Cocoan lab's work ethic

Graduate students, Research staff, Postdoc…

- Somewhere between students and employees

- You study towards a degree, but at the same time, your tuition and stipend are paid by research fund

- It is kind of a confusing, in-between state

- The bottom line is that you are working in the lab, and thus you have to have a strong **work ethic** to succeed in academia

"Ethical behaviour is critical in a laboratory environment…. General ethical behavior is required in the laboratory as it is a workplace like any other. Laboratories deal with critical information and employees constantly work under pressure in order to meet turnaround times and minimal error requirements. With that said, the employee behaviour, teamwork, motivation, integrity and morale have a high impact on the laboratory's production, profitability and public image…"
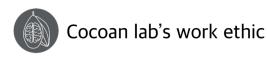
Leah Molai

From Wikipedia:

Factors of a good work ethic [edit]

A strong work ethic is vital for achieving goals. A work ethic is a set of moral principles a person uses in their job. People who possess a strong work ethic embody certain principles that guide their work behavior, leading them to produce high-quality work consistently and the output feeds the individual to stay on track. A good work ethic fuels an individual's needs and goals, it is related to the initiative by a person for the objectives. It is considered as a source of self respect, satisfaction, and fulfillment.[citation needed]

Factors are:[3][4]

1. Goal-oriented actions: it is not about making plans or the next logical steps; it's about getting things done so that the work invested wouldn't be counter-productive.
2. Prioritized focus: focusing on qualitative activities that a person is capable and in areas where they can make a difference or a high impact based on objectives.
3. Being available and reliable: spending time on the work and building oneself up for the task.
4. Conscientiousness: a desire to do a task well, being vigilant and organized.
5. Creating a rewarding routine/system: Engaging in tasks that provide strength and energy which can be transferred to your ultimate goals, creating a habit and a habitat for success.
6. Embracing positivism: shape a problem with the statement "good, (action) (problem)", e.g. "I'm tired and it is time for a workout" leads to "Good. Workout tired".

A negative work ethic is a behavior of a single individual or a group that has led to a systematic lack of productivity, reliability, accountability and a growing sphere of unprofessional/unhealthy relationships (e.g., power politics, lack of social skills, etc.).[5]

Cocoan lab's work ethic

Multidimensional Work Ethic Profile

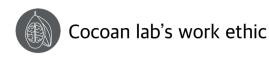| Dimension	Definition
Centrality of Work	Belief in work for work's sake and the importance of work.
Self-Reliance	Striving for independence in one's daily work.
Hard Work	Belief in the virtues of hard work.
Leisure	Proleisure attitudes and beliefs in the importance of nonwork activities.
Morality/Ethics	Believing in a just and moral existence.
Delay of Gratification	Orientation toward the future; the postponement of rewards.
Wasted Time	Attitudes and beliefs reflecting active and productive use of time.

Miller et al., 2002, Journal of Vocational Behavior

Some important features of cocoan lab's working environment:

- **Flexible work schedules**
    - There are advantages and disadvantages
    - This emphasizes more on
        - **Productivity**, not just staying at work (hard work; time management)
        - Internal **self-motivation** and **self-initiative**, not external control (self-reliance)
        - **Genuine "love" for research**, not forced one (centrality of work)
        - **Trust** among us (morality/ethics, leisure)

    - A **disadvantage** of this approach is if you cannot maintain internal motivation and productivity, you will lose the control. You will fail. There will be no seat for you in academia.
    - In other words, if you fail to demonstrate work ethic in this **self-regulating** environment, it would be good to leave academia as soon as possible.
        - But remember, there are many other good options in your life!

    - And if you want, you can have a fixed work schedule. I like personalized methods.

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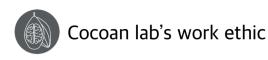| Dimension	Definition
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- **Leave rules**
  - Until now, I've been implicit about this (and many labs still do this implicitly), but I think it would be helpful if we make this explicit.
  - If you have to be **absent** for a specific day, please inform me in advance.
  - I recommend you having 2 week (10 days) paid vacation per year
    - There can be a wiggle room (upon case-by-case request)
    - 2-week serves as a standard

- **Sick leave**
  - There are some unfortunate events in life.
  - With a medical report, you can have sick leave up to two weeks (paid)
  - If you expect you cannot "work" longer than two weeks in advance, please consider taking time off for a while (no payment)
  - For students, it's called 휴학.
  - But still this provides a standard, and there should be a flexibility in the application of the rules.
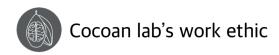
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- Productivity
  - **Publication** is the most important outcome measure in academia

  - **What would be a good number of publications in our field? (just my opinion)**
    - PhD (assuming 5 years): 3-4 first-authored publications and 2-3 co-authored papers including 1 or 2 high-profile journal papers
      - FYI, I had 18 publications, 8 first-authored papers, 4 high-profile first-author papers (2 Nat Comms, 1 Nat Neuro, 1 Plos Biol), though I know our lab is not Tor's lab.
    - Postdoc (2-3 years): 4-5 first-authored papers, including 1 or 2 high-profile papers

  - **But in the real world, does publication only matter?**
    - No, skill and networking is also very important
    - Skill: In our lab, you can learn programming, data science, experimental design, fMRI data analysis, academic writing, presentations, collaboration, etc.
    - Networking:
      - recommendation letter from me
      - good friends and colleagues, collaborators

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Having a strong work ethic is important not only for you, but also for all your colleagues in the lab!!!

Other resources:

- Grad Student Advice Series: 10 Ways To Be A Successful PhD Student
    - http://thegradstudentway.com/blog/?p=989
- Top 10 Characteristics of High-Performing Graduate School Students
    - https://education.cu-portland.edu/blog/admissions-tips/top-10-characteristics-of-high-performing-graduate-school-students/