

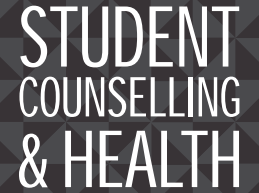
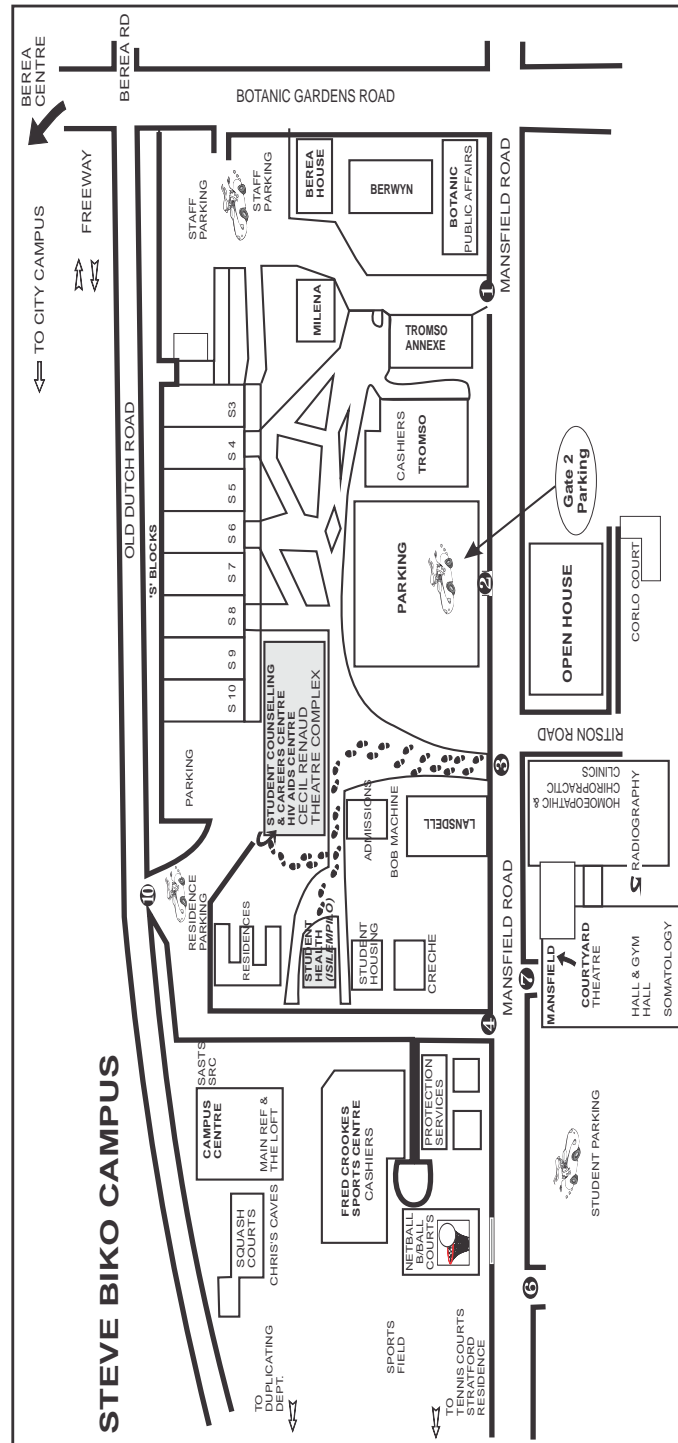
Things to remember:

- Professionals are people-oriented and task-driven. They have a high level of personal responsibility and respect for other people.
- Your behaviour and manners are constantly under scrutiny. Conduct yourself professionally in all circumstances.
- The secret of success is passion. In your passion you demonstrate your work ethics, determination and pride.
- If you have high ambitions of service to people, you will be honoured as an outstanding person and a great professional.

This is an initiative of the
Student Counselling and Health Department
Durban University of Technology
Lower Library Complex
Steve Biko Campus

Tel: 031 373 2266

Developed by
Mr Gideon Biyane
Psychologist



Professionalism in the Workplace



Professionalism in the Workplace

Professionalism refers to the behaviour that will enhance your performance and image at work. It is about doing your best and going the extra mile. Professionalism can turn a good employee into a great employee, because it means wanting to do your job very well.

Elements that create professionalism in the working environment include:

- **proper dress:** dress codes differ from place to place, but in general dressing professionally means dressing conservatively, formal attire. One should always wear clean shoes as well as clean pressed clothing.
- **smart personal appearance:** proper grooming is very important in the workplace. A neat clean personal appearance is essential.
- **communication:** this is essential for the effective operation of an organization. It may be verbal or nonverbal and includes: spoken, written and visual elements.
- **proper etiquette:** treating others with professional courtesy, respect and kindness is essential for success in the workplace.
- **smiling:** this definitely helps, so long as it is genuine.

Winning characteristics of professionalism

Here are a few essential characteristics of successful professionals:

- ✓ take pride in their work

- ✓ show personal commitment
- ✓ show initiative
- ✓ do whatever it takes to get the job done
- ✓ are always looking for ways to make things easier for others
- ✓ eager to learn and take on new challenges
- ✓ listen to the needs of others
- ✓ are team players
- ✓ can be trusted with confidentiality issues
- ✓ are honest, trustworthy and loyal
- ✓ are open to constructive critique on how to improve
- ✓ are accurate.

Unprofessional Behaviour

Unprofessional behaviour could refer to any behaviour that has a negative impact on the workplace, the services that are being offered, the functioning of the workplace and the attitudes of the employees as well as the client. The following could be seen as unprofessional:

- ✗ poor work quality
- ✗ poor telephone etiquette
- ✗ gossiping
- ✗ not following instructions
- ✗ disrespect for superiors
- ✗ stealing and dishonesty
- ✗ undependability
- ✗ late coming
- ✗ lying
- ✗ poor personal grooming
- ✗ being rude to the clients
- ✗ aggressiveness/ inappropriate behaviour
- ✗ not giving clients all the necessary information

Expectations of Employers

It is always important to remember that once you have been employed, your employer has certain expectations of you and they include:

- ✓ Interpersonal skills
 - *ability to relate to others*
 - *presentation skills and appearance*
- ✓ Self confidence
 - *know your positive traits*
 - *deal effectively with people*
 - *be assertive in unfamiliar situations*
- ✓ Good communication skills
 - *having the ability to organise your thoughts*
 - *being able to express your ideas clearly*
- ✓ Problem-solving skills
- ✓ Willingness to learn
- ✓ Taking the initiative and not waiting to be told what to do
- ✓ Making use of your imagination and being resourceful
- ✓ Being creative
- ✓ Being able to adapt to change
- ✓ Making use of good judgement in difficult situations
- ✓ Being responsible
- ✓ Being enthusiastic
- ✓ Good time management skills
- ✓ Complete tasks on time
- ✓ Good planning and organizing abilities
- ✓ Being able to work in a team
- ✓ Help even though it may not be in your job description
- ✓ Ability to give direct and clear guidelines to others
- ✓ Ability to motivate others
- ✓ Ability to handle conflict and pressure