

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT SPECIALIST – LIFE SCIENCE

DEFINITION

Under direction, leads and performs highly advanced and technical support duties in a specialized life science laboratory environment; assists instructors in preparing for complex learning experiences; serves as a lead worker over technical staff; coordinates the functions of several units; operates and maintains specialized equipment related to the assigned instructional areas; monitors and ensures the safety of student activities that may involve the use of hazardous equipment, chemicals, or other materials; performs complex technical administrative support tasks for faculty and other instructional staff; and performs related work as assigned.

DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

This is the advanced and lead technical level class in the Instructional Support Series within the Yosemite Community College District (YCCD). Incumbents in this class provide advanced instructional and administrative support in technically complex laboratory settings and frequently serve as lead workers over multiple complex areas in such settings. Incumbents must possess and utilize highly technical and specialized knowledge of a particular instructional or academic area in order to perform duties and help ensure the safety of students.

This class may be distinguished from the lower-level class of Instructional Support Technician because incumbents in that class perform a wide range of complex technical instructional and administrative support duties in science, vocational, engineering, electronics, photography, physical education, or other specialized and technical laboratory environments, but do not typically serve as lead workers in those types of specialized settings.

This position is further characterized by supporting the biology/life science instructional programs and may be distinguished from others in this class by the specific science training needed and the specialized skills utilized in support of biology/life science instruction.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Incumbents in this class work under the direction of a manager or senior manager, receiving occasional supervision while working toward a definite objective that requires use of a wide range of procedures. Incumbents plan and/or determine specific procedures or equipment required to meet assigned objectives and solve non-routine problems, referring only unusual matters to a supervisor.

An incumbent in this class does not directly supervise other full-time employees, but may serve as a lead worker by assigning, directing and/or monitoring the work of subordinate full time employees on a regular basis.

ESSENTIAL DUTIES

- Receives, inventories, and stores all scientific supplies and equipment required for the life science instruction program.
- Calculates necessary quantities and volumes; and prepares special chemical reagents and dilute solutions.
- Assists faculty and other instructional staff by preparing and presenting complex technical materials designed to enhance students' learning processes; participates in the planning and implementation of exercises and/or experiments; sets up and conducts complex instructional exercises as directed; may independently implement and coordinate instructional sessions and activities.
- Seeks sources of demonstration materials and supplies for life science instruction.
- Sets up, disassembles, cleans, or replaces apparatus and instructional materials used in activities and demonstrations.
- Prepares complex and specialized equipment, materials and/or chemicals for exercises in support of the related programs; trains students in procedures for mixing, storing, dispensing and labeling laboratory work or supplies.
- Collects specimens; seeks out sources of demonstration materials and supplies.
- Sets up, disassembles, cleans, or replaces apparatus and instructional materials used in activities and demonstrations.
- Prepares and properly disposes of solutions, cultures, and specimens.
- Ensures that assigned learning environments, which may include outdoor learning environments, are maintained in a safe, clean and orderly condition; calibrates and performs minor repairs on equipment; monitors the cleaning and organizing of materials; monitors the safety and security of equipment; coordinates with vendors for repair and maintenance services as needed.
- Ensures that chemicals and equipment are stored appropriately and safely.
- Orders and purchases chemicals, laboratory supplies and equipment; contacts and negotiates with vendors to obtain supplies as needed.
- Oversees the disposal of unsafe or hazardous materials according to Federal, State, County and City regulations.
- Develops, explains, and demonstrates specialized and complex learning exercises and instructional materials; monitors students in class work procedures; consults with faculty as needed to develop lesson plans.
- Maintains records of materials ordered, issued, used and returned and prepares related reports; maintains inventories to ensure that adequate quantities are available for timely instructional use; maintains student positive attendance records, ensuring that students sign in/sign out; tracks student costs for computer and/or equipment use; maintains student laboratory accounts and submits charges.
- Assists in the development of laboratory budgets.
- Instructs and/or tutors individual students and small groups to reinforce and follow up on classroom learning activities; monitors and assists students in drills, practices and study activities as a follow up what was presented during regular classes.
- Reports student progress toward the accomplishment of learning objectives.
- Maintains libraries and/or inventories of instructional resources and materials; maintains records of materials loaned to students for home study.
- Organizes and presents workshops related to the development of study skills, interpersonal skills, life skills, academic improvement, and other subjects relevant to learning.
- Coordinates and performs administrative support duties that may require typing, proofreading, filing, checking, and recording information.

- Posts information to a computerized and/or manual management information storage and retrieval systems; retrieves and compiles information and prepares complex clerical forms, reports and summaries.
- Operates a variety of computers and/or related equipment pertaining to the assigned academic area; performs routine hardware and software installations, maintenance and troubleshooting; assists students in utilizing specialized computer technology as part of the learning process; installs and sets up hardware and software; resolves and repairs minor technical issues.
- Performs other related duties as assigned.

TYPICAL WORKING CONDITIONS

- Work is generally performed in a laboratory or other highly technical setting.

MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform each essential duty satisfactorily. The knowledge and ability requirements are representative of essential duties. Reasonable accommodation may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions of the position.

Knowledge of:

- Operations, procedures, goals or objectives of the biology/life science laboratory or program and may include assignments in biology, anatomy, physiology and/or microbiology laboratories.
- Methods and techniques of student instruction and tutoring.
- Principles and practices of supervision and leadership.
- Specialized subject matter pertaining to the life science area of assignment.
- Modern office, classroom and laboratory procedures and equipment including computers.
- Basic mathematical principles and applications.
- Proper English usage, spelling, grammar and punctuation.
- Principles and practices of filing and record keeping.
- Principles of business letter writing and basic report preparation.
- Appropriate and effective communication and listening skills.

Ability to:

- Accurately prepare chemical solutions for biology/life science instruction.
- Perform specialized technical life science laboratory duties and maintain life science equipment, chemicals and supplies.
- Provide hands-on academic support to students as a supplement to their classroom teaching.
- Prepare laboratories and lessons as requested by the instructor.
- Respond to a variety of requests for assistance from students and instructors.
- Listen effectively and appropriately assess student academic needs.
- Work with students from a wide range of cultural backgrounds, ages and academic abilities.
- Lead and direct the work of subordinate staff.
- Maintain accurate and complete records and files.
- Explain and ensure adherence to laboratory and program procedures, goals and objectives.
- Communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.
- Establish and maintain effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Licenses and Certificates:

- Depending upon assignment, a valid license to drive in California may be required.

Physical and Mental Standards:

- **Mobility:** ability to sit, walk or stand for extended periods.
- **Dexterity:** fine manipulation sufficient to operate a computer keyboard, handle individual papers, write, and take notes, and/or prepare laboratory materials/equipment; must have a full range of motion in the upper extremities.
- **Lifting:** frequently lift, carry, push, pull, or otherwise move objects up to 25 pounds.
- **Visual Requirements:** close vision sufficient to read files, documents, and computer screens and do close-up work; ability to adjust focus frequently.
- **Hearing/Talking:** ability to hear normal speech, speak and hear on the telephone, and speak in person.
- **Emotional/Psychological Factors:** ability to make decisions and concentrate; frequent contact with students, teachers, and others, including the public.
- **Other Factors:** moderate risk of exposure to hazardous chemicals, biological materials, flammable gases, and electric shock; moderate use of equipment with moving and/or sharp parts.

Education and Experience:

Any combination of education, experience and/or training that would likely provide the above-required knowledge, skills and abilities is qualifying.

- *Preferred Education: Bachelor's degree in any biological science, biochemistry, biophysics or marine science.*

Typical background patterns that would provide the knowledge, skills and abilities are:

Pattern I

- Experience: Two years equivalent to an Instructional Support Technician at YCCD, performing duties that provided familiarity with life science laboratories and chemical inventories.

OR Pattern II

- Education: Possession of an associate's degree from an accredited college or university, with major course work in biology, or a related area applicable to the specific assignment of the position.
- Experience: Four years performing technical duties that provided familiarity with life science/biology.

Special Requirements:

- Depending upon the assignment of a position, applicants may be required to demonstrate technical knowledge and skills pertaining to a specialized academic area.