



M-S AMC Policy/Procedure Recommendation for Professional Development of Lab Assistants

Document Summary

What it does: This document begins by defining lab assistants in the context of competency based education, and outlines their importance. It then outlines standard roles and responsibilities of lab assistants, qualifications, and duties, and concludes by providing insight into various possible funding sources for lab assistants, and the professional development of lab assistants to ensure that students are able to gain value by attending open labs and the like. The overall incorporation of lab assistants into the organizational structure at a college will allow colleges to get the most value out of their labs and allow programs to move a step closer to being competency-based.

Who it's for: College administration

M-S AMC Present and Preferred State:

PRESENT STATE  **PREFERRED STATE**
("New Model")

- | | |
|---|--|
| ■ Directed learner | ■ Self-directed learner |
| ■ Pace of learning set by instructor | ■ Pace of learning set by skills acquisition |
| ■ Success grounded in hours & <u>theory</u> | ■ Success grounded in <u>competence</u> |
| ■ Program – Measures classroom competence | ■ Program – Validates on-the-job competence |





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Procedure for Professional Development of Lab Assistants

As instructional methodologies begin to change to embrace “Competency Based Education” and/or “Performance Based Objectives”, the manner in which students attain certification in various skill sets requires a rigorous verification process. Lab Assistants often share in the additional time requirements for this in order to reduce the demands on faculty in those situations where costs and availability become a factor.

A Laboratory Assistant is an individual who helps in preparing instructions and materials used during laboratory experiments and demonstrations and can depending on experience witness and sign off on competency check lists. Qualifications and experience of lab assistants should be matched to a particular lab. Assistants must complete a lab safety training program prior to starting to work in a lab. They must also obey the prescribed lab dress code, such as wearing closed shoes, while working.

Faculty members that request lab assistants will be responsible for training and supervision of lab assistants in, preparing the lab for sessions, cleaning the lab, promoting safety, and assisting in experiments and demonstrations.

Preparing for Lab Sessions

Lab assistants read the experimental procedure given to them by the faculty member. The assistant will ask questions to clarify the procedure, if needed. Assistants will set- up any laboratory equipment needed for the experiment and ensure that the lab is stocked with the necessary supplies. This includes monitoring all of the supplies that are used in the lab and restocking them as needed.

Cleaning the Lab

Carrying out experiments in a safe environment reduces the likelihood of accidents occurring. One of the integral duties performed by student lab assistants is securing the lab. This is done by cleaning up any spills, washing the equipment used by students. Assistants also ensure that supplies are put back in the designated places after the lesson ends.

Promoting Safety

Accidents in a laboratory may lead to injuries, lost lives and property damage. A student lab assistant ensures that students do not practice any unsafe behaviors in the lab. They unplug all electrical equipment to minimize the chances of accidents and fires. Assistants show the students how to handle chemical spills and get rid of non- hazardous and chemical waste safely. They also ensure that students adhere to the lab dress code and wear protective gear, such as safety goggles, during experiments.

Assisting in Experiments and Demonstrations





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Lab technicians work closely with students during lab lessons and guide them through experiments. They walk around the lab and answer questions students have concerning the process. This means assistants must read all of the guidelines provided by the faculty member before the lesson commences.

Qualifications

- Varies according to position
- Minimum of high school diploma or GED certificate
- Demonstrated training, work experience, or specific knowledge in the assigned area
- Demonstrated interpersonal skills, communication skills, and work ethic

Additional Duties

- Perform duties that are unique to the specific department, office, or position assigned.
- Organize assigned workload to meet appropriate deadlines.
- Perform all duties and responsibilities in a manner consistent with the College mission.
- Establish and maintain positive working relationships with other administrative, faculty, and staff personnel.
- Follow departmental guidelines and procedures.
- Maintain confidentiality of information.
- Perform other duties as assigned by the supervisor or department head.
- Comply with all policies of the State Board of Education, the Department of Postsecondary Education, and the College

Funding Sources for Lab Assistants

Lab assistants may be funded in some cases with student work study funds that are available through the financial aid office if the student meets the eligibility requirements. Direct students to check with the financial aid office to determine if they meet the eligibility requirements for this program.

Faculty members should become familiar with the types and eligibility requirements for any work study programs that are available on their campuses so they can be a resource for students that they identify or who may inquire about becoming a lab assistant.

Lastly, encourage students to volunteer to become lab assistants and mentor them in the role. Students aspiring to this role should have excellent people skills and highly competent in the course material through previous completion of the course in question. This is an excellent opportunity for students who are trying to build their resume or who want to be more involved in the details of the course or lab experiments and demonstrations.





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