

# Providing Follow-up Support to Laboratory Learners

This job aid accompanies the [Providing Follow-up Support to Laboratory Learners](#) course. It provides a summary of how to apply [CDC Quality Training Standard #8](#), along with exercises to create a follow-up support plan for laboratory training.

## Benefits of Follow-up Support

Follow-up support strengthens knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) by reinforcing the laboratory training content. This encourages a deeper application as learners engage with the material repeatedly, over time.

**Note:** Follow-up support should be used only to reinforce the material that was presented in the training. Introducing new concepts or skills during this process is not recommended.

## Selecting an Appropriate Follow-up Support

Follow-up support can be offered in a variety of ways, including in print, in person, virtually, or online. Selecting the right follow-up support activity can enhance the learning experience by offering practical support, collaboration, and ongoing engagement with the material.

Use these guiding questions to determine the follow-up activity based on the training content.

Does the training include step-by-step procedures that the learner will perform in the laboratory?

- If so, include checklists, guides, or step-by-step instructions in your follow-up support.

Does the training content include complex topics or skills that require reinforcement?

- If so, provide quick reference guides, an FAQ document, or reminders to reinforce key information.

Are there common questions that learners usually ask or mistakes frequently made after training?

- If so, create a troubleshooting guide, an FAQ document, or a decision tree.

Does the training require the learner to make decisions and not just follow step-by-step procedures?

- If so, create decision trees, scenario-based practice exercises, or flowcharts.

Will the learner have to perform tasks alone, without immediate support from a supervisor or team?

- If so, include self-checklists, troubleshooting guides, or emergency protocols.

## Continuum of Follow-up Support

When choosing follow-up support, keep in mind that factors such as cost and time can affect the types of resources offered after training. It is important to find a balance between offering thorough support and making sure the support fits within your budget and time limits. The [Continuum of Follow-up Support](#) shows examples of activities, ranging from on-site coaching to email communication, based on cost and time investment.

Refer to Job Aids disclaimer at [reach.cdc.gov/disclaimers#ui-id-6](https://reach.cdc.gov/disclaimers#ui-id-6). Find additional free laboratory training resources at [reach.cdc.gov](https://reach.cdc.gov).

In the space provided, describe which follow-up support resources or activities are best for your training topic.

## Designing Follow-up Support

When designing follow-up support, consider how each resource or activity will reinforce the KSAs gained during the training and keep learners engaged after the training. Creating high-quality follow-up support includes five phases: planning, communication, implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement.

### Phase 1: Planning

Planning for follow-up support begins during the design phase of the overall laboratory training. During this phase, laboratory trainers should identify opportunities to reinforce training content based on the learning objectives. To align follow-up activities with learning objectives, you can use a [content-objective map](#). The following questions can help you plan follow-up support.

How will you choose the most appropriate follow-up support strategies or tool?

How will you assess learners' need for follow-up support?

### Phase 2: Communication

The second phase in developing high-quality follow-up support involves interactions before and during the training that align with the follow-up activities. When sharing details about the follow-up support, be sure to share the following with the learners:

- Description of the resource or activity
- Timeline for when to use or access the resource or activity
- Instructions about how learners can access the resource
- Explanation of why learners should use the resource or participate in the activity

In the space provided, describe how learners can access the follow-up resource or activity and how it can benefit their work.

### **Phase 3: Implementation**

The third phase of developing high-quality follow-up support occurs when the laboratory learners take part in the follow-up support activity or use the resource. The support activities should help transfer the KSAs from the training into daily practice in the laboratory.

In the space provided, describe how you will set a timeline for implementing the chosen follow-up support activity or resource.

### **Phase 4: Evaluation**

In this fourth phase, gather and analyze feedback through observation, discussions, or post-training evaluations to identify gaps in follow-up support.

In the space provided, describe what data needs to be collected to inform follow-up support improvements.

### **Phase 5: Continuous Improvement**

The final phase of follow-up support is continuous improvement. After collecting and analyzing learner feedback, update the follow-up activities to meet learners' needs and ensure the content is accurate and relevant.

In the space provided, describe what improvements you will make to the follow-up support activities or resources based on evaluation feedback.