

STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA CLASS SPECIFICATION

Class Title: Laboratory Program Assistant

Class Code: 040642

Pay Grade: GG

A. Purpose:

Assists laboratory staff by implementing programs and activities with developed processes; making decisions on behalf of program professionals within established work processes related to the program and interpreting program-specific guidelines. Performs technical laboratory work involving the completion of routine chemical or microbiological tests, preparation of medias or solutions, and analyzing samples for their complete required laboratory procedures.

B. Distinguishing Feature:

The **Laboratory Program Assistant** independently implements work processes and develops procedures for assigned work within limits set by laboratory leadership; makes choices within specified acceptable standards and practices; compiles data for reports, monitors deadlines, and monitors compliance with program deadlines. Performs routine/standardized tests looking for a known reaction/result or type of reaction to indicate a positive or negative presence of a disease, bacteria, or fungi; prepares solutions, medias, reagents, or buffers; or analyzes products for the presence of specified factors/contents or percentages thereof.

The **Laboratory Aide** performs non-technical duties to support laboratory activities.

C. Functions:

(These are examples only; any one position may not include all of the listed examples nor do the listed examples include all functions which may be found in positions of this class.)

1. Prepare media, solutions, buffers, culture plates, or stock cultures to be used by laboratory scientists.
 - a. Follow standardized recipes to prepare and store.
 - b. Apply media to culture plates or petri dishes.
 - c. Use autoclaves to sterilize media, buffers, solutions, etc.
 - d. Prepare distilled and double distilled water for laboratory use.
2. Clean and wash glassware, bottles, and tubes.
 - a. Decant waste from glassware and rinse.
 - b. Operate commercial glassware washers and commercial drying oven.
3. Maintain media kitchen equipment.
 - a. Autoclaves (steam sterilizers);
 - b. commercial dishwashers;
 - c. Commercial drying oven;
 - d. Chemical fume hood;
 - e. Laminar flow safety cabinet;
 - f. Water still.

4. Maintain and use acids, bases, and other chemicals responsibly.
 - a. Maintain a culture of chemical safety at all times.
 - b. Use chemicals in strict accordance with safety procedures and other standard operating procedures.
 - c. Dispose of chemical waste appropriately and according to procedure.
5. Waste Management.
 - a. Maintain an understanding of biohazard safety.
 - b. Ensure waste is appropriately neutralized using biological indicators.
 - c. Dispose hazardous waste.
6. Maintain records.
 - a. Monitor processes to ensure all required steps and documentation are completed in compliance with program guidelines.
 - b. Perform weekly, monthly, and annual quality control checks.
 - c. Maintain inventory of chemicals and supplies.
7. Mailroom shipping and receiving.
 - a. Manage the shipment and receipt of all products, samples, and supplies.
 - b. Collaborate and communicate with providers, vendors, laboratory staff and others involved in the shipment and receipt of products.
 - c. Process, sort, and deliver laboratory specimens to laboratory scientists.
 - d. Organize and store samples in accordance with all safety, temperature, and other requirements to ensure the safety of personnel and integrity of the samples.
 - e. Clean and maintain all equipment required for packing and shipping.
 - f. Maintaining equipment records and daily work logs.
 - g. Unpack shipments and compare packing lists to purchase orders to ensure accurate deliveries.
8. Assists laboratory scientists with operational processes to facilitate daily projects.
 - a. Monitor and order efficient inventories of supplies, recommends products, and resolves vendor problems.
 - b. Schedule repetitive activities into daily program routines.
 - c. Compile data for reports.
 - d. Write Standard Operating Procedures
9. Other duties as assigned.

D. Reporting Relationships:

May report directly to the Director, Deputy Director for Medical Microbiology and Support Services, or other laboratory leadership. May receive work direction from the Deputy Director for Environmental and Forensic Chemistry services and the Laboratory Director. May provide work direction to temporary staff, interns, or other staff members on a case-by-case basis.

E. Challenges and Problems:

Challenges include meeting the constantly changing needs of the laboratory workforce and the partners, stakeholders, and clients served by the laboratory. Laboratory Program Assistant(s) will also ensure processes and procedures are implemented efficiently and according to written protocol. Standard operating procedures (SOP) may require modification to reflect evolving best-practice. SOP changes require communication between Laboratory Program Assistant staff and all stakeholders both internal and external.

Problems include complaint and conflict management, management of multiple complex tasks while meeting deadlines, maintaining flexibility when priorities change, schedules change, or equipment malfunctions occur. Additional daily and weekly problems might include rush orders, coordination of supply purchases during periods of supply chain instability, disposal of waste including toxic, chemical, and biological substances, and working with precision equipment.

F. Decision-making Authority:

Decisions include management of workflows and timelines to meet laboratory goals, scheduling waste decontamination, media production, inventory management, and supply purchasing. Decisions also include scheduling routine maintenance for equipment, scheduling repairs for malfunctioning equipment, and equipment maintenance to ensure good working condition. Communication with partners, clients, and stakeholders to help meet goals that rely on laboratory support services.

Decisions referred include those that require policy development, revision of standard operating procedures, equipment or instrumentation purchase, and resolution of non-conforming events.

G. Contact with Others:

Daily contact with laboratory scientists and leaders to meet goals, provide routine reports and updates, and participate in program planning. Meet occasionally with laboratory equipment vendors to request equipment service. Provide client services to internal and external partners, stakeholders, and clients.

H. Working Conditions:

Located in a typical laboratory environment subject to noise from blowers and fans, heat from steam sterilizers and dishwashers, fumes and odors from samples/specimens, caustic and acidic chemicals, and equipment operating at high speeds or temperatures.

I. Knowledge, Skills and Abilities:

- Support the diverse needs of the laboratory;

- Support positive morale and culture at the laboratory;
- Development and maintain familiarity with the Microsoft Office suite of programs;
- Willingness to learn about laboratory information technology systems;
- Adhere to federal and state confidentiality policies;
- Manage multiple projects and meet agreed-upon deadlines;
- Work collaboratively in a team environment;
- Maintain flexibility and adapt quickly to shifting priorities;
- Effectively communicate both verbally and in writing;
- Solve problems using common sense, reasoning, and resourcefulness;
- Observe all aspects of chemical, biological and occupational safety;
- Operate commercial dishwashers, ovens, and autoclaves (steam sterilizers);
- Operate scales and balances
- Make complex microbiological media and dispense media into appropriate vessels (tubes, plates, and bottles)
- Package and ship infectious substances and laboratory supplies; and
- Work cooperatively with laboratory staff to meet daily goals.