**UNM CONTINUING EDUCATION PARALEGAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

**STUDENT CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**Current as of January 2015

**INTRODUCTION**

By engaging in an experiential learning project as part of your education at UNM Continuing Education, you will be navigating the complexities of two worlds: an outside partner site and a classroom. You will no doubt bring beliefs and ideas from your own life experience to the mix as well. This **Code of Professional Conduct** can help you manage this confluence of circumstances and support you in presenting yourself as a competent, dependable individual who is aware of and practices standards of professional etiquette. Your instructor is always available to assist you as well and should be viewed as a resource if questions arise.

Note: While your assignment may challenge some of your beliefs and opinions, it should not violate any of your personal, religious, or political convictions. If you have concerns in this area, speak with your instructor.

**CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

1. If required by your internship site, report any criminal background to your internship site supervisor and your internship coordinator at the start of the internship.
2. You are expected to observe and adhere to the professional protocols of the internship site. Those protocols may not be immediately evident – don’t make assumptions about what is acceptable and what isn’t. Observe the behaviors of staff at the site, review any policy documents that are made available to you, and ask if you aren’t sure. Assume that you may not do something unless you are specifically told you can.
3. Be honest and “above board” in your relationships with your colleagues at the internship site and in the classroom. Act ethically. If you encounter what you feel is a lapse in ethical behavior at the internship site, speak with your internship site supervisor immediately.
4. Professional attire and proper grooming are good ways to demonstrate your own management of self.
5. The internship site is depending on you to manage your time correctly. Be prompt in everything you do – in responding to requests, in arriving on time, and in meeting deadlines. Always stay for the expected duration of your onsite time unless your supervisor says otherwise.
6. Value the opportunity to work with people of varying backgrounds, often in collaboration. Appreciate and use their areas of expertise to build your own knowledge and skills. Help them do likewise by willingly sharing yours.
7. Communicate clearly. Listen carefully and thoughtfully and seek to understand. Ask questions to clarify a point and ensure that you understand what is being said. If disagreements arise, be respectful in your approach to resolving them.
8. Answer inquiries with the best information you have, quickly, and with attention to accuracy. Unresponsiveness can be mistaken for a lack of interest. When you don’t know an answer, seek the information and respond rapidly.
9. Ask for permission from the internship site and your supervisor before bringing anyone to the site, including children and pets -- and do so infrequently.
10. Inquire first before using electronic media (including laptops, cellphones, cameras, etc.). Some internship sites have privacy policies that do not permit the use of these devices. Further, always respect the confidentiality and privacy of the partner site and its clients. Violations could have serious consequences. Ask before you discuss your experiences with people outside the organization or post any information on a social media site.
11. Focus your attention on the people at the internship site. Distractions (including personal phone calls and e-mails) are unwelcome, except in emergencies.
12. Maintain a professional stature in your interactions at all time. Limit personal conversations to socially-acceptable occasions and topics (discussions about the weather, weekend plans, etc.) Never gossip, speak poorly of another individual, or use profanity. You should usually avoid topics that can engender strong emotions, such as religion or politics – though the tolerance for these discussions will vary depending on the partner site. If your supervisor or other colleagues raises these topics, see in that an opportunity to practice moderation and discretion.
13. Adopt a problem-solving approach to your work: strive to understand and seek solutions for the challenges that will surely arise.
14. Be accountable for your actions. When you make a mistake, as we all do, admit it, then act to correct it. Admitting mistakes, rather than trying to cover them up, will help you earn the trust of your colleagues.
15. While your partner site colleagues and fellow students can become important parts of your network and possibly introduce you to professional opportunities, be careful that you do not exert undue influence for personal gain. UNM Continuing Education is not a placement service, and your partner site is under no obligation to offer you a position or to help you find one elsewhere. If they are able to assist you, thank them.
16. Track your progress, follow-up on ideas and projects, and get them completed.
17. Celebrate your successes while giving credit to the others who helped you accomplish your goals.