

Dear Student,

The most common questions about a hospital-based laboratory program year are related to being fearful of what is to come: the workload, the phlebotomy, the responsibility, ...the unknown. I won't hide the fact that the intensive year is exhausting; but, it can also be invigorating at the same time.

Exhausting...because it will be the busiest, hardest and most challenging year of your baccalaureate education; the program is a preceptorship, similar in pace and level of learning as medical school. Invigorating...because you will learn more than you ever thought you could and you will be in the 1st line of care for your patients and physicians.

The first hurdle to accomplish is becoming accepted into a hospital-based program. Programs are highly competitive, and each applicant must prove his/her capability clearly. Programs can't accept a student on the grounds they "hope" a student will do well; programs must be relatively assured of a student's future success. How can programs assess future success?, by historical proof of past success. Science GPAs (biology and chemistry) and semester-by-semester grades are good indicators, along with A's and B's earned in upper-level and core university courses. Programs must also be assured that the classroom will be a positive learning environment for every accepted student. Creating a classroom of students as a "community" is also a vital part of the acceptance process. Letters of recommendation can shed light on student capability and quality from those who know the student best. Another key element is the personal interview, allowing the program officials to meet and assess the applicant for all of the qualities they value in an outstanding student and in growing a successful class.

For the student who is accepted into a program: You have a lot to learn in 11-months and if you enter a program ready to commit fully to the year, you can excel. However, the opposite is also true; if you enter a program thinking that you can "get by" and have an attitude of "good enough," you will most likely have a very difficult year if you are even able to complete the year successfully.

75% is the minimum passing grade for tests and courses within the first, didactic, portion of our program and it is designed to push excellence and the solid knowledge base required for the clinical portion of the year. This minimum grade requirement can be a challenge since our professional school is similar to 400- and 500-level university courses. Many students discover the work needed to obtain a 75% on a laboratory program exam was the same amount of work they needed to receive an 85% in a 300-level college science course. In other words, you can't compare the program year with most college courses...a laboratory program is a year of professional education at a professional level of expectations.

Remember, everything you will be learning in the program year will impact a patient's life – for good or bad – so, make sure your heart is committed to the year. Bring a servant's heart with you that will allow you to remember, throughout the year, that no matter how tired you are or how hard the learning is, you know why you are doing this – your focus is real and unwavering.

Don't be fearful of the laboratory program year. Many have completed the program before you, so it can be done, and done with excellence. Come prepared to give it your full and utmost attention, and there is help available if you find a subject that overwhelms you. I often tell a story of an interviewing student who asked members of a current class, "What is there to do for fun around town during your internship?" The students laughed at the interviewee and responded "you don't have any time for fun during the year; you only have time to study and get prepared to study." To be fair, there is time here and there for some fun; but, for the overall big-

picture, they were right – this is the 11-months that will seal your professional career and make you indispensable to physicians and patients; come ready to be a success!!



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