

## Expectations for Behavior in the Laboratory

Expectations for behavior in your mentor's laboratory will vary across labs, so be sure to discuss these expectations when you begin working in the lab. But there are some absolutes:

1. Be safe. This is the single most important thing. Attend all required safety classes and familiarize yourself with all safety protocols particular to your lab. Make sure you understand the proper use and disposal of all hazardous materials that you will be encountering. If you don't know, be sure to ask!
2. Be reliable. This is a close second in importance to being safe. Make a schedule with your mentor and stick to it. If you are expected to be there, be there. If an unavoidable emergency arises, be sure to communicate immediately with your mentor.
3. Attend lab meetings. In most labs these are a vital opportunity to coordinate lab activities, communicate your latest research results, and discuss broader scientific questions. If your lab does not have regular lab meetings then make sure you are communicating regularly with your mentor in other ways to keep your project on track.
4. Be mindful of upcoming deadlines. Scientific experiments often take more time than initially planned and sometimes fail, so don't plan to do everything at the last minute.
5. Write everything down. Keep a meticulous lab notebook, and date and initialize anything you prepare in the lab. Maintain a daily planner.
6. Be proactive. If you're not sure of something, ask. You will be doing real experiments for potentially publishable results, so take them seriously. If you don't understand, ask questions.
7. Clean up your messes. Enough said.
8. If a supply is running low, let someone know. Don't wait until you have used the last of something, as lab supplies take time to order and be shipped. Similarly, if you break something, let someone know as soon as possible. These things happen to everyone, you won't get in trouble—but others will probably need to use it, and you don't want them to discover that it's broken on the day of their experiment.
9. If you make a mistake in your experiment or assay, let someone know. Everyone makes mistakes, but failing to disclose them can seriously jeopardize the results.
10. Don't bring friends or family into the lab unless your mentor has approved it ahead of time.
11. Finally, have fun! Science is all about the discovery of the unknown, which is one of our most thrilling endeavors.