



12-2: Recruitment and orientation

Management must establish appropriate personnel qualifications for all positions in the laboratory. These should include requirements for education, skills, knowledge and experience. When defining qualifications, keep in mind any special skills and knowledge that are needed, such as language, information technology and biosafety.

Job descriptions give a clear and accurate picture of responsibilities and authorities for each staff position. Job descriptions should:

- lay out all activities and tasks that should be performed;
- specify responsibilities for conducting testing and implementing the quality system (policies and activities);
- reflect the employee's background and training;
- be kept current and be available for all people working in the laboratory.

Job descriptions should be competency based and reflect any skills needed. The requirements for each staff position may vary depending on the size of the laboratory and complexity of testing services offered. For example, in small laboratories with limited personnel, staff may have many responsibilities and perform many tasks, whereas in larger laboratories with more personnel, staff may be more specialized.

Remember, not only are clear job descriptions a guideline, but they can be used to formally assess personnel competency.

Orientation is the process of introducing a new staff member to the new work environment and to their specific tasks or duties. Nothing is more frustrating to an employee than not knowing where to find the necessary resources.

Orientation is different from training.

Orientation of laboratory personnel should include the following aspects.

- General orientation—a tour of the workplace and introduction to all management and staff. Information about
 - how the organization fits into the medical community and/or the public health system;
 - key personnel and lines of authority;
 - the laboratory interaction with both users and customers of the laboratory;
 - the policies and procedures regarding facilities and safety.

- Personnel policies
 - ethics
 - confidentiality
 - employee benefits
 - work schedules.
- An employee handbook that outlines the policies of the organization and information about the laboratory quality system.
- A copy of the employee's job description and a detailed review of its contents.
- An overview of standard operating procedures (SOPs).

A checklist that addresses each aspect of the orientation is important. Ask employees to initial and date the checklist to document discussion of each topic.