



Online Ethics Center  
FOR ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

## Oops -- Broke Another One

### Author(s)

Albert R. Meyer

### Year

2000

### Description

A scenario in which a graduate student repeatedly breaks expensive laboratory equipment.

### Body

Terry is a graduate student in Professor Young's lab. Terry's research project requires use of delicate optical instrumentation. In the past year, Terry broke a notch filter and a dichroic mirror while handling them. Each of these components costs about \$500. After the second breakage, Professor Young warned Terry that he has limited grant funds and cannot continue to replace expensive optical components. Last week Terry was having a bad time and broke another notch filter.

What can/should Professor Young do?

### Notes

Caroline Whitbeck introduced methods and modules for discussing numerous issues in responsible conduct of research at a Sigma Xi Forum in 2000. Partial funding for the development of this material came from an NIH grant.

You can find the entire sequence on the OEC at [Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research](#). Some information in these historical modules may be out-of-date; for instance, there may be a new edition of the professional society's code that is referred to in an item. If you have suggestions for updates, please contact the OEC.

### **Contributor(s)**

Caroline Whitbeck

### **Rights**

Use of Materials on the OEC

### **Resource Type**

Case Study / Scenario

### **Parent Collection**

Scenarios for Ethics Modules in the Responsible Conduct of Research

### **Topics**

Mentors and Trainees

### **Discipline(s)**

Computer, Math, and Physical Sciences

Engineering

Life and Environmental Sciences

Research Ethics

### **Publisher**

National Academy of Engineering