**Professional Expectations and Code of Behavior**

**For Internships and Employment**

This document provides important guidelines and knowledge for students and fresh graduates who are taking up internships and temporary / part-time / full-time employment.

**Professional Expectations**

Whether you are an intern or a regular employee in the workplace, people expect you to be a professional with the following traits and behaviors:

1. **Going Beyond Expectations:**

Aiming to give the best you can and taking every opportunity to learn and contribute.

* Demonstrating teamwork
* Encouraging communication and conservation in your workplace
* Joining networking groups and offering help to others
* Participating in professional organizations
* Seeing beyond yourself
* Thinking from the company's perspective
* Volunteering community or charity services

1. **Respecting Others:**

Showing others respect is the basis of all professional behavior.

* Accepting constructive criticism
* Apologizing for errors or misunderstanding
* Being courteous and having good manners
* Being fair and gentle when giving feedback
* Being fair in all dealings
* Being punctual
* Communicating clearly and in language others can easily understand to avoid any miscommunication
* Listening to others attentively and with an open mind
* Presenting yourself pleasantly with good hygiene and appropriate dress codes
* Taking appropriate actions, rather than trying to hurt someone when you feel wrong

1. **Responsibility and Integrity:**

All professionals need to take responsibility for themselves and their work. They need to consider consequences and the impact on others.

* Being committed and following through with any tasks given to you
* Being fully committed to your employer, following the agreement on internship / contractual terms and conditions, duration, job duties and the reporting line. Not being jumpy on the internship / employment, and not reneging on your commitment to the employer or the University
* Being honest and avoiding excuses – integrity are crucial
* Being impartial and avoiding conflicts of interest
* Being reliable and dependable
* Being well prepared for different challenges
* Demonstrating self-control
* Informing your supervisor or colleagues as soon as possible in case of any issues or delay in work progress
* Not attending to personal matters during work hours
* Taking matters of confidentiality seriously
* Taking responsibility for your own work

**Code of Behavior**

The following are characteristics that employers generally look for and expect from job candidates and employees.

1. **Appreciation:** Being appreciative from a willing heart will enhance your relationship with your supervisor and working partners. A successful intern / employee is typically a great team player, approachable and interact well with all parties.
2. **Attendance:** You are expected to arrive on time in every occasion. If you do not feel well and need to take a day off, call your supervisor yourself early in the morning. Different companies have different practices so you should try to clarify on the first day of work. Do not rely on someone else to convey the message for you to your supervisor (unless you are very sick or are told otherwise) or call any later than early morning. Absence not related to illness or without proper notice and approval is considered unacceptable and may be regarded as a serious offense. If you get caught, the employer may take disciplinary action, and for interns, report to the University. In the worst case, employers or the University will black list your enrollment in future recruitment related activities.
3. **Attitude:** In the workplace, as interns or employees, you are often expected to deliver beyond supervisors' expectations. Even without being told, you are expected to take initiatives and be solution-driven through taking notes, following up, reporting status, offering assistance and solutions to problems in a constructive manner, taking on challenges without hesitation, being open to take on criticisms, and most importantly, improving upon feedback and comments. Examples of other positive attitudes include being versatile, reliable, adaptable, prompt and able to see from employers’ perspectives.
4. **Commendation:** If you expect to receive special commendations or recommendations from employers, perform well and show respect. Do not take it for granted. You should constantly and proactively ask for feedback for self-development whenever convenient and appropriate, and use the information and feedback gathered for self-reflection and improvement. Your supervisor / mentor would be very willing to provide a special commendation in your reference letter if you perform well during your internship / employment.
5. **Competency:** Being able to work independently without a supervisor hovering your shoulder is essential. You are expected to have keen eyes for spotting errors or inconsistency, with common sense and sound judgment to carry out assignments independently. You should possess the attitude of zero tolerance for mistakes, and respond promptly and stand up to take responsibility for the mistakes you have made (as opposed to giving excuses). If the mistake was caused by someone else, you should possess the attitude of coming to a solution in an amicable manner (as opposed to pointing fingers). You are expected to possess sound working knowledge of the commonly used computer software as well as specific softwares and systems required by the job. Whether writing or speaking, in English, Chinese, or other languages, communications skills are essential. Additionally, being tactful in asking questions and gathering information is essential – asking the right questions, thinking and reading beforehand and avoiding asking repeated questions. Being passive or following order without clarifying or putting additional thoughts are considered inert or incompetent. Remember, those who can deal with ambiguity and uncertainties and work extra steps in the workplace are considered more capable and having higher potential for further development.
6. **Confidentiality and Data Privacy:** Take confidentiality and data privacy very seriously and beware of the legal implications and consequences. You must respect and protect confidential data seriously whether or not the company requires you to sign a confidentiality agreement. Do not talk about your company or work assignments outside of the company premises or with other non-involved parties or staff members. Never video tape or record someone's private conversation or discussions at meetings unless you have permission from your supervisor or other parties.
7. **Discipline in Using Company’s Computer / Equipment:** Be extremely cautious when you use employers’ computer and other equipment and beware of viruses and malicious software that can easily spread among computers on the network. Always be careful when opening attachments. Do not download software without first asking and gaining permission from your supervisor. In all cases, do not surf on internet, social media or handle personal matters or other non-work related activities during office hours. These are inappropriate and unprofessional conduct and behavior, and the University and most employers consider these as serious offenses.
8. **Dress Code:** While dress code for most companies is business, this may differ according to industries and job natures. Even if the dress code is business casual or smart casual, DO NOT wear sandals, sneakers, etc. to work unless otherwise permitted. Never wear shorts or provocative / revealing clothes to work. Do not make judgments on the dress code solely based on your observation of other colleagues. Some companies have a stricter dress code. Be neat and clean at all times, and dress well to show respect. You are advised to clarify the dress code with your supervisor on or before the first day of work.
9. **Gaining Permission:** For rules and conduct, situations and practices may vary by company and supervisor. Jot down your questions and ask your supervisor on the first day of work. If you ever want to leave early in order to attend an event or due to expected emergency, gain permission from your supervisor before you leave and offer a solution on how you plan to make up your hours and complete works assigned. Never assume, or talk to your supervisor after the fact or after you have made up your mind.

**10. Sexual Harassment in the Workplace:** Sexual harassment comes in different forms and shapes (verbal, non-verbal, and physical) and can have serious legal repercussions. The rule of thumb is to stay alert at all times. Depending on the circumstances, examples of unwelcome conduct may include, but are not limited to:

* Displaying sexually explicit pictures, cartoons, e-mails, etc.
* Intentional physical contact such as touching or patting a person
* Remarks about an individual's sexual experiences
* Sexually demeaning statements, comments, jokes, or anecdotes
* Unwanted conduct or romantic advances
* Whistling or other sexually explicit sounds or gestures

IMPORTANT: If you feel that you are being harassed, tell the harasser that the behavior is unwelcome and inappropriate and must be stopped, and report it to your supervisor immediately.

1. **Underperformance:** Some supervisors may not provide feedback directly to the interns / employees on their performances. From the employer’s perspective, poor performance will reflect negatively on the performance evaluation. Not only will this affect the chance and comments of professional references for the interns / employees who need them for applying for further studies or other jobs, it will also affect the intake of fellow students to the employers in the future.

**13. Workplace Safety:** If you know or feel that your workplace is unsafe or if your employer is asking you to do something that you feel is unsafe, please speak to your supervisor immediately. Interns are encouraged to discuss with your faculty or CEDARS-Careers and Placement for advice. Note that you can refuse to take part in any unsafe activities. If you are uncomfortable going offsite, discuss with your supervisor to check if this is part of the job responsibilities, and suggest to be accompanied with a partner if needed.

Before your first day at work,familiarize yourself with the nature of the business by visiting your prospective employer’s website and conducting research on your own. Approach career advisors at CEDARS-Careers and Placement for additional insights and guidance.

If you are an intern and have experienced special issues with your employer or colleagues, talk to your professor, teacher or career advisors of your faculty or CEDARS-Careers and Placement. Be patient in your work and try your best to finish your internship / job as agreed to demonstrate your respect and commitment to the employer.

[Wish you every success in your endeavors!]