



Academic Professionalism Tips and Suggestions

Have you ever been instructed to “act professionally”? What does that mean? You may have noticed that your instructors and college staff have certain expectations for student behavior. The good news is that professionalism is a skill that can be learned. Here, you’ll see that we’ve provided tips and suggestions for how to act professionally in a college setting.

Professionalism in the Classroom

- At the beginning of each semester, **read your syllabus!** This is the cardinal rule for academic success. Reading your syllabus will provide answers to many questions that you’ll have about the course. Additionally, reading your syllabus shows your instructor that you are prepared and that you are serious about being successful in the course.
- **Attend each class!** Students should assume that each class is important. If you miss a class and ask the instructor, “did I miss anything important?” the answer will always be yes!
 - **If you need to be absent from a class, inform your instructor in advance. Take responsibility for catching up on any material that you missed. Don’t ask the instructor to do the work for you!**
- **Show up to class on time.** Consistently showing up to class late is disruptive and disrespectful. If you know that you will frequently be tardy to class, consider enrolling in a class that occurs at a time that works with your schedule. Or, make arrangements to arrive to class on time.
- **Be present in class.** This means that you should give the instructor your undivided attention. No phones, social media, working on assignments for other classes, or having individual conversations during class. And lastly, **DON’T SLEEP IN CLASS.**
- **Read assigned chapters** before each class. Instructors assign readings to be completed outside of class because they plan to discuss them during lecture time.
- **Meet the deadlines.** Students are almost always informed of deadlines and due dates in advance. It is the student’s responsibility to ensure that assignments are submitted on time.
 - **If an emergency occurs, which interferes with submitting your work on time, communicate with your instructor. Ask if submitting the assignment late is acceptable. Also, expect that submitting an assignment late might negatively impact your grade.**

Menachem Wecker. U.S. News and World Report. “5 Guidelines for College Student-Professor Interactions.”

<https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/2012/09/17/5-guide-lines-for-college-student-professor-interactions>

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Judi McIntyre. Shepherd University. “Academic Etiquette.” http://www.shepherd.edu/cti/firstyearexperience/academic_etiquette.docx



Professionalism in the Classroom cont'd...

- **Do NOT PLAGARIZE!** Cheating is absolutely unacceptable, in any form. It is grounds for severe consequences, which can result in you being asked to not return to the college. Cheating is offensive and it can be perceived as you being too lazy to complete your own work.
- **Type all of your assignments and proofread!** In a college setting and beyond, it is expected that all submitted work will be typed and not handwritten, unless your instructor gives permission. Also, check for grammatical errors before you submit your work.
- **Eat outside of the classroom.** It is understood that classes can last a long time and students get hungry throughout the day. However, ask your instructor if it is acceptable to eat during class. If they allow it, **bring food that will not disturb the classroom, i.e. no loud wrappers, messy foods, or foods with offensive smells, such as fish.**

Professionalism in Other Academic Settings (anywhere on campus, outside the classroom)

- **Address faculty and staff appropriately.** This means use their appropriate title when speaking with them. If you know that your instructor has earned a Ph.D., address them as “Dr. XXX” (XXX=last name). Use the prefix of Mr. or Mrs./Ms. in other cases. Ultimately, if you are unsure of their title, ask them what they prefer to be called.
- **Think before you speak!** Make sure that what you say is appropriate, relevant, and to the point.
- **Be respectful!** Maintain an appropriate tone when speaking with faculty or staff. Remember, they are not your peers.
- **Do not engage with faculty or staff on social media!** Even if you think that your math instructor is absolutely the coolest person you’ve ever met, it is not appropriate to send them a “friend request” on Facebook. It is only acceptable to interact with faculty or staff on social media if they inform you that they are comfortable with it.
 - **If you have received permission to interact with your instructor/college staff via social media, it is still expected that you remain appropriate and professional.**
- **Don’t share personal details with your instructor or staff.** Only discuss your personal life if it is relevant. For example, a family member has died, which caused you to be absent from class.
- Lastly, know that there is plenty of support for you at college. **It is ok to expect help from others. But never expect for faculty or staff to do the work for you.**

If you have additional questions, feel free to call to speak with a STAR coach at 704-330-6754 or email star.success@cpcc.edu. Check out the rest of our tips sheets on our website <http://www.cpcc.edu/star>.

Menachem Wecker. U.S. News and World Report. “5 Guidelines for College Student-Professor Interactions.”

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