Working in collaboration with others is a must and at the same time a challenge. During graduate school, students usually join research teams or labs; this should be looked at as an opportunity to shape teamwork skills for future career paths. Following are seven steps that may enhance success when joining and working in research teams or labs.

1 **Mission:** It is important to set the group’s mission at the beginning of the program. A mission gives the group a clear reason for existing. Whether it is research, teaching, or extension or publishing scientific research or an extension report, the mission will be the connection point between all team members. Define the team’s mission, set the goals, and chase the success.

2 **Communication:** Communication is a key element in the success of teamwork. Continuous communication is desired among team members so that everyone understands what they are doing. If you understand the specific goals of another, you are in a better position to help and contribute to that very same goal.

3 **Leadership:** Graduate students are usually mentors of undergraduates and visiting scholars that join research teams, especially during peak seasons of research work. This provides an excellent opportunity to exercise leadership skills. Knowing how to solve problems, guide activities, listen to perspectives and ideas from others, and set a good example are characteristics of a good leader that can be implemented in such situations.

4 **Flexibility:** Be flexible with your co-workers, university staff, and other researchers. Demonstrate that you are concerned with others and willing to help. Do not try to do things alone: the more involvement and collaboration, the better. Trade with co-workers; be open to re-arrange responsibilities to seek the best balance for all. Make sure that all team members have a voice, and listen for different opinions or perspectives.

5 **Commitment:** Always be committed to doing your best, not only for yourself, but also for others. Sometimes, this means you will need to sacrifice something in order to achieve better things for others. Be committed to succeeding and helping others succeed as well.

6 **Respect:** Relationships among people can be rough, especially under stressful situations, like working in the field at 38°C. Keep a positive attitude, and remember that respect is the basis of good relationships. Be respectful with colleagues and co-workers in all possible aspects: the way you speak, the time you arrive, the interest you show in other’s voices, etc.

7 **Improvement:** A team should always pursue excellence. As the saying goes, “There is always room for improvement.” Hardworking and positive attitudes lead to success. It may not be immediate, but with clear goals and determination, improvement and success will be achieved sooner than later.

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