

CDO Statement on Ethics and Professionalism

We encourage you to explore opportunities in Boston and around the world and we are excited to work with you to make that happen. When you take on a job, internship, or a *pro bono* project you take on a responsibility to serve a client. Below we discuss a few key components of legal service: ethics and professionalism.

Ethical Issues: *Unauthorized Practice of Law; and Confidentiality*

It is important to be aware that ethical issues may arise in the context of any legal service you provide. As part of your law school curriculum you will take a class in professional responsibility. Without providing detail here, it is important to be mindful that you are not an attorney and that you cannot represent yourself as a lawyer or give legal advice.

In general, you should be careful in your interaction with clients and not engage in the *unauthorized practice of law*. While the definition of the unauthorized practice of law may vary depending on the jurisdiction, remember not to provide legal advice (e.g., applying the law to the facts of the client's case), but rather only convey legal information (e.g., the current status of a particular law) when speaking with clients. You should also communicate with clients only under the direction of an attorney supervisor.

Also, remember that any client matter is *confidential* and that this duty of confidentiality continues even when your service ends. Err on the side of caution and always communicate with your supervising attorney if you have questions about the scope of your role and responsibilities.

Professionalism: *Communication; Respect; and High Quality Work Product*

Communication: When you begin a project make sure you understand the assignment. Then, when working on a project update your supervising attorney on a regular basis. Ask questions and make sure you seek approval when necessary. Also, remember to keep track of your research and keep organized notes of any interaction with clients or others.

Respect: In the course of your work you will likely find yourself in places unfamiliar to you, such as a courthouse or a law office, or meet people with different backgrounds and experience, perhaps clients or judges. In all of these cases it is important to remain professional – dress appropriately, arrive on time, communicate your whereabouts, speak respectfully to judges, clients, administrative staff, attorneys and anyone else.

High Quality Work Product: In anything you do, you should produce the highest quality of work product. While you may or may not be getting paid, you may be handling critical life matters, such as housing and employment. Your work matters – clients are counting on you and your superior work product.

If you have any questions, please contact the CDO at lawcdo@bu.edu

Many thanks to Georgetown University Law Center and University of South Carolina School of Law for providing the general outline of this Statement