



STATECIVILSERVICE
COMPREHENSIVE PUBLIC TRAINING PROGRAM



Professionalism in the Workplace

Course Manual

Revised 06/13/2018

PROFESSIONALISM IN THE WORKPLACE

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course allows participants to define professionalism and analyze the factors that represent professionalism in today's workplace. They will use these guidelines as they progress through practices to improve the professionalism of their communications, their workplace competencies, etiquette, and finally, the ability to coach others to a higher level of professional behavior.

JOB/LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify, demonstrate, and coach professional practices.
- Apply standards of professionalism in written and verbal communications.
- Incorporate the principles of professionalism into everyday work situations.

GROUP ACTIVITY: WHAT IS PROFESSIONALISM TO YOU?



As a group, come up with your best definition of professionalism.



What traits and characteristics come to mind of when you think of someone who is professional? Be specific.



Are these traits and characteristics visual, verbal, or actions?

COMPETENCIES OF PROFESSIONALISM

PROFESSIONALISM SELF-ASSESSMENT

How often do you take the time to ensure that you're presenting a professional image? Next to each behavior listed below, circle the number that indicates how frequently you act or respond in these ways.

1 = Never 2 = Seldom 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Always

1 Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
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Image and Perception

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I am confident in the first impression I make. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. My image is aligned with my values and goals, and it ensures that others perceive me as professional and competent. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. I frequently receive positive feedback on my appearance and conduct. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. My office and work area support my professional image. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. I am conscious of my body language and the messages it sends. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Total score for this section _____

Conduct and Ethics

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 6. My conduct is consistent with my image and values. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7. I regularly find opportunities to assist others in the workplace. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8. I acknowledge the accomplishments of others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9. I accept blame when responsible. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I would be confident and comfortable if all my work activities today were printed on the front page of a newspaper. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Total score for this section _____

Communication

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 11. I maintain eye contact when I communicate with others. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12. I ignore distractions and stay focused on the person or task at hand. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. I review written communications for accuracy, tone, and professional language before I send them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. I do not make inappropriate comments or use foul language. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I protect confidential information and avoid gossip. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Total score for this section _____

Work Skills and Technology

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. I am confident in my work skills and continually look for ways to develop these further. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. I know how to use my technology and tools effectively. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. I use cell phones and other technology with discretion. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. I use networking and interaction to discover ways to improve work processes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. I am not hesitant to ask questions and request assistance. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

Total score for this section _____

Survey TOTAL _____

COMPETENCIES OF PROFESSIONALISM

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT



Individual Activity

Review each section of the self-assessment to determine the areas in which you would like to make improvements. As we discuss ideas today, list ones that you hear that will allow you to be more effective in these areas.

If your Assessment score in an area is 21 or above, that is one of your strong areas. Below 15 in any section represents an area for development. Review the statements in the assessment to identify actions you can take to make a positive difference immediately.

IMAGE & PERCEPTION	CONDUCT & ETHICS	COMMUNICATION	WORK SKILLS & TECHNOLOGY
<i>What does my appearance, image, and body language say about me?</i>	<i>Do I set the example of a positive, ethical, and trustworthy individual?</i>	<i>Do I represent myself and my agency appropriately in my spoken and written words?</i>	<i>Do I continue to develop the skills and abilities that make me an asset to my team?</i>
Assessment score:	Assessment score:	Assessment score:	Assessment score:

GROUP ACTIVITY: SHARE YOUR BEST IDEAS



1. What actions or behaviors are included in this skill?
2. Why do you think this skill is important to our professionalism?
3. What ideas do you have of ways we can improve our skills in this area?

#	Statement	NOTES
1	Work to develop positive communication skills. <i>Consider our words, listening skills, and even the body language and tone of our communications. How can we improve these?</i>	
2	Brush up our writing skills. <i>Consider the written messages we send each day and how they represent us and our agencies? How can we improve these?</i>	
3	Develop strong relationships. <i>Consider the relationships with have, not only in our teams, but across other departments, vendors, and customers. How can we continue to make these stronger?</i>	
4	Notice the effect of our words on others. <i>How can we ensure that we notice when others are offended or angered by our words? What can we do to remove these types of barriers to communication?</i>	

COMPETENCIES OF PROFESSIONALISM

5	<p>Take responsibility and give credit. <i>What can we do to continually recognize the good work of others? What guidelines can we use to take responsibilities and admit mistakes? How can we encourage others to take responsibility?</i></p>	
6	<p>Be a problem solver. <i>What steps can we take to determine what the problem is that needs to be solved and to determine the best way to address it? How do we encourage ourselves not to wait for others to solve problems, but to be the innovators on our team?</i></p>	
7	<p>Take service to a higher level. <i>Service to our customers, our coworkers, and our community are a part of all of our missions. What can we do to be more service-oriented? What do you think is the difference between good service and great service?</i></p>	
8	<p>Continually develop our work skills. <i>How can we objectively assess our skills and determine ways to improve them? What kinds of skills do we need to consider?</i></p>	
9	<p>Be willing to adapt and try new ideas. <i>How can we make sure we're not the one in the department who says, "We've always done it that way." What are some ways we can become more flexible?</i></p>	
10	<p>Address conflict as an opportunity for growth. <i>How can we make conflict more positive for our teams? What kind of guidelines could we put into place?</i></p>	
11	<p>Respect and value the different personalities we meet. <i>How can discover and acknowledge the strengths of others and learn from them? What techniques could we use to ensure we adapt our communication to our different audiences?</i></p>	
12	<p>Be a great team player. <i>What actions could we do to help our team as a whole and the individuals on our team? How we can assess what we need to work on to be a more positive force on our teams?</i></p>	
13	<p>Demonstrate our ethics and character in all we do. <i>What tests or guidelines could we use to ensure that every action we do is of the highest character? Why is it important that we continue to do this every single day?</i></p>	
14	<p>Mentor and be mentored by others. <i>How could we create our own mentor programs to help us and help others? What can different generations learn from each other? How can you identify potential mentoring partners?</i></p>	
15	<p>Lead by example. <i>What are some of the actions that we do that could be a positive or negative example to others? How can we remind ourselves of the importance of these actions? Why do we sometimes say this is the most important of all the skills or professionalism?</i></p>	

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS SELF-ASSESSMENT

How often do you take the time to ensure that you're sending and receiving messages effectively and professionally?
Next to each behavior listed below, circle the number that indicates how frequently you act in these ways.

1 = Never 2 = Seldom 3 = Sometimes 4 = Often 5 = Always

1 Never	2 Seldom	3 Sometimes	4 Often	5 Always
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Receiving Messages

1. I listen more than I talk.
2. I try not to finish other people's sentences.
3. I ask questions to ensure that I understand.
4. I pay attention to the body language of others.
5. I ignore distractions when in conversation with others.

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

Total score for this section _____

Sending Messages

6. I am conscious of my body language and the messages it sends.
7. I am conscious of my tone and adjust it to suit the situation.
8. I maintain appropriate eye contact when I interact with others.
9. I use positive language in my communications.
10. I am seldom misunderstood by others.

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

Total score for this section _____

Interpersonal Skills

11. I ensure that others understand me by taking the time to ask and answer questions.
12. I consider my audience's needs when I prepare communications or presentations.
13. I respond appropriately to the tone and cues that are being sent by the other person.
14. I ignore past negative experiences and bias when interacting with others.
15. People are not hesitant to approach me or ask questions of me.

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

Total score for this section _____

Communication Challenges

16. I do not procrastinate in addressing communication challenges or conflict.
17. I remain calm in difficult situations.
18. I do not make inappropriate comments or use foul language.
19. I accept criticism well and am not defensive when others make suggestions.
20. I address communication challenges with a positive outlook and keep the goal in mind.

1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5

Total score for this section _____

Survey TOTAL _____

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS

AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT



Individual Activity

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RECEIVING MESSAGES	SENDING MESSAGES	INTERPERSONAL SKILLS	COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES
<i>Do I really listen when others speak? Do I recognize the things that are not being said?</i>	<i>Am I conscious of my tone and body language? Do people misunderstand me often?</i>	<i>Are others comfortable asking me for help? Do I give every conversation my full and positive attention?</i>	<i>Do I address challenges effectively? Do I put negative thoughts aside when dealing with difficult situations?</i>
Assessment score:	Assessment score:	Assessment score:	Assessment score:

DEVELOPING COMMUNICATION SKILLS



In your group, brainstorm and come up with ways to be more professional in each of the following workplace situations. These may be 1) methods that you currently use, 2) ideas from others in your group, or 3) best practices from other organizations or individuals.

Face-to-Face Interactions	Telephone Interactions	Written Interactions

PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATION

PROFESSIONAL WORDING



In your group, review the following messages. Decide what's wrong with the phrase and reword it to make it more professional and appropriate. Write this alternative phrase in the second column. If there is no appropriate way to say this phrase, note that in the second column.


Phrase	What's Wrong?	Alternative
1. Calm down.		
2. That's not my job.		
3. That won't work.		
4. It's just our policy.		
5. She's still at lunch.		
6. You're wrong.		
7. What were you thinking?		
8. You should have...		
9. But...		
10. We can't do that.		

REWRITE THESE TO MAKE THEM MORE POSITIVE, PROFESSIONAL, AND APPROPRIATE

<p>A Memo: I have never seen so many writing mistakes in my life. Due to the terrible writing of the emails and memos that you have been writing, all members of this department will be required to attend a session on biz writing next week. Yours truly, Boss Smith</p>	<p>B Letter: Dear Ann, I got your letter and wanted you to know that you are not entitled to a rebate because it has been over three days since you bought your item. If you had taken the time to review the disclaimer on the receipt, you would have seen this notice. Your friend, I.M. Jones</p>	<p>C Email: Our department is starting a new contest, but we can't utilize this program until after this quarter. Therefore, on April 1, we'll start bequeathing awards each quarter for the person getting the unsurpassed scores on the customer service surveys. Mary Marketing</p>	<p>D Email: "Casual Fridays" does not mean that you can wear wrinkled shirts and dirty blue jeans. Since you folks don't seem to know that, we are eliminating this perk from our workplace. No longer will you be able to wear casual outfits in our department. Please adjust your actions accordingly immediately. Fred Blazer</p>
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PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE QUIZ

WHAT DOES YOUR GROUP THINK?

 Your group will discuss and agree on an answer to the questions below. Then we'll see how your ideas match with the rest of the class. And finally, we'll see where your answers fall on the etiquette meter!

<p>1</p> <p>What is considered the most comfortable space for personal interactions in the United States?</p> <p>A. 10-12 inches B. 18-24 inches C. 30-36 inches D. 10 foot pole</p>	<p>2</p> <p>A hand on the arm is always considered safe, but a hand on the shoulder can be considered intrusive.</p> <p>A. True B. False</p>	<p>3</p> <p>In introductions, people of higher rank and government or public officials have people introduced to them.</p> <p>A. True B. False</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Which of the following are the steps of a good handshake at a reception?</p> <p>A. Maintain eye contact B. Carry your glass in the left hand C. Shake from the elbow D. All of the above</p>	<p>5</p> <p>You should arrive at a meeting:</p> <p>A. Exactly at the start time B. Within five minutes after the start time C. At least five minutes before the start time</p>	<p>6</p> <p>If you arrive at a meeting late, you should immediately apologize and explain to the others in the room why you were late.</p> <p>A. True B. False</p>
<p>7</p> <p>Casual dress days mean you can wear anything casual.</p> <p>A. True B. False</p>	<p>8</p> <p>You should conduct yourself as if you were at work when wearing anything branded with your team or agency outside of the workplace.</p> <p>A. True B. False</p>	<p>9</p> <p>Which one of the following is not included in the steps of solving a challenging situation?</p> <p>A. Listen to the other person B. Apologize that they are having difficulties C. Determine who made the mistake D. Solve the problem</p>
<p>10</p> <p>It is okay to raise your voice, but only if the customer raises his first.</p> <p>A. True B. False</p>	<p>11</p> <p>When you have finished your work, you are not required to help others on your team complete their tasks.</p> <p>A. True B. False</p>	<p>12</p> <p>You should turn off or silence cell phones while in meetings.</p> <p>A. True B. False</p>
<p>13</p> <p>It is allowable to work on your computer during one-on-one meeting, but only if you explain to the other person that you are able to multi-task.</p> <p>A. True B. False</p>	<p>14</p> <p>It is only appropriate to share sensitive information in an email if you include the disclaimer that it is not to be shared.</p> <p>A. True B. False</p>	<p>15</p> <p>Your Facebook posts do not have an impact on your job.</p> <p>A. True B. False</p>

REPRESENTING YOUR AGENCY

THE ELEVATOR SPEECH



Individual Activity

Your task is to create a 30 second promotional talk that answers the question: Why would we want to work in your agency (or department or team)? What's so special about your workplace? What is important about what you do? Make us want to work with you!

Use the SET Formula as outlined below to create this talk: Short Answer * Evidence * Transition

Short Answer	Evidence	Transition
<p>A brief summary statement that gives the bottom line answer.</p> <p>This narrows down the answer to a single statement.</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> You want to work with the ABC Department because we are the most creative and fun group you'll ever meet. You want to work with the XYZ Department because we make a difference in the state of Louisiana. 	<p>Three pieces of evidence explaining why the short answer is true.</p> <p>Keep refining these to make sure they fall into the 30 second time frame.</p> <p>Think about what is so good about your team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it the people who make your team so great? Is it the opportunity to connect with and help the people you serve? Is it the difference you get to make every day? Is it the opportunity to learn new skills? Is it the variety of activities in your work? 	<p>You don't want to go too long without allowing the other person time to speak. Build in a transition question like:</p> <p>For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Doesn't that sound like a team you'd like to work with? Do you have any questions about my department? Can't you picture yourself working with this team? What do you think?

COACHING PRACTICE



Group Activity

Your group's task is to prepare a coaching session based on one of the following characteristics of professionals.

You will determine points to illustrate why this characteristic is important and be prepared to answer any objections or concerns about trying to achieve this goal in today's workplace.

You'll use the steps of an effective coaching session as listed in the infographic to the right.

You'll conduct this session with the rest of the group observing and then evaluate what worked and what could be improved.



Characteristics of a Professional
1. Concerned about improving their standards of performance
2. Committed to life-long learning
3. Looking for what's wrong as opposed to who's wrong
4. Self-directed
5. Use other's talents to work effectively with their own
6. Appreciate the contributions of others
7. Create realistic goals and continually measure progress
8. Treat everyone with respect
9. Admit mistakes
10. Take a leadership role whenever possible

Step	Notes
1. Open	
2. Explain	
3. Listen	
4. Develop	
5. Agree	
6. Close	
7. Follow Up	

UNPROFESSIONAL BEHAVIORS

YOUR BEST SOLUTIONS



Your group's task is to review one of the following behaviors that can undermine professionalism and answer these questions:

1. What negative effects can these actions have on the workplace?
2. What actions, guidelines, or ideas could help us overcome these unprofessional behaviors?

BEHAVIOR	Notes
1. Gossip	
2. Negative attitude	
3. Tardiness	
4. Unprofessional body language	
5. Overuse of personal technology at work	