

## A GUIDE TO WORKING IN A RESEARCH LAB

### DURING THE RESEARCH EXPERIENCE:

#### *Aim to be a collaborative, supportive, team member*

Please remember that in addition to gaining experience in research, you are acting as an ambassador of Pomona College. How your colleagues and supervisors view you will influence their general impressions of the College. Thus, you should aim to behave professionally while you are working in their labs (and possibly living on their campus).

Here are some general tips:

- It is good practice for your mentor / supervisor to establish clear expectations. For example, ask when you are expected to start and end your workday, and how long your lunch break should be. You should show up on time and not take breaks longer than those suggested by your mentor. At the same time, recognize that research doesn't always follow a consistent schedule, so be prepared that in some cases, you might need to come in early, stay late, and/or eat a late/early lunch!
- Take initiative and show interest in the work of your colleagues! If you find yourself with time on your hands during the workday, ask your mentor if there is additional learning you could be doing or projects you could be helping on. Or ask another lab member about what they are working on and learn.
- If you have finished all your given tasks, or have a waiting period before you can proceed, ask your supervisor (mentor) if there is anything else you can do or help with before sitting down and doing non-work-related stuff.
- Be collegial. Get to know your co-workers. Learn how they got to where they are now – you might get inspiration for your own academic and career trajectory!
- Avoid checking your phone every minute (or even every couple of minutes). Wait until you have a break to check to see if you have any messages
- During work hours, avoid texting
- During work hours, avoid checking your email all the time
- During work hours, avoid surfing the internet, unless you are looking for information related to your research project

While it can be hard to do this, a few weeks into the experience, ask your supervisor (mentor) for feedback. Use a growth mindset: how can I get even better? Then, at the end of the summer, ask your supervisor (mentor) for summative feedback. If you like what you're hearing, then ask them if they would be willing to write you a letter of recommendation in the future.