

XI. PROFESSIONALISM

The following quote is from a National Association for Law Placement publication: "Lawyers as a profession are held to the highest moral and ethical standards. Those standards take effect **as soon as you enter law school** and should influence your behavior both in the classroom and in daily life."

Professionalism encompasses a number of topics. More generally, it refers to regulating your behavior, to thinking beyond your own needs to the impact of your actions. Specifically, when we talk about professionalism, we are talking about things such as the reputation you build. As a soon-to-be member of a profession, you need to be conscious of the fact that your behavior as a law student can impact your professional reputation and your career options. It is important to remember that you, your classmates, and other students here at the law school will soon be practicing attorneys. You need to begin now to establish a reputation for honesty and integrity. How do you do that?

- Avoid gossiping.
- Be respectful of others ideas.
- Do not use profanity or make derogatory remarks.
- Keep promises and commitments.
- Guard confidentiality. (Don't discuss work in public places, such as on the subway.)
- Exhibit good time management skills.

Professionalism is also very relevant to your job search.

- Do not misrepresent or falsify credentials.
- Adhere to guidelines in accepting and declining offers. This relates to the need to respond to and communicate with others. In the job search this applies to recruiters. This same rule will apply to clients when you begin to practice.