Duty Statements and Role Descriptions for Science Laboratory Staff

Science laboratory staff work in partnership with science teaching staff in providing effective learning outcomes for students of science at Monivae College. Science laboratory staff require effective communication skills and must have the ability to relate well to both students and staff. Science laboratory staff should have the capacity to take on responsibility and work independently and should possess a very high level of organisational skills.

Science laboratory staff provide technical support to the science faculty and possess qualifications and/or skills which are relevant to science. The services of science laboratory staff should therefore be utilised solely for the purposes of science within the science faculty.

Science laboratory staff should not be in sole charge of students, except in emergency situations.

Under the direction of the Science Coordinator, science laboratory staff provide technical support to the school’s science faculty in a range of areas, with particular emphasis on:

- the timely preparation of laboratory equipment and materials for science classes
- employing safe work practices in the science laboratory by applying Occupational Health and Safety legislation
- safe storage and disposal of chemicals and biological residues in accordance with regulations
- safe storage of laboratory equipment and materials
- specialist cleaning of laboratory equipment and laboratory preparation areas
Monivae Science Laboratory Staff Role Description

The science laboratory staff work in partnership with science teaching staff in providing effective learning outcomes for students at Monivae. Under general direction and instructions, they are expected to perform responsible tasks associated with the efficient operation of the science laboratory. Science laboratory staff exercise significant initiative and work independently with little supervision. They perform duties as directed by the Science Coordinator and prepare laboratory requests from science staff. Satisfactory work progress checks may be carried out and all science issues must be directed to the Science Coordinator.

SKILLS

- Effective communication skills and the ability to relate to both students and staff.
- Demonstrated capacity to take on responsibility and work independently.
- Excellent organisational skills.
- Competency with reading instructions and use of mathematics (i.e. handling technical equipment and chemical preparation).
- Efficient research skills to seek out new technologies and/or resources for staff.
- Related qualifications to Laboratory Staff or a willingness to undertake further training.

DUTIES

Typical duties of Monivae Science Laboratory Staff:

1. **TEACHER SUPPORT**

   - liaise with science teaching staff on their needs for practical work and maintain an efficient system for use and allocation of materials and equipment, setting a priority system where necessary
   - advise science teaching staff on technical components of curriculum
   - assist science teaching staff with demonstrations
   - assist science teaching staff in instructing students on use/care of equipment
   - advise and assist science teaching staff in safety matters relating to the science laboratory
   - demonstrate laboratory techniques to science teaching staff/students
   - assist with the use of computers and learning technologies within the department
• set out equipment and materials for classroom/department use
• clear classroom demonstrations.

2. PREPARATION, MAINTENANCE

It is expected that the Science Laboratory Technician is given adequate notice by teaching staff to prepare for activities. Where inadequate time is given, and demands on the Science Laboratory Technician dictates that time is inadequate, they may need to state that the practical exercise is postponed to a later date.

The Science Laboratory Technician is responsible for performing the following preparation and maintenance task in the laboratory:

• prepare solutions, stains, and media for use in the laboratory
• maintain a safe chemical storage/handling/disposal system in accordance with current regulations
• assist with security of science laboratory and equipment
• maintain an inventory of equipment and annual stocktaking
• Keep a record of the consumables used regularly and maintain adequate supplies of them (including chemicals).
• acquire relevant catalogues and price lists
• Order equipment and chemicals in consultation with Science Coordinator
• assist with labelling, storage, stocktaking and ordering of equipment and chemicals
• Keep appropriate records of purchases, confirming safe arrival of all products
• manufacture simple glassware/general equipment for laboratory use
• service and clean simple laboratory apparatus/equipment
• develop maintenance procedures for laboratory equipment and organise maintenance where required
• report damages to equipment and arrange repairs
• conduct safety audits for the laboratories
• create and maintain chemical and equipment data bases
• maintain a clean and organised science preparation area.

3. CARE

• care for flora and fauna within the science department, in accordance with current handling and prevention of cruelty regulations
• collect and maintain living specimens (in accordance with regulations)
• collect off-campus scientific materials and field materials
• maintain MSDS/RAS records
• have current First Aid training.
4. **LIAISON**

- liaise with organisations and industries for purpose of acquiring equipment, etc.
- liaise with companies regarding excursions/use of materials
- liaise with other schools to share resources
- liaise with sales representatives.

5. **BUDGET**

- assist with the science budget and petty cash system
- assist with record keeping
- evaluate and select equipment, and make recommendations for purchase to Science Coordinator.

6. **RESPONSIBILITIES NOT EXPECTED OF THE LABORATORY TECHNICIAN**

- Science laboratory staff are not to be in sole care of students, except in emergency situations.
- Science laboratory staff are not responsible for the general cleaning of floors, desks, sinks, shelving and windows within the laboratories unless support is requested by teaching staff after a particularly messy practical exercise e.g. dissections.

**REMUNERATION**

Wages and terms of employment would be negotiable based on experience and qualifications in accordance with The Victorian Catholic Education Multi-Employer Agreement 2008.
Science Laboratory Staff
Position Statement

Basic Premises

Curriculum

Curriculum documents such as the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS), Australian Curriculum and VCE Sciences Study Designs, promote the development of science programs which:

• provide for the needs and progress of all students;
• increase interaction between science, technology and society;
• provide students with substantial hands-on experiences.

Legislation

Legislation impacts on science education, particularly in the areas of:

• handling, storage and disposal of chemicals;
• the use and care of animals;
• Occupational Health and Safety.

School Organisation

Trends towards increasing student numbers particularly in practical classes places increased demands on science teaching, science laboratory staff and faculty budget constraints.

Implications

Curriculum advice means that science classes are often based around practical activities:

• students use a variety of approaches to practical investigations
• there is a high level of responsibility due to government legislation in areas such as Occupational Health and Safety and Hazardous Substances Regulations
• there is a requirement for skills and knowledge relating to technology management and maintenance
• there has been an increased level of technology implementation
Appropriately qualified/experienced science laboratory staff have an essential role to play in achieving the school curriculum goals outlined in the above premises.

**Implementation**

The *Laboratory Technician’s Association of Victoria (LTAV)* believes that:

- all science laboratory staff should have an individual role description, which gives clear details of duties and also specifies to whom the science laboratory staff member is responsible
- school administrators should recognise appropriate qualifications and past experience of science laboratory staff
- where a science laboratory staff member is expected to perform more complex duties, with greater responsibility; a new role description should be written and the position should attract higher classification levels and remuneration

The *LTAB* supports its individual members in the following ways:

- provide opportunities for interaction between science laboratory staff and science teaching staff.
- provide and support pre-service and in-service training for science laboratory staff.
- assist with production of relevant technical publications for science laboratory staff
- contribute to the production of typical duty statements for science laboratory staff
- provide advice on the minimum number of science laboratory staff required for any particular school.
- provide advice on appropriate qualification requirements for science laboratory staff, or appropriate induction training.
- provide advice on ratios of student numbers to science laboratory staff in schools.

**Qualifications and Training**

The *LTAV* believes that:

- Science laboratory assistants should have successfully completed at least 4 VCE science units
- Science laboratory technicians should have a minimum qualification of Diploma of Applied Science (or equivalent) or relevant experience/training
- Science laboratory managers should have a minimum qualification of Diploma of Applied Science (or equivalent) and/or significant relevant experience/training
- It is preferred and recommended that science laboratory staff members have the appropriate training/first aid qualifications required to perform emergency first aid
- Schools (or the employer) should provide encouragement and assistance for science laboratory staff to gain access to professional development programs, which further their specific laboratory skills and knowledge