

## Role in quality management system

### 12-1: Overview

Personnel are the most important laboratory resource. Critical to the implementation of the quality management system are people who possess integrity, recognize the importance of their work and participate in continuous improvement. Laboratorians are important partners in health care.



## Overview of the process

Recruiting and retaining qualified staff is essential to laboratory quality. Failure to check the education qualifications and references for a new hire can lead to problems in the future.

As a **laboratory director** it is important to:

- Hire an appropriate number of staff to cover workload.
- Verify that items on the job application are correct.
- Develop complete and thorough job descriptions for each employee.
- Train each employee in their specific duties.
- Provide orientation for new employees. Even with a credible background, differences between laboratories are common, so a manager needs to ensure new employees have adequate orientation and training.
- Conduct and record competency assessments on all personnel. It is management's responsibility to verify that trained employees are sufficiently competent to do their work.
- Provide opportunities for continuing education; new techniques or updates for existing methods can be introduced using continuing education courses.
- Conduct annual employee performance appraisals.

As a **quality manager** it is necessary to:

- Provide employees with orientation and training.
- Keep track of employee records and make sure they are confidential.
- Include policies relevant to personnel in the quality manual.

## Importance of motivation

As a **laboratorian** it is important to:

- Participate in training and continuing education opportunities.
- Request training that may be needed as job responsibilities increase.
- Maintain records of personal professional development.

Success or failure depends on the knowledge and skills of the people in the laboratory, and their commitment and motivation to perform tasks as described in the job description. Motivated employees are more likely to be committed to their work.

Elements of motivation vary for different people.

- Some people respond to concrete rewards such as bonuses and praise.
- Some people respond best to flexible work schedules that fit their responsibilities to home and children.
- Most people respond to recognition and feeling that they are an integral part of the health care team.

The manager can motivate the team by emphasizing that everyone's job is important; whether it is performing testing, collecting specimens, making reagents or managing the laboratory.

## Retention of staff

Migration and turnover of staff have been described as major challenges in many countries. Apart from economic factors, the lack of a good working environment and improper management practices can contribute to loss of staff. A good personnel management programme can contribute to the retention of staff.