signatures.

33. Where can I find information about how the rates for using CNS?
Our user fees are posted in the User Info section of the website under the tab, "CNS User Fees"

34. Where can I find information about how CNS charges time for billing?
This can also be found in the User Info section. This info is under the tab, "Billing Policy"
Users are expected to know and understand the policies related to billing at CNS.

35. Does CNS charge for reserved time or for actual use time?
CNS charges for both. Usages are looked at for the earliest possible start time and latest possible end time. If you reserve and instrument from 1 – 4 but show up late and use it from 3 – 7, you would be charged for 6 hours (1 scheduled start time to 7 actual use end time)

36. What happens if I forget to logout of an instrument on CLEAN?
The clock will continue to run until you do logout or another user logs in. You are responsible for all time that it "appears" to others that the instrument is in use.

37. Does CNS charge for no-show events?
Yes.

38. What do I do if it is within the tools cancelation window, but an extenuating circumstance arises where I cannot make it?

Email us at: info@cns.fas.harvard.edu. Tell us your name, the instrument, the reservation details and the extenuating circumstances and we can work to remove that reservation to free up the tool and make certain that your PI or advisor is not charged.

39. How can I keep track of my expenses at CNS?

There is no mechanism in place for Users to see their real-time charges within the system. However their PI as well as the person listed as the main administrative contact in our system does have access to this data via the CNS Portal for Administrators. Your PI or group admin should contact us at: info@cns.fas.harvard.edu to inquire about gaining access to this portal.

40. How do I cite the CNS when I publish articles based upon work done at CNS?

Language on how to properly cite CNS and the NNCI can be found in the User Info section of our website.

41. Can I bring a visitor into the lab to watch me work?

CNS cannot have people in lab spaces that are unaccounted for in the case of an emergency. We have the ability to accommodate "observational visits" to the lab, but we do need to be notified well in advance. Please contact us at: info@cns.fas.harvard.edu at least 48 hours in advance of such a visit.   Currently due to space constraints observational visits within the main LISE cleanroom are not permitted.

42. Can I train a groupmate on how to use an instrument if I have already been trained on it?

No, only CNS technical staff members can formally train and qualify researchers on our instrumentation.

43. Can I work on someone else's project or with their sample during my reserved time?

No, time reserved in your name is linked to your project on file as well as the billing information for you. If you are working on a sponsored project, particularly a Federally funded grant, it is vital that all work you conduct be on your project.

44. What do I do if I need to change my billing information?

The correct procedure is to have your group admin person either update your billing info in the CNS Portal for Administrators or to submit a Change of Billing Information Form, which can be found in the Forms tab of the User Info section of our website.

45. What do I do if I change groups or institution, but still wish to access CNS under my new affiliation?

You should contact the CNS Admin Office at: info@cns.fas.harvard.edu to let them know of the change. You should NOT continue to reserve time or do any work under your current CNS UN and PW as that is tied to your previous affiliation.

46. What do I do if my access card does not work on a lab space that it should?
You should come to the CNS Admin Office at LISE 304. We will troubleshoot and remedy as needed.

47. What do I do if I am coming to CNS from distance and need a place to park?
Please notify us at: info@cns.fas.harvard.edu that you need information on how to get set-up with an online guest parking account with the Harvard Parking Office. We will respond with details on how to do so.

48. Where can I store my personal belongings while working at CNS?
CNS does have some locker space available. Please see the User Info section of the public website for additional details on the locker program.

49. What should I do if I am having technical difficulties with the User Portal, Training sign-up page or CLEAN system?
Please report such issues to us right away at: info@cns.fas.harvard.edu

50. What should I do if I graduate or leave my institution and no longer need to use CNS?
Simply notify us by email at: info@cns.fas.harvard.edu. We will put you into inactive status and take you off of our email list, so you will not receive system notifications from our system and staff.