



# Career Services

## Austin Peay State University Student Employment

Congratulations on starting your new student employment job on campus!

Do you remember your first day at school? Well in many ways you're back there again. Even if you have worked with this department before, often, changes to processes will be made and you will have to learn new processes. By the end of week two, with piles of work landing on you apparently at random, from people who seem demanding and to expect you to just know what to do with it all, and the phone going all the time, you might feel yourself drowning as you wonder how you are ever going to handle all this, your class load, and still have time for social engagement with friends and campus organizations.

Opportunities of student employment are considered **high impact practices** which help you develop skills and qualifications you will need to land a job after graduation. They say you never get a second chance to make a first impression (actually if you think about it that's complete rubbish, you just have to make it on someone else, somewhere else), so this short guide is focused on making those crucial first impressions in those critical first few weeks at work. Think of it as a crash course on a few essentials intended to ensure you get off on the right foot in your first month or so.

### Key Behaviors – the Dos

There are a limited number of things you probably need to concentrate on in your first month or so as summarized below:

1. **Be there and be there on time** – one of the simplest steps you can take, but one which is entirely within your control and which is very visible and gets noticed, is to be punctual. Downstream in your career you may need to deal with the cultural problems of presenteeism but don't worry about this now.
  - At this stage of your career you want to be building social capital and this is one of the quickest first steps to doing so.
  - First impressions are hard to change, be willing to take initiative and get to know the team.
2. **Dress appropriately** – this could reasonably fit as part of giving a good impression but it's important that you and your appearance fit in with the organization's culture and values. All departments will have certain dress code policies (some relaxed and casual, some more professional that require business casual) and certain standards of professional dress code.
  - Ask about and Learn the expectations of the dress policy for the department or office.
  - Of course, dress can also vary depending on the role people have to fulfil or if the department or office has specific events that require different dress than a typical day. Again, ask in advance to see if there is an expectation of a different dress code for those days.



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3. **Listen and take notes** – quite simply **write** everything down. Your work is going to be overwhelming to start with and people will be telling you lots of different things, which you'll be expected to remember.
  - If you don't write it down, you won't remember. There'll just be too much to absorb too quickly.
  - So, write it down!
  - Get yourself a notebook and carry it with you everywhere you go at work. Use it to note down everything: work to do, names (and contact details), deadlines, ideas, everything. It's important to realize how much you are in learning mode in these early days and how much you are learning on the job... as well as, skills you are development that should be documenting on your resume.
  - Immediately this will help you keep yourself organized and avoid forgetting things that need doing, people you need to deal with and so on.
  
4. **Plan** – *a properly organized and prioritized To Do list is your best friend.*
  - It's the way you order and organize your world and turn the stream of work heading your way into something manageable. The truth is, if you don't plan, others will plan for you and you will simply end up reacting to and running around after their priorities, not yours.
  - To begin with you simply need to start daily planning for yourself.
  - For the moment, at the end of each day sit back for a moment and take the time to put together an outline plan of what's expected of you tomorrow.
  - In your notebook, you'll be keeping a schedule of all the dates when projects are due or expected so you can keep track of them and pull them into your To Do list for the next day.
  - As part of this process go through today's list to make sure you've done what you were supposed to do and to carry over anything that didn't get finished today into tomorrow's list.
  
5. **Work to make everyone else around you look good** – forget about yourself for the moment and instead work on the basis that your job is simply to make your boss (and your team of co-workers) look good.
  - So, try to think about what their goals are and how you can support them. Ask yourself:
    - o What does your boss want and why?
    - o And so, what you can do to help them so you become their team's go to person for getting things done.
  - Be proactive and always look for chances to help and be useful. This will make you stand out and in due course you'll start to be seen as indispensable.
  - If you focus on serving others what you are actually doing is investing in your social capital, while at the same time helping yourself to learn and develop. Do this throughout your career and it will pay back handsomely, believe me.
  - Don't be afraid to ask for help. Yes, as we've covered above you don't want to be bothering people for the same instruction time after time, but if you have a problem you can't solve or aren't sure you have the right answer for, then ask.



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6. **Seek feedback** – check in with your manager/supevisor on a regular basis to get their view on how you are doing. Your job is to make them look good, so don't you want to know if they feel you have?
  - Share your To Do list with them at the start of each day, is it covering everything they need or is there anything else they want? This helps you ensure you get off on the right track and shows them you are being proactive in planning your work.
  - Check in with them before you go home to ensure everything's been covered off that's needed today.
  - Show them your notes/completed work on a regular basis (that in itself is likely to impress them). Ask them whether they feel things have gone right and whether there's anything you could have done better?
  
7. **Participate** – your work is a social environment and to be successful you need to understand the culture and build relationships.
  - There is something to learn from each of the people around you, so dive on in and become part of the team.
  - Participate in department events, programming, birthday celebrations if invited, etc. if your schedule allows.

## The Don'ts

If those are the Dos, then there are also clearly some Don'ts that you want to avoid. Some of these are obviously the flip side of the Dos.

1. **Gossip/over confide** – neither your manager, nor your co-worker are your best friend (certainly not yet anyway).
  - So, don't gossip about what you think about other people in the workplace, who you like and who you don't, or over confide about issues at home.
  - All that's going to do is lead to trouble as it gets around the grapevine and you don't want to be seen to be a source of trouble, do you?
  
2. **Never forget you are now representing your organization** – your employer is hiring you and certain of your attributes to do a job.
  - Your private life is your private life and while it's up to you how you live it, it's not unreasonable for your employer to expect that what you make publicly available shouldn't bring the organization into disrepute.
  - This is an area where I'd expect quite a lot of potential conflict to arise in employer/employee relationships, particularly as social norms change. (How many years back would it have been when there could have been concerns about employees coming out as gay, for example?)
  - Never use foul language on the job.
  - Never physically or verbally assault an employee or visitor.
  - Never share confidential information.



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3. **Don't Use social media/gaming at work or complete homework** – your employer is likely to have the old-fashioned idea that they've actually hired you to work unless it's a part of your job functions.
- That's all personal stuff so keep it for personal time (apart from pirating stuff aka the theft of copyright material that someone has slaved over creating – just don't do that at all).
  - Do not work or complete homework or school work on the job unless approved.

## Remember, they hired you – that's important

- You have been hired. The organization which has employed you spent time, effort, and cold hard cash, often quite a lot of all three, in looking to find, interview, select and engage someone; and out of all the people who went into the find part of the process (and believe me, there's likely to have been a lot), they chose you.
- So always remember, they've not hired you for the fun of it, they've done so because they have work that needs doing (probably lots of it as you are possibly finding out) they have picked you to do it; and they (particularly the individuals involved in the recruiting process) are invested in you and you making a go of it.
- After all, having spent all that time, effort and money, don't you think the people who were involved in hiring you are going to want the process to be seen to be successful?
- If it goes well they've got bragging rights about what a good choice they made in you haven't they? But if you don't do well, or even leave, then that's a pain for them; not only might they look bad in front of their colleagues for having got it wrong, but the likelihood is they are going to have to go through the process all over again.

# Competencies for a Career-Ready Workforce



### Career & Self Development

Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.



### Communication

Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.



### Critical Thinking

Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.



### Equity & Inclusion

Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.



### Leadership

Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.



### Professionalism

Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.



### Teamwork

Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.



### Technology

Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.



## What Is Career Readiness?

Career readiness is a foundation from which to demonstrate requisite core competencies that broadly prepare the college educated for success in the workplace and lifelong career management.



## Career & Self-Development

Proactively develop oneself and one's career through continual personal and professional learning, awareness of one's strengths and weaknesses, navigation of career opportunities, and networking to build relationships within and without one's organization.

### Sample Behaviors

- Show an awareness of own strengths and areas for development.
- Identify areas for continual growth while pursuing and applying feedback.
- Develop plans and goals for one's future career.
- Professionally advocate for oneself and others.
- Display curiosity; seek out opportunities to learn.
- Assume duties or positions that will help one progress professionally.
- Establish, maintain, and/or leverage relationships with people who can help one professionally.
- Seek and embrace development opportunities.
- Voluntarily participate in further education, training, or other events to support one's career.



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CAREER & SELF-DEVELOPMENT



## Communication

**Clearly and effectively exchange information, ideas, facts, and perspectives with persons inside and outside of an organization.**

### **Sample Behaviors**

- Understand the importance of and demonstrate verbal, written, and non-verbal/body language, abilities.
- Employ active listening, persuasion, and influencing skills.
- Communicate in a clear and organized manner so that others can effectively understand.
- Frame communication with respect to diversity of learning styles, varied individual communication abilities, and cultural differences.
- Ask appropriate questions for specific information from supervisors, specialists, and others.
- Promptly inform relevant others when needing guidance with assigned tasks.

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## Critical Thinking

**Identify and respond to needs based upon an understanding of situational context and logical analysis of relevant information.**

### **Sample Behaviors**

- Make decisions and solve problems using sound, inclusive reasoning and judgment.
- Gather and analyze information from a diverse set of sources and individuals to fully understand a problem.
- Proactively anticipate needs and prioritize action steps.
- Accurately summarize and interpret data with an awareness of personal biases that may impact outcomes.
- Effectively communicate actions and rationale, recognizing the diverse perspectives and lived experiences of stakeholders.
- Multi-task well in a fast-paced environment.



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CRITICAL  
THINKING





## Equity & Inclusion

**Demonstrate the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism.**

### **Sample Behaviors**

- Solicit and use feedback from multiple cultural perspectives to make inclusive and equity-minded decisions.
- Actively contribute to inclusive and equitable practices that influence individual and systemic change.
- Advocate for inclusion, equitable practices, justice, and empowerment for historically marginalized communities.
- Seek global cross-cultural interactions and experiences that enhance one's understanding of people from different demographic groups and that leads to personal growth.
- Keep an open mind to diverse ideas and new ways of thinking.
- Identify resources and eliminate barriers resulting from individual and systemic racism, inequities, and biases.
- Demonstrate flexibility by adapting to diverse environments.
- Address systems of privilege that limit opportunities for members of historically marginalized communities.

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## Leadership

**Recognize and capitalize on personal and team strengths to achieve organizational goals.**

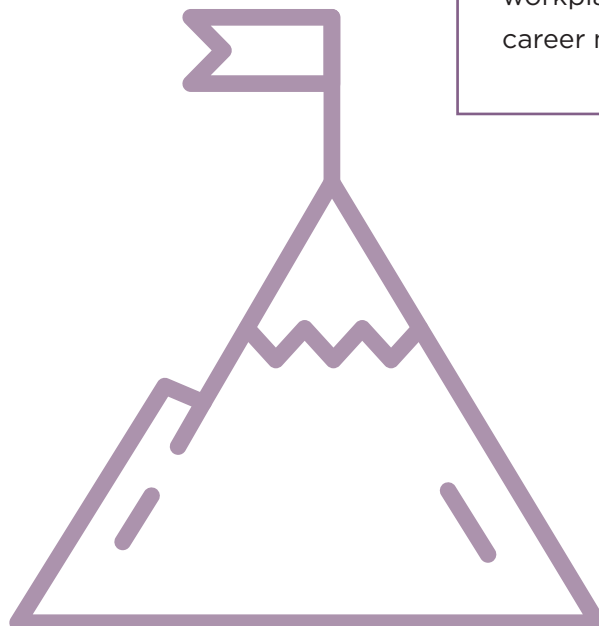
### **Sample Behaviors**

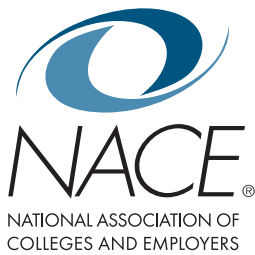
- Inspire, persuade, and motivate self and others under a shared vision.
- Seek out and leverage diverse resources and feedback from others to inform direction.
- Use innovative thinking to go beyond traditional methods.
- Serve as a role model to others by approaching tasks with confidence and a positive attitude.
- Motivate and inspire others by encouraging them and by building mutual trust.
- Plan, initiate, manage, complete, and evaluate projects.



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## Professionalism

**Knowing work environments differ greatly, understand and demonstrate effective work habits, and act in the interest of the larger community and workplace.**

### **Sample Behaviors**

- Act equitably with integrity and accountability to self, others, and the organization.
- Maintain a positive personal brand in alignment with organization and personal career values.
- Be present and prepared.
- Demonstrate dependability (e.g., report consistently for work or meetings).
- Prioritize and complete tasks to accomplish organizational goals.
- Consistently meet or exceed goals and expectations.
- Have an attention to detail, resulting in few if any errors in their work.
- Show a high level of dedication toward doing a good job.

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## Teamwork

**Build and maintain collaborative relationships to work effectively toward common goals, while appreciating diverse viewpoints and shared responsibilities.**

### **Sample Behaviors**

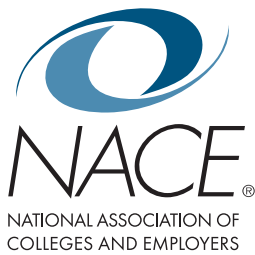
- Listen carefully to others, taking time to understand and ask appropriate questions without interrupting.
- Effectively manage conflict, interact with and respect diverse personalities, and meet ambiguity with resilience.
- Be accountable for individual and team responsibilities and deliverables.
- Employ personal strengths, knowledge, and talents to complement those of others.
- Exercise the ability to compromise and be agile.
- Collaborate with others to achieve common goals.
- Build strong, positive working relationships with supervisor and team members/coworkers.



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# TEAMWORK



## Technology

**Understand and leverage technologies ethically to enhance efficiencies, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.**

### **Sample Behaviors**

- Navigate change and be open to learning new technologies.
- Use technology to improve efficiency and productivity of their work.
- Identify appropriate technology for completing specific tasks.
- Manage technology to integrate information to support relevant, effective, and timely decision-making.
- Quickly adapt to new or unfamiliar technologies.
- Manipulate information, construct ideas, and use technology to achieve strategic goals.

## **What Is Career Readiness?**

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TECHNOLOGY



## **APSU Student Employment Learning Outcomes**

In an effort to professionalize and help students develop/enhance soft skills, APSU Career Services has created Learning Outcomes to foster meaningful work and to help develop the next generation of APSU professionals. Students who participate in Student Employment at APSU will be able to:

### **1. EXHIBIT EXEMPLARY COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE BY:**

- Responding with tact, diplomacy, and composure when dealing with others.
- Keeping others adequately informed.
- Exhibiting good listening skills and paying close attention, in what others are saying, and expressing interest.
- Conveying information in both verbal and written formats as appropriate for the needs of the target audience.

### **2. DISPLAY PROFESSIONALISM IN THE WORKPLACE BY:**

- Demonstrating commitment to safety in the workplace.
- Managing time effectively, committing to work schedules, and remaining at work as needed.
- Exceeding expectations when it comes to quality, volume of work, and meeting deadlines.
- Understanding the value of hard work and being an active member of a team striving for a common goal.

### **3. SHOW INTERPERSONAL AND TEAMWORK SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE BY:**

- Cooperating with others toward the achievement of common goals.
- Developing rapport with others to form positive working relationships.
- Actively contributing to and participating in team initiatives and being a positive influence for others.
- Consistently displaying exceptional enthusiasm in working with others and in their work.

### **4. PRACTICE LEADERSHIP AND INITIATIVE SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE BY:**

- Actively seeking various resources to complete a task, and providing excellent customer service.
- Anticipating needs and demands and taking appropriate action.
- Preventing issues from arising by working to solve them before they escalate.
- Being receptive to taking on additional tasks, learning new skills, and willing to take it to the next level.



**5. DEVELOP VALUES OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND INTEGRITY BY:**

- Exhibiting pride as a member of the APSU student body.
- Carrying out responsibilities accurately, organizing work and duties in a professional, conscientious, and timely manner.
- Conscientiously avoiding conflicts between their private interests and their university responsibilities, with respect to the use of confidential information, financial transactions, and personal relationships.
- Evaluating personal performances and remaining open to constructive criticisms and improvement opportunities and tasks.

**6. DEMONSTRATE CRITICAL THINKING AND COGNITIVE REASONING ABILITY BY:**

- Carrying out assignments proficiently and accurately with little direction.
- Identifying and adapting behaviors based on understood information and experiences to various situations or settings.
- Demonstrating the ability to obtain and analyze facts, consider related impacts, and arrive at sound conclusions.
- Functioning autonomously.

**7. DEMONSTRATE EQUITY AND INCLUSION SKILLS BY:**

- Working collaboratively with others, even with those different from themselves.
- Facilitating inclusive interactions, the exchange of ideas, and forging relationships.
- Treating others with respect, being sensitive to others' situation and circumstances, and being open to alternative viewpoints.
- Understanding human motivation and managing conflict with tact and diplomacy.

**8. DEMONSTRATE CAREER AND SELF-DEVELOPMENT SKILLS BY:**

- Working in a complex environment and completing tasks within regulation and compliance criterion.
- Articulating team goals and expectations to team members or peers and motivating them to achieve their best.
- Effectively communicating your skill sets that match the job field you are interested in working in after graduation.
- Developing a plan of action for developing needed skills, internships/co-ops that are necessary for your transition from academia to the world of work and working with your supervisor to enhance those skills and experiences on the job.

**9. EXHIBIT TECHNOLOGY SKILLS BY:**

- Selecting and operating appropriate technology to accomplish tasks.
- Solving problems using computer or mobile-based skills and software.
- Utilizing online/computer-based tutorials and trainings to increase professional development and job proficiency.
- Instructing internal and external audiences to operate commonly-used technologies and online systems.



## **NACE Career Competencies Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment for Student Employees**

All first-year General Campus Student Employees will be required to complete a Career Readiness Competencies Pre-Assessment and Post-Assessment based on the information outlined in this packet.

The **Pre-Assessment** will allow you to rate yourself in terms of competency level in each Career Readiness area, and then establish a goal to further develop each competency throughout the year. You are encouraged to develop goals that you can work on achieving as part of your Student Employment experience, but these goals can also be achieved in the classroom, through clubs and organizations, projects and presentations, other employment, etc. Please complete the Pre-Assessment within your first month on the job.

The **Post-Assessment** will allow you to rate yourself in terms of competency level in each Career Readiness area, as well as describe the progress you made in achieving your goal for each competency throughout the year. You will be also asked to explain how you applied each Career Competency in your student employment experience. We encourage you to use these statements to update your resume and incorporate into your interview responses when applying for future positions. After completing the Post-Assessment, you will be required to schedule a meeting with your Student Employment supervisor. Your supervisor will discuss your progression with each competency level throughout the year and give you any feedback for future improvement. Please complete the Post-Assessment one month prior to the end of your student employment position, or by April 15 if you plan to continue working in the same position during the summer or the next academic year.

### **How to Complete Assessments**

Both assessments are available to complete digitally in your Jobs4Gobs account. Find linked within your **Student Employment** pathway under **Resources > Pathways** on your Jobs4Gobs homepage. If you cannot access your pathway, please contact Megan Simpson with Career Services at 931-221-6543 or [simpsonm@apsu.edu](mailto:simpsonm@apsu.edu).