

Lab Leadership and Management Best Practices – Checklist

Principal investigators are responsible for managing lab operations and leading research staff. They must also establish effective professional habits to support these activities. Using this checklist, identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. (Note regarding terminology: Research staff include junior faculty, post-docs, graduate students, undergraduate students, coordinators, research technicians and anyone else conducting research in your lab or team.)

		Check if practice is used	Check if an area for improvement
Managing Lab Operations			
1	Hold regular meetings with research staff.		
2	Utilize a written meeting agenda.		
3	Examine the research data that are analyzed in the lab (not just the results of analysis or output).		
4	Store all research data in a central location accessible by the principal investigator.		
5	Store all compliance materials in a central location accessible by the principal investigator.		
6	Store back-up copies of all research data in a secure location (e.g. on the cloud, an external hard drive, or use a data storage service that is backed up, etc.).		
7	Share data in a data repository that can be accessed by other researchers.		
8	Establish written scientific procedures (or checklists) for new scientific projects.		
9	Establish written standard operating procedures (or checklists) for matters of research compliance or integrity.		
10	Perform self-audits of compliance with lab protocols or standard operating procedures within your lab.		
11	Acquire additional resources before taking on new projects that extend beyond the lab's current capacity.		
Leading Staff			
12	Train research staff to ensure they have the skills to execute research protocols competently.		
13	Provide ongoing professional development or training for executing protocols effectively.		
14	Delegate tasks to staff when they can be delegated.		
15	Give research staff constructive feedback.		
16	Formally communicate expectations of research staff in your lab.		
17	Hold conversations in your lab about matters of research compliance or integrity.		
18	Communicate that you are available to help address problems or mistakes identified by staff.		
19	Adapt leadership or mentorship style to the individuals' skills and knowledge level.		
20	Communicate appreciation for the contributions of research staff.		
21	Celebrate milestones or successes in the lab.		
Professional Habits			
22	Be accessible by working regularly in the same physical location as research staff.		
23	Say "no" to good research or scholarly opportunities when overextended.		
24	Manage stress daily.		
25	Consult mentors or colleagues for advice.		
26	Have a strategy for immediately addressing frustration or anger at work.		
27	Collaborate with people who complement your strengths.		
28	Reflect regularly on what is and is not working and try new approaches.		
29	Set healthy work-life boundaries and follow through on them.		
30	Establish effective relationships with compliance offices (or other institutional resources).		
31	Regularly practice SMART decision-making strategies.		
32	Use assertive communication techniques (i.e., recognize others' needs, communicate your needs, use "I" statements).		