

Name: _____

Date: _____

Lab Self-Assessment
(to be completed in Jan, May and Sept)

Version last updated: 20 August 2024

The goals of the lab self-assessment are to (i) ensure that we are on the same page for short-term and long-term goals, (ii) practice setting and evaluating goals, (iii) give yourself credit for your accomplishments and activities, and (iv) discuss ways to improve the lab culture. For each self assessment, we will find a time to meet, you will complete this document and email it to me at least 1 working day before our meeting, then I will send you a summary of our discussion after we meet.

SECTION I

The questions in this section can be updated ~annually, but include them and your answers in each self-assessment since they set the context for the next sections.

Five-year goals.

I.1. Why are you here in the lab (specifically) and doing research (generally)? What do you want to be doing longer term (after your current position)? Are there professional and/or other factors that inform these goals that you want to share?

One-year goals.

I.2. What are your goals for the coming year?

I.3. What guidance or support could help you accomplish these goals and your broader exploration of career options (e.g., learning techniques, developing scientific collaborations, connecting to new contacts in your advisor's network)?

I.4. For graduate students, copy the relevant section of the lab dissertation framework here and fill it out to the extent you can at this time.

Finances.

I.5. For graduate students, brainstorm possible sources of your salary for each term of your PhD. You can fill this out together with your advisor and it's ok to leave spots blank / uncertain.

Year	Fall	Spring	Summer

I.6. What other funding needs might you have for the coming year – e.g. travel, research, etc?

Mentoring.

I.7. Mentoring comes from many individuals. Consider the breadth of mentoring you currently receive and if you have the support to strengthen your target skills.

	How often are you meeting?	Is this sufficient?	Do you initiate meetings?	Need help finding or coordinating?
Advisor(s)				
Thesis committee: as a group				
Thesis committee: one-on-one (list names)				
Additional mentors or collaborators (list names)				

I.8. What if anything would you change about your current level of mentoring?

I.9. For graduate students, what was the date of your last committee meeting (these should happen at least annually)?

SECTION II

This section focuses on goal setting and evaluation, and your answers may be relatively long.

Last assessment.

II.1. Paste in the summary that I emailed you after your last self-assessment meeting.

Accomplishments.

II.2. What have you accomplished since your last self-assessment, and how do these match your four-month goals from last time? Categories you might consider are:

- A. Projects/Papers
- B. Coursework/training
- C. Teaching/mentoring
- D. Applicants (grants, jobs, etc)
- E. Presentations/Conferences (talks, posters, other)
- F. Participation in lab/departmental activities (seminars, etc)
- G. Equity/inclusion work
- H. Outreach/Other service
- I. Professional Development

Reflection.

II.3. Describe any unusual or unanticipated challenges you experienced in trying to accomplish the goals you set out last time. Have you been able to deal with these challenges? How can your advisor help you with these and future challenges?

II.4. Do your accomplishments here line up with your longer-term (1-year, 5-year) goals?

II.5. Have you learned anything about yourself over the past four months that you would like to

share with me?

II.6. Which experience(s) have been most valuable to you, your research, and/or your professional goals?

Four-month goals.

II.7. Ideally, what would you like to have accomplished by your next self-assessment (in ~ 4 months)? Include any soft or hard deadlines you have.

II.8. What is the minimum that you expect to have accomplished by your next self-assessment? Make sure to include any obligations that you need to fulfill based on your funding source (e.g., RA, TA, fellowship).

II.9. For the coming 4 months, are there any particular stressors you are under, factors that you are concerned may impede your progress, or challenges you foresee based on patterns you have noticed in past assessments? If so, what can you do, and what can the lab do, to help support you? Indicate if you need help finding professional or personal development resources.

Skills.

There are many different skills you might develop during your time in the lab. Consider the list below (and any others you can think of).

II.10. What are the top 3 skills you would like to improve in the coming months?

II.11. Which skills do you see as your top 3 current strengths?

<p>SCIENTIFIC THINKING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Broad-based knowledge of science• Critical reading of scientific literature• Reading theoretical papers• Idea generation• Formulating a research question• Coding• Experimental design• Mathematical analysis• Statistical analysis• Interpretation of data/model output• Creativity and innovative thinking <p>PROFESSIONALISM & INTERPERSONAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying and seeking advice• Upholding commitments/deadlines• Maintaining positive relationships• Approaching difficult conversations <p>PROJECT MANAGEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Planning projects• Breaking down complex tasks• Time management• Managing data and resources	<p>WRITING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For a scientific publication• Writing with mathematical notation• For a research proposal• For a lay audience• Broad framing / story construction• Grammar/structure• Editing your own writing <p>ORAL COMMUNICATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To a specialized audience• To a lay audience• In a classroom• One-on-one• English proficiency <p>LEADERSHIP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Modeling behavior you admire• Encouraging and motivating others• Delegating; providing instruction• Providing constructive feedback• Establishing expectations• Addressing conflict• Leading a group discussion
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• Mentoring	
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Bigger picture - work style and lab culture.

II.12. What are some things you would like to change or work on changing with your own work style? What steps will you take in the coming months to accomplish these goals? What can the PI, the lab, or others in the department do to help you with your goals?

II.13. What would you change about the lab (including supervisory style)?

II.14. Is there anything else not covered elsewhere that you would like to share with me?

II.15. What changes (if any) would you make to this self-assessment form?

SECTION III

This section focuses on checking in on a number of areas where problems can arise. Short answers (yes/no) in the table below are fine but please elaborate (below) for areas you would like to discuss or receive support on.

#	Question	Short response
Challenges		
1	Are there personality issues you struggle with in the lab? Have you experienced any instances of discrimination, microaggressions or harassment? If so, are there things you can do to help alleviate these issues? What can I as the PI do to help?	
2	Are there any challenges or problems related to idea ownership or authorship that you currently face?	
3	Have you identified someone to whom you would feel comfortable reporting any issues you have with me, or issues within the lab that you don't feel comfortable talking to me about? Ideally this is a faculty member outside your direct power structure (not an advisor, committee member, department head or DGS). If not, please make a plan to identify someone.	
Lab citizenship		
4	Are you respectful of others in the lab (i.e. are you mindful of shared space, do you clean up after yourself)?	
5	Do you regularly attend lab meetings? When was the last time you led a lab meeting discussion?	
6	Have you re-read the 'lab expectations' document within the last 6 months? If not, please do so now and confirm here.	
Communication and support		
7	Are you happy with your level of interaction with the PI?	
8	Do your at-work hours overlap with those of others so you can both help others and benefit from them? Do you regularly tell others in the lab what you are doing?	

9	Are you happy with your level/amount of science discourse (both inside and outside the lab)?	
10	Are you happy with your current work/life balance?	
Productivity		
11	Are you satisfied with your strategies for maintaining productivity and focus while you are working?	
12	Are you facing any challenges to your efficiency? What are steps you can take to solve these, and what can I do as an advisor to help with productivity?	
13	Do you help others and ask others for help as needed?	
Organization		
14	Do you have a record-keeping system in place for research projects (e.g. folders/notebooks/electronic documents for each project), literature (e.g. folders or pdf library) and code (e.g. github or other version control)? Does it work well for you? If not, what could be improved?	
15	Are you satisfied with your methods for tracking progress? Does it accurately account for your time? Does it reflect your productivity, priorities and goals?	
Gain of scientific knowledge and critical thinking		
16	Do you take steps to expand your scientific knowledge (e.g. reading certain journals, doing literature reviews, attending on-campus seminar series)?	
17	Are you thinking critically about your research? Do you seek out alternative methodological approaches (e.g. by searching the literature or talking to others)?	

Elaborate here for any areas to discuss / get support on:

Sources for the above content:

- *At the Helm: Leading Your Laboratory, Second Edition* (Kathy Barker)
- <https://sociobiology.wordpress.com/2015/09/02/what-are-your-goals-for-fall/>
- <https://acdalal.wordpress.com/2023/11/01/things-ive-learned-about-myself-this-term/>
- [EEB-specific IDP, for first years](#)
- [EEB-specific IDP, for all years](#)