

## Women United Mentoring Series

### Getting Ready for the Real World: PROFESSIONALISM

#### Get to Know You

Ask the Student	Ask the Mentor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your hobbies? Interests?</li> <li>• What is one thing people should know about you?</li> <li>• Have you had a job? What about unofficial jobs (like babysitting or shoveling snow)?</li> <li>• What do you want to do as a career?</li> <li>• What do you want your next job to be?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your hobbies? Interests?</li> <li>• What is one thing people should know about you?</li> <li>• What was your first job?</li> <li>• When you were my age, what career did you want?</li> <li>• How did you get to your current job?</li> </ul>

#### What is Professionalism?

Ask the Student	Ask the Mentor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does professionalism mean?</li> <li>• How does a professional act?</li> <li>• How does a professional speak and listen?</li> <li>• How does a professional dress?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How did you learn to be professional?</li> <li>• Do you have any habits, mannerisms, or styles in your personal life that you do not bring to work?</li> <li>• Did you ever make a mistake that helped you learn about professionalism?</li> </ul>

Read the advice on the following pages about behavior, talking, and dressing for work. Talk through the tips. Are any new to you? What do they mean specifically? Are some more important than others?

## MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION

- Be on time – meaning 15 minutes early
- Have a positive attitude
- Show team spirit, be willing to work as a team
- Take initiative
- Take notes
- Ask for help
- Listen
- Avoid office politics and gossip
- Find a mentor
- Get organized
- Keep your manager informed
- Network with key people in your organization and profession
- Get comfortable being uncomfortable
- Don't take things personally
- Manage your time
- Work full days
- Do not use your cell phone, leave at home if possible
- Cover tattoos and remove piercings as needed
- Do not chew gum



## LANGUAGE AT WORK

- **Levels of Formality:** Write in a style that is appropriate for your audience and that fits your purpose.
- **In-group Jargon:** Jargon is specialized language used by groups of like-minded individuals. Only use jargon when you are writing for members of that group. You should never use jargon for a general audience without first explaining it.
- **Slang and Idiomatic Expressions:** Avoid using slang or idiomatic expressions in professional writing.
- **Deceitful Language and Euphemisms:** Avoid using euphemisms (words that veil the truth, such as "collateral damage" for the unintended negative consequences) and other deceitful language.
- **Biased Language:** Avoid using any biased language including language with a racial, ethnic, group, or gender bias or use language that promotes stereotypes.

Reference: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/owlprint/608/>

## DRESSING FOR WORK

- Dressing for the interview:
  - Do research before interviews or visiting the company to get a sense of their environment. Then determine what you should wear.
  - At some companies, employees dress in business professional clothes every day, at others it may be normal to dress in business casual clothes.
  
- Dressing for interviews or work:
  - Clothes should not be too tight, short or baggy
  - Less is better-when referring to jewelry and patterns on clothes
  - No excessive make-up or jewelry
  - If you have a uniform, follow the company policy.

Appropriate	Inappropriate
Dresses (Fingertip check)	Shorts, Mini Skirts
Cardigans	Denim, Leather
Buttoned Solid Shirt	Tank tops, Strapless Shirts
Well Pressed Khaki or Dark Pants	Exposed Midriff or Undergarments
Flats, Loafers	Casual Sandals, Platform Heels
Heels (No taller than 3 inches)	Hats
Conservative Watch (On Left Arm)	Multiple Rings, Facial Jewelry
Short, Clean, Well Groomed Nails	Maxi Dress, Sun Dress, Club Wear

## Choosing References

Most employers will request 3 or 4 references- people who can vouch for your work ethic and responsibility. You should ask several people who might be willing to give you a good recommendation.

Ask the Student	Ask the Mentor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who can vouch for your reliability (like good attendance, follow through, and helpfulness)?</li> <li>• Who should you NOT ask to be a reference?</li> <li>• Who can you impress this year so they can be a reference in the future?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do you find your references?</li> <li>• Have you been someone's reference?</li> <li>• Have you ever called a reference and gotten negative information?</li> <li>• Have you ever told someone you could not be their reference? Why?</li> </ul>

Having *good*, professional references is key to getting the job you want. It is critical to provide three people who will say positive things about you.

- Best** Employers or supervisors
- Good** Teachers  
Volunteer or Intern Supervisor
- Acceptable** Clergy or other professionals  
Co-workers
- Weak** Friends
- Unacceptable** Family

### Why are teachers and supervisors best?

- They know the quality of your work.
- They can speak about your attendance and whether you come to work on time.
- They know if you are helpful.

### Why shouldn't you use friends and family members?

- Employers think they will say good things about you because they like you.
- Employers think that these people do not know how you behave at work.

## POSSIBLE REFERENCES

Person's Name	How I Know this Person
1) _____	_____
2) _____	_____
3) _____	_____
4) _____	_____
5) _____	_____

## ARRANGING FOR GOOD REFEREMCES

**Talk with every person you plan to use for a reference *before* you give out the person's name.**

- Talk to or call the person about being a reference.
  - *Example:* I am looking for a job as a \_\_\_\_\_ and hope you will be a reference for me.
- Listen.
  - If the person does not remember you or says someone else might be a better reference, thank the person and get off the phone. Do not try to persuade him or her.
  - If the person says yes, thank him or her and continue the conversation.
- Tell the person about the jobs you have been applying for and who is likely to call.
  - *Example:* I will be applying for cashier jobs and a store may call you.
- Ask important questions.
  - "What phone number should I give the employer?"
  - "May I have your email address in case the employer prefers email?"
- Thank the person for his or her willingness to help you get a job.

## My Professional References

Name of Reference \_\_\_\_\_

Person's Title \_\_\_\_\_

Agency/Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers \_\_\_\_\_

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers \_\_\_\_\_

## Action Plan

My goal is to \_\_\_\_\_.

These are the actions I will take between now and the next mentoring session:

Goal	Action	Date Completed
<i>Examples:</i> Raise my GPA	Turn in every homework assignment	Ongoing
Find references	Ask math teacher Ask coach	Nov 3 November 12