

Student Employment Services
First Footings for Supervisors of Students

Welcome to the
First Footings
For
Supervisors of Students

Student Employment Services

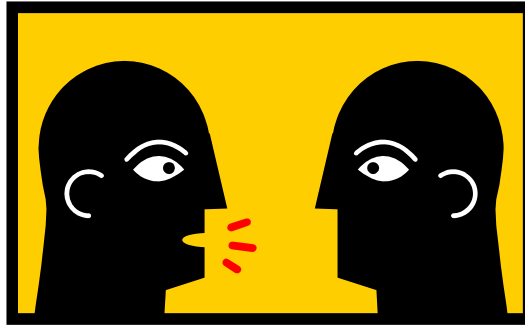
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Research shows that communicating expectations and instructions to new workers can sometimes be a tricky business. Making assumptions about a new student employee's work ethic and experience is to head down a path of misunderstanding and disappointment.



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New student employees want and expect specific information *up front* about their jobs to be communicated to them by their managers and supervisors. They want expectations clearly defined with the nuts and bolts of their job clearly explained. Most of all, they want you to be honest with them about every aspect of their employment.

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As a supervisor you also have expectations. You need reliable, knowledgeable employees. When new employees come through your door, you expect them to possess a rudimentary idea of what having a real job entails. You can lay a foundation for helping a young employee develop a work ethic by keeping a few fundamentals in mind.

Here is a plan to help start you out on the right foot...

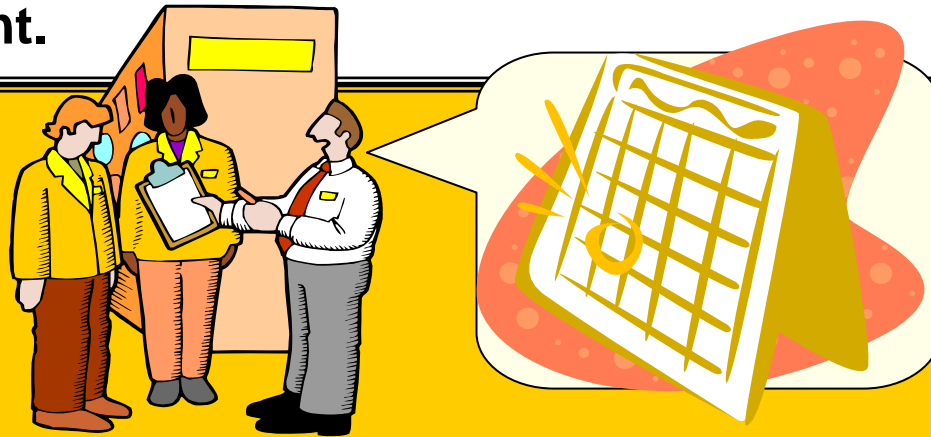
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GET THE BASICS WORKED OUT EARLY

Let the student employee know who his/her supervisor(s) is. This seems obvious, but you might be surprised how often it is overlooked. The new student employee wants a *go-to* person. Make sure there is always someone available to answer questions about their job.

Also, agree upon vacation periods and other time off in advance. How early do you need requests for time off? Do you expect your student employees to work over school breaks? The list of these kinds of questions may be long, but be diligent and work them out up front.



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EXPLAIN THE JOB

This takes time, but the survey results are unequivocal: If you do not give student employees a thorough introduction to the details of their jobs, the student employee is much more likely to do unsatisfactory work, feel inadequate, isolated, and defensive. Get off to a good start: Explain the job description from start to finish.



TIP:

When training, do not let the student's bored, know-it-all expression fool you. You still need to explain the job thoroughly.

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Dispel your Student Employee's notion of peon work.

Explain to your student employee that there is no such thing as menial work. All work is vital work. Ask them if they would want to eat off of a dirty plate at lunch, walk across a wet yard of uncut grass just before an interview, or have personal information about them circulating because someone left private documents laying around for everyone to see.

Show your student employee that their place in the organization is important. When students see the real role they play in the big picture of your organization, they will understand their job is real and vital!

TIP:

Have your employee say out loud, "I am an integral part of this office!" It is a good start.



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EXPLAIN THE NEGATIVES

Just because there is no such thing as peon work does not mean there are not negative aspects to a job. Some jobs are strenuous, dirty, and monotonous. Let the student employees know up front that this is the case. If you do not, they may feel that you have misled them or are treating them condescendingly.

Young people have a hypocrisy radar the size of the moon. They know when a bad job is being sloughed off on them and they resent it. However, they will accept that you are asking them to do things that you do not necessarily want to do yourself, as long as they know ahead of time that you have that expectation and that you value their help.



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SAY, “REMEMBER IT!”

Tell the new student employee that it is their responsibility to retain the training you are giving them. Say specifically while training, “I expect you to retain the training I am giving you. It is part of your job to **remember it**. Ask questions, take notes, or use whatever method it is that you can best learn by.”

We cannot emphasize enough how important it is to say this to your student employee. If you do not say it, you may be in for a learning experience yourself. Student employees are wonderful people and most often are great workers, but sometimes their work ethic is less than what we would expect. That is why you need to be specific.



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FOLLOW UP

In many ways this is the most important element to a successful start. Follow up with your student employee.

**Do they have questions? Do they have ideas? Do they need further training?
DON'T JUST ASK! OBSERVE!**

Is their work done to your satisfaction? Only you can answer that question. Everyone wants to do a good job. Sometimes student employees may say they know how to do a job even if they do not. This may be because they have a lot of confidence or because they lack confidence and do not really know how or when to ask for help. You will need to follow up for your own peace of mind. The student employee will appreciate it.



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**DO NOT BE AN AVOIDER
OF THE AWKWARD MOMENT**

Awkward moments are generally viewed negatively. Better, perhaps to think of them as necessities because like death and taxes, awkward moments will come. Here is a list of possibilities that can lead to “the awkward moment.”



The *Student Employee*...

- ~Doesn't do tasks in the correct order
- ~Frequently calls in ill
- ~Doesn't do his/her assigned tasks
- ~Doesn't make good eye contact
- ~Frequently shows up late
- ~Mumbles
- ~Appears inappropriately dressed
- ~Has frequent visitors/phone calls

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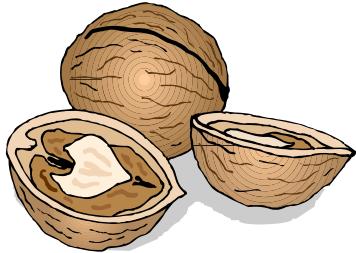
***DO NOT BE AN AVOIDER
OF THE AWKWARD MOMENT***

It is awkward to tell someone generally doing a good job for you that they will have to learn their job more thoroughly, that they will have to dress appropriately, or that tardiness and/or absence will not be tolerated. It is hard to say these things especially to good people (who may have personal issues), but there is no choice if you want to have a successful employer-student employee relationship.

Many things - the culture, the times, the tilt of the earth – can be blamed for lack of work ethic we see these days, but avoidance is the real reason that the supervisor-student employee relationship did not work out. Look at the awkward moment as an opportunity.

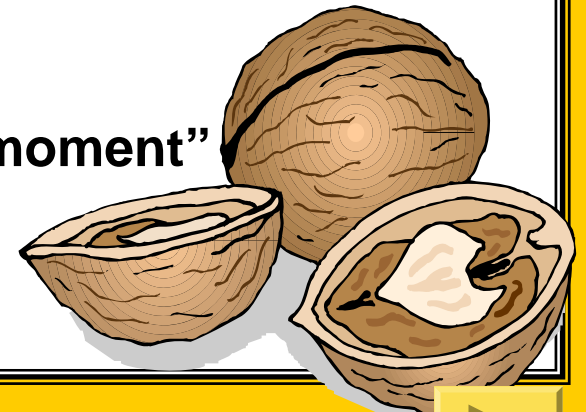
Generally, one of two things will occur: 1) You will resolve the problem or 2) the student employee and supervisor may decide to part company. This last option is undesirable of course, but is also unlikely if you clarify your expectations early.

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IN A NUTSHELL:

- Work out the basics
- Explain the job thoroughly
- Dispel the notion of menial peon work
- Explain the negatives
- Say, “Remember it”
- Follow up
- Do not avoid the “awkward moment”



[To the website:](#)

