LAB KIT

Lessons Learned from Building a Lab from Scratch · iGEM Team KIT 2026

1. Navigating product catalogs

Lab consumables catalogs can be complex and unintuitive. Seek advice from someone experienced in lab procurement and rely on their practical experience. Whenever possible, order products that are already used by other research groups, as this is often the easiest and most reliable option.

2. Communicating with potential sponsors

When looking for specific products, provide potential sponsors with a clear and detailed description of your planned experiments and explain your specific needs. Ask for their recommendations, as company representatives often have valuable product knowledge and expertise to share. Engage in a dialogue rather than simply requesting donations.

3. Researching products carefully

Take your time to research different products before making a decision. Read product descriptions thoroughly and consider your specific experimental requirements and use cases before choosing a product.

4. Preparing product requests

When requesting specific products from a company, include the article numbers and quantities needed. We found it helpful to attach a table summarizing all the relevant details, as this makes requests clearer and easier to process.

5. Asking for equipment loans

Ask companies or research institutions whether they can lend you equipment. Borrowing equipment can be a cost-effective way to access the tools you need without having to purchase them.

6. Establishing lab maintenance routines

Set up a clear lab maintenance structure early in the project to ensure that the laboratory remains clean, organized, and functional. Define responsibilities and establish regular cleaning and maintenance routines.

7. Keeping the lab organized

Make sure everyone can easily find what they need. Clearly label cupboards, storage boxes, samples, and plates, and establish a consistent labeling system that everyone follows.

8. Establishing a journal club

Introduce a journal club early in the project to encourage a strong research culture and make scientific literature a regular part of team discussions. Regularly reading and discussing research papers helps team members build their scientific knowledge and critically evaluate relevant findings.

9. Scheduling regular scientific discussions

We greatly benefited from exchanging experimental results and discussing upcoming experiments with both team members and supervisors. We recommend establishing a dedicated weekly meeting for this purpose to share progress, troubleshoot problems, and coordinate next steps.