



Working World 101: *Life as a Boston University Student Worker*

Not “Just a Work-Study Job” – Accountability & Reliability

- ◆ Boston University relies heavily on and highly values its student workers. Your first priority, of course, is academics, but **while you are at work, you are expected to approach your job professionally and give 100%**. Just like any other job, your part-time student job requires a commitment.
- ◆ You are expected to be at your job when you are scheduled to work. Do your best to give your supervisor as much advance notice as possible when you know you are going to be absent or late. Ask your supervisor in advance about the “call-in” procedure.
- ★ **TIP:** At the beginning of each semester, take a look at your class syllabi and think about your schoolwork in relation to your work schedule. Let your supervisor know well in advance if you think you’ll need to take some time off when you have tests scheduled or papers/projects due.

Professionalism – Approach, Conduct & Appearance

- ◆ **Have a positive approach**
 - Your student job may not be the most exciting position, but it can still provide a good experience. Think of the benefits—gaining work experience, earning some money, and having schedule flexibility and the convenience of working on campus.
 - Your job(s) as a college student will form the foundation for your working life. Even if the job is not related to your major or career goals, it will help you to learn about the work world and acquire general work skills that may be useful to you when you graduate.
 - Be enthusiastic about learning new tasks and/or taking on additional responsibilities. View your job as an opportunity to learn new skills...you never know for sure what you will be doing after you graduate, and the skills you learn in your student job(s) may come in handy!
- ◆ **Be a “team player”**
 - Most departments at BU require people to work together effectively as a “team”; **as a student worker, you are part of your departmental team.**
 - In most cases, to perform your job, you’ll need to interact with other students and staff members. Establishing a positive rapport with other students as well as your supervisor and departmental staff will facilitate these interactions.

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Professionalism – Approach, Conduct & Appearance (continued)

- ◆ **Refrain from conducting “personal business” on the job**
 - “Personal business”—such as making personal phone calls, doing schoolwork, and browsing the Internet—tends to detract from your productivity while at work. Do not engage in personal business unless your supervisor gives you specific permission to do so.
- ◆ **Keep casual conversation to a minimum**
 - While it’s usually acceptable for you to talk with other students and/or departmental staff while working, keep in mind that your casual conversation can become distracting for you and/or others.
- ◆ **Dress appropriately for your department**
 - Not all departments have formalized dress codes, but most departments have standards of dress that even students need to abide by. If you are not sure about the expectations in your department, ask your supervisor for some guidelines.

Taking Initiative – Going the Extra Mile

- ◆ **Don’t do just the “bare minimum”...give 100%**
 - Supervisors count on you to produce high-quality work. You may be tired or feel stressed from school, but keep in mind that the work you do while at your student job reflects on you and your department as a whole.
- ◆ **Ask for more work**
 - When you complete a task, don’t assume there is nothing else to do. Always take the initiative and ask your supervisor if anything else needs to be done.

Communication – Developing a Productive Relationship with your Supervisor

- ◆ **Talk to your supervisor**
 - Establishing and maintaining **open lines of communication** with your supervisor will help you feel more comfortable on the job.
 - Talk to your supervisor if you are feeling overwhelmed by your academics; supervisors understand that academics are your first priority and are usually willing to decrease your hours should a situation like this occur.
 - Ask for feedback about your work performance and be receptive to constructive criticism. Keep in mind that student employment is a learning experience; you are not expected to be perfect.
- ◆ **Ask questions**
 - Don’t hesitate to ask questions when you’re not sure how to do something or how to respond to a question. In most cases, your supervisor would much rather have you ask questions than do a procedure incorrectly or give someone inaccurate information. Asking questions also helps you build a knowledge base, thus ultimately helping your department.