

## Lab Assistant Instructions – General

(These are general instructions that should guide your behavior as a lab assistant – keep in mind that individual instructors may have additional requests or requirements that will impact your classroom conduct.)

1. **Before you leave any classroom**, please take a few minutes for some housekeeping, specifically but not limited to the following:
  - a. Make sure all students have logged off their machines.
  - b. Look for personal items that may have been left behind and turn in to the instructor – this especially applies to USB drives, homework, etc.
  - c. Pick up and discard any trash.
  - d. Double-check that the projector has been turned off.
  - e. Remind students to keep personal items (backpacks, book bags, etc.) in front of their feet under the table/desk. This keeps the aisles clear for walking.
  - f. Push chairs back under desks/tables.
2. **Do not take over the mouse or keyboard from any student.** Although this seems to save time, it actually does not help students learn to do things for themselves. It can seem difficult to try to explain things and not touch the mouse or keyboard, but it is really in the best interests of the students. The only times you should consider taking over from the student is if he or she is in serious emotional distress or you have tried for *several minutes* to communicate the proper actions verbally without success. In addition, keyboards and mice tend to harbor germs – for better hygiene, please avoid touching the mice or keyboards unless absolutely necessary. Use the antibacterial hand gels on entering and leaving the classroom, and help remind students to do the same.
3. Unless an individual instructor tells you otherwise, **keep moving in the classroom.** Students are much more likely to speak up and ask you for help if you are passing by on a regular basis. If you stand in the back of the room, sit off to the side, or sit at a station and use a computer, students are going to be intimidated or reluctant to ask for help. The purpose of having lab assistants is to provide assistance to the students.
4. Related to the above, **do not hover** over particular students who seem to be having more trouble than others. For one thing, this makes those students self-conscious and as if they've been singled out as the “dumb ones.” In addition, those students sometimes become *too* dependent on the lab assistant and then do not learn how to solve problems for themselves. This can also lead to certain students monopolizing a lab assistant's time, and preventing you from giving the other students in the class a chance to ask questions. When a student asks a question, try to lead them toward finding the answer on their own, rather than you just telling them.
5. **Don't give out answers!** If an instructor provides you with a copy of the solution to an exercise, that's for your OWN use – to help you guide the students and give you a reference in case you are unfamiliar with the exercise or are unable to find the answer on your own. Remember, you are allowed to take up to 30 minutes per week per section as prep time – becoming familiar with the course material that is being covered this week is exactly what prep time is for, and you should be doing that. If you don't know what the course material is, then it's your responsibility to contact the instructor and find out what it is. Most instructors are probably going to assume, especially if you've been a lab assistant before, that you already are familiar with the material – it's up to you to make sure you are.

**Remember, these are GENERAL instructions, and individual instructors may have additional requirements. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.**