Graphing with Microsoft Excel® Supplementary Handout

Please note that various versions of Excel® may function a bit differently from the directions outlined below, therefore, adjust accordingly. Two sets of instructions are provided for users with Microsoft Office Excel® 2007 and Excel® 97-2003, respectively. If you encounter difficulties, consult your instructor for assistance.

If using Microsoft Office Excel® 2007, begin by typing the data onto your Excel® spreadsheet in (x, y) form. To plot the data, highlight the x/y coordinates, select Insert from the display menu followed by Scatter, choose X Y (Scatter), and click OK. To label the graph and coordinate axes, use the Layout function from the toolbar and select the appropriate Labels.

If using Microsoft Office Excel® 97-2003, begin by typing the data onto your Excel® spreadsheet in (x, y) form. To plot the data, highlight the x/y coordinates and select the Chart Wizard icon from the display menu. Work through the four steps of the Chart Wizard as shown below:

1. Chart Wizard – Step 1 of 4: Select XY (Scatter) and hit Next>.
2. Chart Wizard – Step 2 of 4: Hit Next> a second time.
3. Chart Wizard – Step 3 of 4: Select Titles and give your graph an appropriate title, making sure to label both the x-axis and y-axis WITH UNITS IN PARENTHESES! Other options are available via various menu options, including the ability to delete the legend. When completed, hit Next>.
4. Chart Wizard – Step 4 of 4: All graphs should be incorporated into your laboratory reports as full sheet inserts. Therefore, select the As new sheet: option.

For both versions of Excel® outlined above, once your data is plotted, you can draw a best-fitting line for the data utilizing the trendline function. Place the mouse cursor on one of the data points and proceed to right-click. All the data points corresponding to a particular data set should now be highlighted. Right-click again, and various menu options will pop up; select Add Trendline… utilizing the left-click. If your graph involves a linear function, select Linear. If your graph involves a non-linear function, you may opt to select one of the other listed functions.

Finally, you should choose to display the slope-intercept form of the equation for any linear functions (graphs) by selecting Display Equation on chart. Click on OK (or Close) and print your graph for submission with your laboratory report.