

Sample LAB POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS

Provided by Elizabeth A. Grice, PhD, Associate Professor of Dermatology and Microbiology

Citizenship

- Be a good lab citizen. This includes being neat and cleaning up your messes, being polite to other lab members, avoiding distracting others unnecessarily, and helping out when called upon.
- Acknowledge and build off the work of others in the lab.
- Support others in lab by sharing drafts, engaging in discussion, and sharing information, tips, and funding opportunities.
- Always conduct yourself in a professional manner. This includes dressing appropriately and refraining from using offensive language.
- If you wish to listen to music, you may listen on headphones. Please respect our neighbors and other lab members who may not want to listen to music.
- Using other people's stuff: DON'T, unless you ask that person first. This includes reagents, pipetmen, and benches—everything. Just don't.
- Always seek to improve yourself without feeling the need to compete with your lab mates.

Safety

- No food or drink, or containers holding food and drink, should be visible in the lab.
- Familiarize yourself with locations of PPE, the chemical hygiene plan, and safety equipment such as eye washes and showers.
- If you see someone doing something unsafe, simply remind them that they need to follow appropriate safety protocols. If the unsafe behavior continues, please notify the PI.

Effort

- Maintain core hours that are >8 hours a day and overlap with the rest of the lab for at least 10 AM to 4 PM. Being present 8 hours a day is not the same as working 8 hours per day.
- Time off: Post-docs and grad students are treated like other Penn employees in terms of time off: 2 weeks of vacation plus university holidays. You must ASK me (not tell me) to take vacation days and with advance notice. At least one-month notice is required for vacations longer than 2 days and/or if there are urgent items that need to be completed on your projects.
- Sick leave (including doctor's visits that prevent you from working a full day or week) is up to 2 weeks.
- I NEED to know if you are sick, mentally or physically, and I expect you will let me know either by phone or email on days that you cannot make it to lab due to illness.

Computers

- Lab owned computers should ONLY be used for work purposes and limited personal use on your breaks. Using lab computers and/or IP addresses for looking up anything that would be considered lewd or questionable will not be tolerated and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.
- I have the right to inspect lab owned computers at any time.

Spending

- If you notice that a consumable or stock reagent is getting low, please let the Lab Manager know so that he can order more.
- As we all know, obtaining funding for research is a major challenge. We are privileged to have adequate funding at the moment, but this can change at the drop of a hat. You should never take this for granted and always be mindful of your spending—whether it is on supplies or on samples that you are sequencing.
- Buying personal items with lab money is obviously prohibited.

Lab meeting & seminars

- *Lab meeting* (time, frequency, location). This will vary in format, round table, chalk talk, presentations, or journal club formats. This is a private meeting and everything discussed here is considered in

confidence. Attendance is mandatory – if you are running over or have a conflict on a particular day, let me know.

- *Departmental Seminar Series* (date, time, location); please make every effort to attend and support other members of the department. You are not allowed to bring your work to the meeting and work while someone is giving a talk.
- Other meetings and seminars of interest that you may consider attending:
 - [Include relevant meetings and seminars of interest to your lab]

Presenting at Seminars & Outside Meetings

- Attendance at one outside meeting a year is typically supported and encouraged. You need to get my approval before registering for a meeting. Unless you have outside funding, it is my grant money that will pay for your travel expenses. You will be required to submit an abstract if you wish to attend a meeting.
- You can attend more than one meeting a year if for example you get chosen to present a talk or have your own funding to pay for the meeting.
- If you are submitting an abstract for a meeting, you need to send it to me **>2 days in advance** for approval, even if it's an abstract that you've submitted previously. Slides and posters for meetings should also be sent to me **1 week in advance**. Failure to follow these deadlines will result in you not attending the meeting.
- Same is true if you wish to give a seminar or a poster at an internal (Penn) meeting or seminar series—I need to see the posters or slides **1 week in advance**. Please also schedule a time to practice the talk with myself and the lab.
- You are never allowed to present or discuss other lab members' unpublished data or even the experiments that are underway.
- If you attend a meeting, you are expected to go to the talks and attend the full program. **Attending meetings is a privilege and if I find that someone is taking advantage of that privilege, they will be barred from attending meetings.**

Notebooks and record keeping

- You are expected to keep a detailed, accurate, and neat lab notebook. The lab interface is GitHub for sharing and storing analysis scripts, mapping files, etc. OneNote is fine for keeping notes if you wish to keep an electronic notebook.
- Your notebook will be at ALL times available for me to review. If you use OneNote or Evernote, you will need to share a link with me.

Collaboration

- Do not send or give reagents to someone who asks you for them. Send them on to me. We may have received the reagent from another lab and not be allowed to share it. Or we may not be able to freely distribute reagents (especially clinical samples) without paperwork and justification. Or the person requesting the reagent may be a direct competitor of an existing collaborator.
- Do not initiate new collaborations without my approval. I ultimately assume responsibility for all transactions (data, mice, clones, clinical samples).
- I appreciate being cc'd on all correspondence with collaborators.

Reading & writing

- You should be reading both broadly and within your specific area. Aim to read 3+ papers per week.
- Sign up for PubCrawler or other search engine to keep on top of the literature.
- Writing is an essential skill for almost every career path within the sciences. You should aim to write 1000+ new words per week. If you need help thinking of topics or want to write a review, please consult with me.

As your mentor, in return, you can expect that I will:

- Provide a steady stream of funding to the lab. This means that a significant portion of my time is spent writing grants. You will occasionally be expected to contribute data, figures, and text to grants.
- Provide mentorship to you on a personalized basis.

- Meet with you as needed. An open door to my office means you are welcome to come talk to me.
- Remain responsive by email if I am traveling.
- Have ZERO tolerance for plagiarism, fabrication, or misconduct (scientific or other).
- Give you information regarding career development and funding opportunities.
- Direct you in a project that has the capacity to generate >3 papers for a thesis (PhD students) or a paper a year (post-docs).
- Be your biggest advocate. I will help you network, introduce you to the right people, publicize your work as appropriate, and nominate you for awards as appropriate. I will be enthusiastic about your project and will support you in your career decisions as long as you uphold your part of the bargain.
- Maintain a diverse and collaborative team in a positive and productive work environment that facilitates training, collaboration, and rigorous scientific inquiry, towards the common goal of advancing scientific understanding of the skin microbiome and its roles in health, disease, and wound healing.