Professionalism Standards for Working Learners

Why professionalism is important

Professionalism is essential as a working learner as it helps you build a strong foundation for your future careers by instilling discipline, reliability, and accountability. By following professional standards in your role, you'll develop valuable skills such as time management, teamwork, and effective communication, which are highly sought after by employers. Additionally, professionalism fosters a positive work environment, where you can gain valuable experience, expand your networks, and make a lasting impression on potential future employers. Overall, professionalism is the cornerstone of a successful, cohesive, and efficient workplace. It not only contributes to individual growth but also significantly impacts the overall culture and success of a department.

Behavior and Conduct

- **Punctuality:** Arrive on time for shifts, meetings, and appointments.
  - **How?:** The best way to ensure punctuality is by staying organized. Figure out the best way for you to keep track of your schedule and stick to it. This could be a planner, email calendar, phone calendars, reminders, etc. It is also a good practice to always give yourself 5 to 10 extra minutes just in case. It is better to be a little early than late!
  - **Why?:** Arriving on time demonstrates respect for others' time and sets a positive tone for the workday, ensuring smooth transitions between various responsibilities.

- **Professional Attire:** Dress appropriately according to the university's guidelines or the specific job requirements
  - **How?:** Each working learner position has different requirements for attire. Talk to your supervisor about the expectations and requirements regarding your specific department's dress code.
  - **Why?:** Following dress codes not only reflects a commitment to professionalism but also helps create a professional atmosphere and fosters productivity and focus.

- **Respectful Communication:** Interact respectfully with colleagues, supervisors, faculty, and students, whether in-person, over the phone, via email, or on Slack.
  - **How?:** When speaking with others, be honest, positive and polite. Make sure you are being an active listener and not speaking over others. This includes body language and non verbals. Eye contact, open body language, and tone, have a big impact on respectful communication. It is essential to keep your language free from stereotypes and words that exclude others based on race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or gender.
  - **Why?:** Treating everyone with respect fosters a harmonious work environment, encourages open dialogue, and promotes effective collaboration, ultimately enhancing team dynamics and productivity.

Work Ethic

- **Commitment:** Demonstrate dedication to tasks and responsibilities assigned.

  - **How?:** You can show dedication to tasks and responsibilities by staying on task and producing quality work. Limit your distractions and take the time to make sure your tasks are completed correctly and to the best of your abilities.

  - **Why?:** Demonstrating dedication inspires confidence in colleagues and supervisors, contributing to a strong team ethos and fostering a culture of excellence within the workplace.

- **Reliability:** Fulfill duties consistently and responsibly.

  - **How?:** Show your supervisors you are reliable by following through with commitments and working methodically to ensure you complete tasks.

  - **Why?:** Consistently fulfilling responsibilities builds trust among peers and supervisors, establishing a reputation for dependability crucial for successful teamwork and task execution.

- **Time Management:** Manage workload efficiently and meet deadlines.

  - **How?:** To have good time management it is important to limit distractions and stay organized. Use a planner, google calendar, etc. to keep track of when tasks are due. Make sure to prioritize tasks with earlier deadlines. Make sure to limit distractions while working to ensure you have enough time to work on your tasks.

  - **Why?:** Efficiently managing time ensures tasks are completed promptly, minimizes disruptions, and allows for effective prioritization of responsibilities, leading to increased productivity and goal attainment.

Professional Growth

- **Learning Attitude:** Show eagerness to learn and adapt to new tasks or responsibilities.

  - **How?:** Show you have a learning attitude by offering to learn new tasks and responsibilities. Do not get discouraged if you are not good at something right away. Work to continue to improve your skills.

  - **Why?:** Embracing opportunities for growth demonstrates a proactive approach to personal and professional development, enhancing adaptability and resilience in the face of new challenges.

- **Seeking Feedback:** Be open to constructive feedback for improvement.

  - **How?:** Do not be afraid to ask for feedback on a task. It shows that you care that you are doing your work correctly. During your 1 on 1, ask your supervisor what you can improve on.

  - **Why?:** Being receptive to feedback fosters continuous improvement, accelerates skill development, and strengthens professional relationships through open communication and mutual respect.

- **Professional Development:** Engage in opportunities for skill-building or training offered by the university.

  - **How?:** There are many different types of professional development. It could be learning a new skill, watching a training, going to an event, working on your LinkedIn, etc. Prioritize spending time on your professional development to grow in areas you feel are beneficial for your future career.

  - **Why?:** Engaging in skill-building activities expands knowledge and expertise, positioning working learners for future career advancement opportunities and increased job satisfaction.

TheWork+Collective

Collaboration and Teamwork

- **Collaboration:** Work effectively in teams or with colleagues across departments.
  - **How?:** If you are working on a project that others may be able to help with, ask them to collaborate. Divide the work up based on skill area.
  - **Why?:** Effective teamwork leverages diverse perspectives, skills, and strengths to achieve common goals, fostering innovation, creativity, and mutual support among team members.

- **Supportive Environment:** Foster a positive and supportive work environment for fellow student workers and colleagues.
  - **How?** To foster a supportive and positive work environment, be kind and encouraging to those around you. Build relationships with your coworkers and supervisors.
  - **Why?:** Creating a supportive atmosphere promotes collaboration, encourages risk-taking, and enhances job satisfaction and morale, ultimately driving individual and collective success.

- **Conflict Resolution:** Handle conflicts professionally and seek assistance if needed.
  - **How?:** When dealing with conflict in the workplace, it is important to stay calm and be professional. Make a plan to dissolve the conflict and reach out to others if you need help.
  - **Why?:** Addressing conflicts promptly and professionally prevents disruptions, preserves relationships, and promotes a culture of transparency, trust, and respect within the team.

Confidentiality and Ethics

- **Respect Confidentiality:** Maintain confidentiality regarding sensitive information related to the university, students, or staff.
  - **How?:** Keep confidential information between you and your supervisor, unless otherwise stated.
  - **Why?:** Safeguarding sensitive information demonstrates integrity, trustworthiness, and respect for individuals' privacy rights, maintaining institutional trust and compliance with legal and ethical standards.

- **Ethical Behavior:** Uphold ethical standards and university policies.
  - **How?:** Commit to honesty, integrity, respect for others, confidentiality, and compliance within organizational policies and procedures.
  - **Why?:** This fosters a culture of honesty, fairness, and accountability, strengthening the organization's reputation and credibility while minimizing legal and reputational risks.

Initiative and Accountability

- **Initiative:** Show initiative in taking on tasks and offering assistance where needed.
  - **How?:** Actively seek out opportunities to contribute, propose new ideas or solutions to challenges, and take on additional responsibilities without waiting to be directed or instructed.
  - **Why?:** Taking initiative demonstrates proactive problem-solving skills, resourcefulness, and a commitment to organizational success, driving innovation and driving positive change within the workplace.

- **Accountability:** Take responsibility for actions, tasks, and decisions made within the job role.
  - **How?:** If you make a mistake at work, do not try to hide it. Instead, let your supervisor know and make a plan to fix the mistake. Be receptive to feedback and look at mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow.
  - **Why?:** Holding oneself accountable for actions and decisions promotes transparency, fosters a culture of responsibility, and builds trust among colleagues and supervisors, ensuring the achievement of shared goals and objectives.

Communication

- **Clarity and Professionalism:** Communicate clearly, professionally, and effectively in all interactions.
  - **How?:** Whether it is in person or online, less words is more. Be straight to the point and avoid unnecessary words. Before sending a message, email, or scheduling a meeting, know exactly who your audience is and what your goal is.
  - **Why?:** Clear and professional communication enhances understanding, reduces misunderstandings, and cultivates a culture of transparency, respect, and efficiency within the organization.

- **Active Listening:** Practice active listening when receiving instructions or communicating with colleagues and supervisors.
  - **How?:** To be an active listener, face the person speaking to you and make eye contact. Do not cross your legs or arms which can come off as defensive. Do not interrupt them and do not jump to any conclusions or judge. Listen to absorb the information they are telling you, don't just listen to respond. A best practice is to repeat back what you heard from the other person or respond with how you interpreted the information, so that they know you are understanding what they said.
  - **Why?:** This fosters empathy, understanding, and trust in interpersonal relationships, improving collaboration, conflict resolution, and overall communication effectiveness within the team.

Resources

1. Fulton School of Engineering states **students' professionalism** standards which also apply to every ASU working learner.
2. Professionalism **self evaluation**
3. Career Services **Professionalism and Work Ethic video**