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New entries or pre-existing entries that have been changed are highlighted in blue. Minor formatting edits and corrections to grammatical or spelling errors are unnoted.

The following rulings have been collected from various official sources, such as the FFG Website, the Dragonstar Group Official FAQ, postings and comments from various FFG employees, both public and private.

SOULMECHS

What is the correct XP Cost for upgrading Soulmechs?

Errata: Page 33: A soulmech's XP cost for upgrades is 1/2 the market price of the upgrade, as listed in the table on page 120.

Do Soulmechs have a CON score?

The FAQ says: Soulmechs do not have a CON score. They only get class level and magic item save bonuses to their Fortitude saves. This is exactly how it works for constructs, undead, and other creatures with no CON scores. Mechanically, it is no different than being a character with a 10 CON.

How do Soulmechs fare when dealing with endurance-based activities, such as forced marches, etc.?

Wil says: I would probably rule the same (ref. "I'd lean towards ruling that soulmechs do not have to make Constitution checks against exhaustion from running"). You can't wear out a robotic body like that, although I would probably put some reasonable limit on it.

Do Soulmechs sleep? What about Soulmech spellcasters?

Wil says: Soulmechs never need to sleep. Soulmech casters do need at least 4 hours of downtime to "clear their magical cache" or something (that's not the official DS terminology, that's just my lame attempt at humor). Regardless, though, they do need 4 hours of downtime each day before they memorize spells.

Undead (and other intelligent creatures without a CON score) use their Charisma ability modifier when determining the use of the Concentration skill. Does this apply to Soulmech as well?

Wil says: Yes, Soulmechs use their CHA score as the base ability when using the Concentration skill.

Do Soulmechs that started as a different race keep their racial abilities?

The FAQ says: No. Soulmech is a race in itself, so any racial abilities are lost when a character becomes a soulmech. Anything described in a racial write-up as an "inherent racial trait," is lost, including spell-like abilities.

Can Soulmechs that started as a different race qualify for the corresponding racial Prestige Classes (i.e., Dwarven Defenders, Arcane Archers, etc.)?

Brian says: No. Soulmech is a race in itself; they are not elves, or dwarves, or orcs; even if they once were. They do not qualify for racial prestige classes.

Are Soulmechs always Medium-sized?

Brian says: Soulmechs are listed as medium sized because this is the default size for the race. It is certainly possible to find other sized Soulmechs out there, and if you want to play one you have to work it out with your DM.

Can a Soulmech imitate or reproduce other sounds, such as mimicking other's voices or sound effects?

Brian says: No, although that might be achievable through a specific robotic upgrade.

Can a Soulmech barbarian gain bonus hit points from raging?

The FAQ says: No. They also do not gain the extra Strength. [Similarly, a Soulmech cleric cannot take advantage of the Strength domain's granted ability \(src: Brian\).](#)

Can Soulmech Druids use the Wildshape ability?

Wil says: Soulmech Druids may use Wildshape without hindrance; Wildshape acts just like Polymorph Self with exceptions noted in the PHB. The soulmech may assume a 'biological' or 'robotic' appearance for the forms taken, at his option. Regardless of the outward form chosen, he still retains all soulmech attributes associated with being a robotic construct, of course.

Brian adds that both Polymorph Self and Wild Shape do allow the soulmech to regain hit points as a result of using the spell.

Can a Soulmech Druid heal himself with the Wildshape ability?

The FAQ says: Yes. Wildshape works just like Polymorph Self, which works normally on Soulmechs. (See above.)



Can a Soulmech Monk heal himself with Wholeness of Body?

The FAQ says: No. Soulmechs may only be healed with arcane magic and repair.

Can a Soulmech Paladin lay hands on himself?

The FAQ says: No. Divine healing will not work on Soulmechs.

How do Soulmechs repair themselves?

The FAQ says: Soulmechs cannot repair themselves, but others can use the Repair skill to heal damage they've suffered as follows:

Repairing Soulmechs:

- + Soulmechs do not heal damage normally.
- + A Soulmech may not make a Repair check on himself.
- + A Repair check at DC 15 will stabilize a Soulmech as a standard action.
- + A Repair check at DC 15 can provide a Soulmech with long-term care, allowing him to regain 1 hit point per level per day of light activity, or 1.5 hit points per level per day of "bed rest".
- + Characters attempting a repair roll without a Robotics Toolkit suffer a -2 circumstance penalty on their Repair roll.
- + Repairing a Soulmech in these ways does not have any cost in parts.

Are Soulmechs affected by the Inflict Wounds spells?

Wil says: Soulmechs are not affected by the various Inflict spells.

Some Basic Soulmech Concepts

Although not really a ruling, Greg posted this on the Yahoo Group regarding what the rationale is behind a soulmech being subject to critical hits. It gives a pretty decent overview about how soulmechs differ from your run-of-the-mill robot:

Anyway, my take is that soulmechs are inherently more vulnerable than conventional robots due to the delicate interface between the neural net and the robotic body. If a conventional robot loses an eye, it doesn't care: It just continues collecting data from the other one, and its computer brain can probably even extrapolate the imaging so that little visual quality is lost.

If a soulmech loses an eye, a specific neural pathway (or pathways) that allow it to receive, filter, and interpret visual stimuli just like an organic being does is damaged. This neural pathway is a lot more complex and sophisticated than a robot's simple optical interface: The soulmech can react emotionally to a beautiful sunset just like an organic being, while a robot just catalogs the colors and intensities of the visible light. Unfortunately, those complex neural pathways are also a liability, and damage to them can cause a mechanical effect similar to physiological shock in an organic being. If severe enough, damage or destabilization can spread throughout the neural net.

And finally, these complex linkages to the robotic body mean that the soulmech can't take the same advantage of redundant systems as conventional robots: Even if a backup system is available to come online, the real damage is already done in the stress on the neural net caused by the loss of the original system. All of this technospeak is just to say that we tried to design soulmechs as essentially "human" minds animating robotic bodies. All of those linkages would mimic the organic ones as closely as possible, even using magic where necessary, but would suffer some of the same vulnerabilities as a result.

As Rob says, there certainly are game balance issues involved, but we tried to design consistent rationales from the ground up rather than imposing arbitrary limitations and restrictions (i.e., here

are the principles guiding the design of soulmechs; what sorts of abilities and limitations should they have).

CHARACTER RACES

In Galactic Races, some of the races do not give the creature type they are. What are they?

Kevin says: Here is the list.

- + Doppel: shapechanger
- + Elem: humanoid
- + Eleti: undead
- + Ith-kon: aberration
- + Oruk: humanoid
- + Pershalan: humanoid
- + Pevishan: humanoid
- + Quasta: aberration
- + Sathon: plant
- + Siarran: humanoid
- + Tarn Idoun: outsider
- + Ulb: ooze

Shapechanging allows the doppel to assume a small size. Does this give the benefits of small size or do they just appear small?

Kevin says: *Alter self* creates a physical transmutation effect. If you become Small, you are subject to all the effects of being Small. Likewise, they can grow wings or gills if they want, as per the *alter self* spell.

For Siarrans, are 3 of the arms considered offhand? This seems to be the explanation under the Ulb.

Kevin says: Yes.

How does 2-gun shooting work with Siarrans? Do they get to use more than just two guns with their extra arms?

Kevin says: All their extra hands are considered off-hands for penalty purposes. They can hold one gun in each hand and shoot, receiving a total of 3 extra shots with Two-Gun Fighting, each at off-hand penalties. Basically, they work more or less like the Ulb's extra limbs.

It says that Ulbs are immune to critical hits, yet at the same time it says that the critical range against them with piercing weapons is expanded by one. How does that work?

Kevin says: Ulbs are immune to critical hits, except from piercing weapons. For piercing weapons, the threat range against them is increased by one

CHARACTER CLASSES

Gundancer Prestige Class

Errata: Page 60: A Gundancer gets the Gun-Fu ability



at first level.

Errata: Page 61: The first entry in the Gundancer class table should list Gun mastery +1.

Starting Money

Errata: Page 91: Pilots and mechanists both receive 5d4x100 starting credits.

Mechanist's Starting Package

Errata: Page 56: The mechanist starting package receives 2d6x10 cr, rather than 2d6x100 cr.

Sun Domain and the Father

Errata: Greg says: The Father is incorrectly listed as providing access to the **Knowledge** domain. The Knowledge domain should be replaced with the **Sun** domain instead.

Does the Mechanist have Navigate as a class skill?

The FAQ says: The Mechanist does not have Navigate as a class skill. The starting package is incorrect.

Can Monks wear high-tech armor?

Wil says: Technically a monk can wear anything he wants, but: "When wearing armor, a monk loses her AC bonus for Wisdom, AC bonus for class and level, favorable multiple unarmed attacks per round, and heightened movement. Furthermore, her special abilities all face the arcane spell failure chance that the armor type normally imposes." The fact that the armor being worn is made of high-tech fabrics and composites has no bearing on that restriction.

Imperial Wizard Starting Equipment

Greg says: When first created Imperial (i.e., technologically-based) wizards have to buy their own datapads, but they get the spellbook software with 100 pages of storage for free. Beyond this capacity, they will have to upgrade their spellbook software.

How do you determine starting credits for characters over 1st level? Do you still multiply their starting gold (from the PHB) by 10?

The FAQ says: Starting credits get multiplied by 10 only for 1st level, so if you start at 8th level you can add 27,000 cr to your starting total.

Are there any skills that pilots or mechanists expressly cannot have (i.e., class-specific skills)? The PHB gives a chart (most classes cannot take Use Magic Device, for example) but there's nothing mentioned in the SFHB about it.

Greg says: Any skill that is an exclusive skill for any other class is also excluded from the Mechanist and Pilot class unless specifically designated as being a class skill for them.

A couple of the prestige classes in the SFH have spell-like or supernatural effects that operate "as if cast by a spellcaster" of a particular level. This is fine for durations and such, but what about when figuring out DCs for some of these abilities?

Will says: The DCs would be adjusted according to (among other things) the ability modifier as appropriate (for example, CHA for sorcerers, INT for wizards, WIS for clerics, etc.). For ability DCs like this, you always calculate the lowest possible prerequisites if none are given. So, to cast a 3rd level spell a wizard must have a 13 Int. If his Int isn't given, assume it is 13 and he is 5th level.

Negotiator: as if cast by a sorcerer, using CHA as the ability mod.

Technomancer: as if cast by a wizard, using INT as the ability mod.

SKILLS AND FEATS

Can a Soulmech be repaired still when it has been brought down to less than 0 hit points?

Wil says: Soulmechs, as a special case, are not destroyed and can still be repaired until they are reduced to -10 HP, as opposed to 0 HP as with other constructs or objects.

Is Digital just like any other language?

Brian says: Digital is not a language that can be spoken, though it can be read.

Digital Basics

In another thread, I gave the following idea of how I figured Digital operated, which Brian confirmed was pretty much accurate:

Actually, I rather assumed that when they stated "Digital" as being a bonus language for Soulmechs, they were talking about the actual communications format, as opposed to an actual, honest-to-god spoken-out-loud language. I.e., we can't naturally understand the raw on/off bits that comprise Digital without some sort of software to translate it into a format we can read (like a modem, etc.)

Soulmechs, by contrast, have that translator 'built-in' from the get go. So they can jack in to your digital toaster via the Internet and simply tell it to burn your toast, without having to fall back on the software we'd normally need to use to tell it to do something."

Can followers obtained through the application of the Leadership Feat have levels in Thug, the Dragonstar-specific NPC class?

Wil says: Yes, followers may be of the Thug NPC class as well as the standard ones as listed in the Dungeon Masters Guide.

Does using the Pressing Attack Feat provoke an Attack of Opportunity?

Wil says: No.

The description of the Destructive Spell feat is somewhat confusing. At one point, it says that the



character can now cast a 12d6 fireball, but then says that he is still limited to only a 10d6 fireball.

Greg says: The feat increases the theoretical maximum number of dice that the spell can create, not necessarily the actual number of dice rolled.

For example, the fireball spell's description states that the maximum amount of damage the spell can do is 10d6, even if the caster is greater than 10th level. With this feat, a sorcerer with Cha of 14 could potentially do 12d6 damage with a fireball (exceeding the normal maximum – 10d6 – by a number of dice equal to his Cha mod). However, in the example, the caster is only 10th level, so he can still only cast a 10d6 fireball. When he's 11th level, he'll be able to cast an 11d6 fireball, and when he's 12th level he'll be able to cast a 12d6 fireball.

With regards to the robotic familiar feat, it mentions that the robot provides no special ability. Is this referring to all the special abilities (alertness, empathic link, etc.) or just the initial special ability (such as a weasel's +2 to Reflex checks)?

Greg says: Just the initial special ability that many normal familiars would otherwise provide. Subsequent abilities the familiar receives are generally supernatural and are treated no differently than the like abilities of "normal" familiars.

WEAPONRY AND ARMOR

Blaster Rifle and Pistol

Errata: Page 94: A blaster rifle gets 20 shots with a standard minicell and a blaster pistol gets 30 shots. The ammo entries in the text are switched, but the table on page 98-99 is correct.

How do shotgun attacks and stats work for double-barreled shotguns?

The FAQ says: You roll one attack roll for a shotgun blast and apply it to all possible targets individually (assuming you are in the 3rd range increment). Double-barreled shotguns have the same statistics as a shotgun. You can fire both barrels as a single attack action, and you must make 2 separate rolls to determine the results.

Can monks use Stun Batons?

Wil says: The stun baton is a simple weapon. Monks with the Technical Proficiency feat can use all high tech simple weapons; however, they must use their base attack bonus, not their unarmed bonus. Wizards can use the stun baton (assuming they have the technical proficiency feat).

Does a Keenblade have to be Masterwork quality? How much would a Masterwork Keenblade cost?

Wil says: A keenblade need not be masterwork; it is a keenblade simply because of the material used to make it. A masterwork keenblade weapon would cost the basic price of a masterwork weapon (+300 cr), then multiplied as described in the SFHB to make it a Keenblade.

Can firearms be masterwork? Can they be enchanted?

Brian says: Firearms can be masterwork; they can either be crafted by a master gunsmith or be top-of-line manufactured weapons. It costs the usual amount (+300 cr). Like any other items, they can also be enchanted; the weapon would just have to be masterwork, but the enhancement would have to be done by a spellcaster with the Craft Magic Arms and Armor feat. Magic in general can't be mass-produced.

Can you enchant energy weapons?

Brian says: Officially, the pulses from energy weapons can't be enchanted, so you couldn't have a flaming laser or frost laser, for example. In Dragonstar, this will be one of the benefits of slug-throwers (including more high-tech ones like gauss rifles and needlers and such in Imperial Supply). Of course, a ranged weapon's enhancement bonuses still apply to the shots it fires. So, for example, a +5 laser rifle will still do 3d10+5 points of damage on a successful hit.

Spell Warheads, GttG 80: Are the spells placed inside the warheads altered in any way when they discharge, or do they go off as described in the spell description? Example: If I make a grenade enchanted with the reduce spell, will the spell affect everyone in the blast radius, or just one creature or object as normal?

Greg says: The spell warhead uses the spell's area of effect instead of the armament's normal radius.

Flamethrowers, SFHB 94: It says that flamethrowers do damage to everyone in their area of effect, with a Reflex save for half. However, on pg. 134, it says instead that you make an attack roll and compare that the each potential target in their area of attack. Which is correct?

Greg says: Page 134 is in error. As an area-of-effect weapon, there is no attack roll and instead a Reflex save for half.

Since powered armor is "powered" and has it's own STR score, does it's own weight count against its carrying capacity? Further, do you also figure the PC's weight into that carrying capacity (since it's effectively 'carrying' the character inside it)? Or do you simply ignore both weights when determining how much a person in powered armor can carry? In a similar vein, does its weight count



towards skills such as Swim, etc.?

Greg says: Neither the weight of the armor nor the weight of the wearer is counted; the design of the suits themselves already takes these into consideration. And yes, it's weight does count towards weight-dependant skills such as Swim, etc.

On page 54 of Imperial Supply, "Rail Cannon" is listed on the chart of Huge weapons. However, I could find no actual description of the weapon anywhere in the book.

Greg says: "Rail cannon: This single-shot railgun is designed to accelerate large-caliber projectiles at extremely high velocities. The rail cannon is favored by the Imperial Legions in a variety of support roles, and can be very effective against personnel, light fortifications, and lightly armored vehicles. A rail cannon magazine holds 15 shots and a minicell provides sufficient energy for 45 shots."

Can you clarify the damage a tangleweb grenade does, and when it is applied?

Greg says: If the character attempts any physical action while entangled, he takes 1d3 points of damage. This includes a failed Escape Artist check (but not a successful one). The DC increases by 1 each round if the character took any physical actions that round, including a failed Escape Artist check.

Is there a "hard" limit on high-tech or projectile or energy weapons? It seems odd that using a magnifying scope can make a bullet or energy beam actually travel farther just by its use.

Greg says: Such things don't actually change how far a bullet or beam of light can travel. However, at least in Dragonstar, the x10 range increments rule is not meant to represent the actual physical distance a projectile or beam of light can travel (in space, especially, there is no such absolute limit!). Rather, the limit is meant to represent the maximum possible distance at which the weapon is *effective* in a particular shooter's hands. So, while weapons are still limited to the x10 range increments, the size of the range increments and thus the weapon's maximum effective range can increase dramatically.

EQUIPMENT

Enhanced Dexterity Robotic Upgrade

Errata: Page 120: The credit and XP cost of enhanced Dexterity should be doubled.

Vacuum and HEV Suits

Wil says: Vac Suits & Hostile Environment Suits have no armor value. Light armor can be worn underneath a Vac Suit.

Can the dampsuit (GttG 34) be worn over armor and/or under a chameleon suit (SFHB 110)? I'm looking at wearing the dampsuit over my armor and the chameleon suit over that. If I do this, does it impact the hide and move silently bonuses of these items? (Obviously, the chameleon suit must be seen to provide any bonus).

Greg says: Both the dampsuit and the chameleon suit can be worn over light armor, but nothing heavier. They cannot be stacked; both suits need to be the outermost layer in order for them to be effective.

There is no description for the Masterwork Toolkit. What bonuses does it provide?

Greg says: Actually, the description of the non-specialized Toolkit given on page 114 is intended to be the description of the non-specialized *Masterwork* Toolkit. A Masterwork Toolkit provides a +2 circumstance bonus to applicable skills, while a plain Toolkit merely allows the character to use the skills properly without incurring a penalty, but it does not provide any bonus.

VEHICLES AND VEHICLE COMBAT

Acquiring a Target and Targeting Run

Errata: Page 158: Acquiring a target and targeting run are both move-equivalent actions, rather than standard actions as listed. The Combat Ace feat (page 87) allows you to do both as a single move-equivalent action.

Vehicle enhancements, GttG 83: Since enchanting a vehicle's hull is described as being "just like a suit or armor" (except for costs and using the Craft Wondrous Item feat), does this mean that you could enchant a vehicle with special abilities as well? I'd love a free trader +2, Fire Evasion! It would require extending the price charts up to +10, but that doesn't seem too hard.

Greg says: Normally, only pluses to the AC (from +1 to +5) are applicable to the vehicle enhancements. However, I'd encourage the DM to allow special armor abilities for vehicles on a case-by-case basis.

Teleport suppressor, GttG 85: This one was brought up earlier, I believe. What is the varied cost for this device? If it's based on the same size chart as the armor enhancements, which column do we use?

Greg says: The costs are half those for a force shield generator.

What is the limit for weapons mounted to an Explorer or Freighter? I have searched everywhere and was unable to find anything.

Greg says: There are no hard, mathematical limits.



The DM should use common sense to determine the limits on effective armament for a given ship.

Can you clarify the Visual Data Overlay from Imperial Supply? Are the references to "data glasses" supposed to be "digital glasses" and references to "I/O goggles" supposed to be "I/O glasses?"

Greg says: Yes, and the last sentence of the visual data overlay description should read: "The advanced version of data overlay produces the same effect as I/O glasses."

It seems like Brainports are a much better deal for soulmechs than the corresponding robotic upgrade, neural net interfaces. Is this correct?

Greg says: The part of the brainport description about soulmechs being able to use them is incorrect; they must acquire neural net interfaces instead. Neural net taps are effectively brainports for robots, including soulmechs.

SPELLWARE

Spellware and Death

Wil says: I'm not sure how Greg means it to work, but I would guess that only disintegration and such would destroy spellware, as normal raising and resurrecting probably shouldn't break the bond.

Do Spellware register on a Detect Magic spell?

Brian says: Yes, but generally speaking you will only determine the existence (as opposed to the nature) of the Spellware. Some Spellware lists in the description what specific part of the body it's implanted in, but most are pretty generic. If you detect magic on someone's eyes, you can narrow the field of possible Spellware down, but in general you can't really pinpoint what it is.

Can other classes have access to Divine Spellware other than paladins (such as clerics, druids or rangers)?

Brian says: No, only paladins can acquire divine spellware. Other character classes have access only to the 'traditional' spellware.

When does a Trauma Symbiote shut down? Does its owner take damage if the symbiote takes more than 10, or 20 hp?

The FAQ says: The symbiote shuts down at 0 hp, but while it is active it must take all damage from any given attack before shutting down. If it is at 5 hp and takes 15 (or more) hp in damage from a single attack it goes to -10 and dies. The host suffers any extra damage beyond -10. At any time the host may voluntarily shut down his Trauma Symbiote as a free

action. Reactivating it is also a free action.

Can a Paladin's Laying On of Hands heal a Trauma Symbiote at the same time as it heals the host?

Brian says: No; healing the Trauma Symbiote would require a separate use of the ability.

Can you have more than one Trauma Symbiote?

The FAQ says: No.

Creating spellware, GttG 88: The example of installing an aura mask lists the surgery time as three hours. Shouldn't it be twelve? (12000 credit cost, one hour per 1000 credits). Or is "base cost" considered the cost to create the spellware (in this case, 6000 credits), in which case the surgery should still take 6 hours.

Greg says: The example is in error. The surgery would take 12 hours: 8 during the first day and the last 4 the second. Implanting spellware requires 1 hour per 1,000 cr (gp) of the base *price*, not the base *cost*. For most items, the base price equals the market price. For items with costly material components, the market price equals the base price plus the extra price for components.

Holy Channeling, GttG 93: Despite the wording of the spellware's power ("channel the power... to smite evil foes"), is it safe to assume that using this spellware does not count as a paladin's use of the smite evil ability?

Greg says: Correct. It is a "smite," but does not count towards the paladin's daily limit.

Divine Spellware in the GttG do not have any XP costs associated with them. What are they?

Greg says: The XP cost is equal to 1/25 of the market price, same as any other standard magic item.

Improved Healing (divine spellware), GttG 94: The spellware gives the paladin a bonus for healing with laying on of hands, but it doesn't say how much of a bonus.

The sacred bonus given is equal to the paladin's existing Charisma bonus. For example, the Improved Healing spellware would give a paladin with a Charisma of 18 an additional +4 to his Charisma bonus for purposes of laying on hands.

MISCELLANEOUS

Is the 10% chance of contracting radiation sickness cumulative for each dose, like the increase in the Fortitude save DC? (For example, a character exposed to an unshielded fission reactor takes ten doses of radiation per minute; does this call for a single Fortitude save at DC 28



[DC 10, +18 for nine extra doses] with a 100% chance of contracting radiation sickness)?

Greg says: Yes, the chance of contracting radiation sickness is 10% per dose. In other words, if you're exposed to an unshielded fission reactor, you *will* contract radiation sickness. The save DC is actually 28, though (DC 10 for the first dose, +2 for the rest).

In addition, are Fortitude saves against attacks from hellfire rounds resolved round-to-round (assume three hits on a character in a single round: would this call for a single Fortitude save at DC 28, with a 90% chance of radiation sickness?), or do the +2's and 10%'s keep adding up over the course of a full minute (10 rounds)?

Greg says: No, the save DCs and chance of radiation sickness are calculated *for each instance of exposure* (it would be a pain to keep track of otherwise, even if it were more realistic). If you take three hits from a 3-dose hellfire revolver, you've got to make three separate DC 14 Fort saves and have three 30% chances of radiation sickness. Note, however, that ability damage from radiation sickness *does stack*. So if you get radiation sickness from all three hits, you're going to take 3d4 Con/3d4 Con damage in total unless you get your rads taken care of.

Why doesn't the GttG mention costs for teleporting ships above Colossal size in Outlands Station's track network?

Greg says: Because the track network cannot accommodate ships larger than Colossal size.

ADVENTURES

CAUTION: The following section may contain spoilers.

The Symbiote in the "Prisoners of Alphex" Module

Wil says: Well, I had *intended* for the info to be found by the PCs in the doctor's datapad. It should have to be extrapolated from the doctor's research, however, not just in a text file that states, "extreme heat kills the symbiote." I would use a Research check (DC 20) to put together the necessary files, or even a Knowledge check of some kind to figure out the doctor's notes. As for the mutant symbiote being too tough, the players aren't supposed to engage it since doing so kills the doctor as well. Even if they do engage it, they shouldn't have to even come into range of its tentacles to blast it. Since it has a movement rate of 0 ft. it can't give chase. I should have included the following special quality in the monster's description:

Heat Vulnerability (Ex): Temperatures of over 100 degrees F cause 1d6 points of normal damage per round to the mutant trauma symbiote.