

# Lab etiquette

Research is a community endeavor: you cannot do it on your own. At a university practical, in the department or in the lab you are working alongside your colleagues. Following these simple universal rules will help you avoid conflicts and remain a good lab citizen –

## 1 Be respectful and considerate to all your colleagues

Your fellow students, professors and PIs, administrative assistants, technical and cleaning personnel – they are all your colleagues, who you meet and work with every day. Being nice to each other creates a good working atmosphere and helps deal with the challenges of science

## 2 Coordinate your work with others

Many reagents and instruments are shared and could occasionally become a bottleneck. Reach out to your colleagues to discuss how you can share them most efficiently. Create and use sign-up sheets or online tools to coordinate and schedule usage time. Inform and get consent from other users in case you need to extend your time slot or cancel the reservation

## 3 If you need to borrow anything from a colleague – ask

People will readily help, but will frown if you help yourself. Always get permission first. Borrowing without permission is not only a financial problem; you may interfere with other people's work plans. Promptly return what you have borrowed without reminders

## 4 Clean up after yourself

Return materials and equipment to their places, clean your workbench and common usage equipment (balances, hoods, etc). Re-stock used up plastic- and glassware, order used reagents and consumables

## 5 Do not leave problems unattended

If anything requires attention, investigate and react accordingly – not only just out of courtesy to your colleagues, but also as a matter of personal and public safety. Do not pass beeping or malfunctioning equipment, spills or colleagues who might need your assistance. Clean up spills, order used up reagents and consumables and promptly report problems with equipment

## 6 Talk to your colleagues – openly and honestly

If you are in doubt about anything in the lab – ask your colleagues. Do not hide your mistakes: informing others and asking for their assistance helps resolve problems quickly and prevent them in the future

## 7 Help others

Assisting colleagues is one of the most valuable traditions in science. This help goes a long way – from showing location of common equipment to a novice, to sharing reagents and establishing international or interdisciplinary collaborations