

## **How do you handle situations where you need more time, need to push back a deadline, or need to delay?**

(And not that I think anyone in the lab would get themselves into these pickles!) For each scenario, think about what you would do and describe it to the group. We'll then discuss the best ways to handle each scenario.

### Tips and tricks:

- Let people know as soon as possible
- Be honest, incorporate a genuine response
- Have an alternate timeline ready or suggest an alternate to replace you
  - Use technology to arrange alternate plans
- Start with key people and get their advice on how to approach a larger group
- Attach extra information
- Keep in mind it can take 1 week just to reschedule a group meetings
  - When I send an email to schedule poll, try to get everyone to respond to the poll within 48 hours
  - Be prepared for no one to be available for 2-3 weeks out
- How to craft an apology
  - Be up front about the reason, keep it "short and sweet"
    - Don't provide more details than necessary
  - Don't over-apologize
  - Use "next time" instead of "I'm sorry", or "i apologize" instead of "I'm sorry"
  - Empathize with the person you are apologizing to - recognize that you have inconvenienced them and their time and investment
    - "I know you invested this time and I apologize for that"
- Multiple follow ups and documentation
- Feeling nervous
  - Tell your audience "I'm really nervous" in different ways
  - Have first few minutes well rehearsed
- Write templates / email templates when in a good frame of mind
- Resubmit a manuscript - you need an extension because of a co-author
  - It's not your fault, but you're in charge and have to communicate
  - "We need more time to finish the revisions, I'd be happy to provide more details if needed."
- Double the timeline you think you need

**Sara S** - A draft of your thesis is due to your committee 6 weeks prior to your defense date. A week before it is due, you realize a full draft is not going to be ready on time.

As soon as I realize that completing this on time is not feasible, I would reach out to my advisor first to discuss why I don't think I will finish on time. I will explain how I have been working and what there is left to do by presenting an outline of how much time I think I need to complete each task that is left. I also present an alternative timeline for pushing my defense by a few weeks to prepare. Once I have my advisors okay, I reach out to my committee to present the alternative timeline to them.

**Alan D** - Your talk for an online conference needs to be uploaded today, but the system rejected it because it was too long.

**Lauren Z** - You are signed up to present for a lab meeting next week, but you procrastinated and then were sick. It's the day of the lab meeting and your presentation isn't ready.

I would be upfront about it--there's nothing you can do at this point! It's preferable to let your PI/other lab members know as soon as you know that you are unable to complete the presentation and are sick so alternate plans can be arranged via email/slack. I'm definitely someone that over-apologizes so I'm not sure if an apology is warranted here because things happen and so long as it's not habitual, life goes on! There is usually a schedule so you can suggest an alternate activity or maybe you know someone is ready to present something else, so in a way your "shift" could be covered.

**Madeline** - Your oral exam is in 2 weeks, but you don't feel like you are going to be ready on time.

In this situation, the need is to delay the date of the oral exam. My response is to spend a short period of time figuring out why I feel unprepared. Do I need additional time to study material, or am I simply nervous about the exam because it's important to do well? If the answer is the former, I would quickly develop a new study plan (accounting for a specific amount of time to go over recognized deficiencies) and then immediately contact the oral exam administrators via email to explain the need for a delay. Hopefully, a reasonable time extension could be granted to accommodate the new study plan. If I find that I am simply nervous, I would arrange meeting times in the upcoming two weeks to speak with advisors, professors, or other grad students regarding advice on the oral exam or to give an evaluation of my preparation. I might contact the exam administrators via email to request a short extension for personal reasons, but I could likely take the exam on the original deadline in this case.

**Luke** - You have an assignment due for a course, but it's 2 days before the assignment is due and you haven't finished it yet because someone in your family was sick and you had to go visit them.

Depending on the scale of the assignment, I would try to finish it within the 2 remaining days. If, however, it isn't practical to finish the assignment within 2 days, I would email the instructor of the course and explain that I had a family emergency that prevented me from putting forth the necessary time and effort into the assignment, thus it is incomplete. I would explain that a relative of mine fell ill and required my care. I would then ask the instructor if it is okay that I

request an extension to finish the assignment. In the event that the instructor doesn't respond to my email by the deadline of the assignment, I would follow up with them the morning that the assignment is due; if they don't respond to that email either, I would then talk to them during class and explain my predicament.

Ffion- not back yet from the field?