Professionalism

What do we mean by professionalism?

Professionalism is a challenging concept to understand. Let's explore it together.

We want you to think about it now… it can help you grow in your chosen career. Professionalism could be related to the level of competence, knowledge or skill in a particular field. For example, you would expect a professional footballer to be competent at playing football, or a teacher to be competent at delivering teaching to students.

But don't worry, competence and confidence is something you will develop over time. When you finish your course the learning will start again.

As students you will be working towards:

- Building knowledge and skills in your subject
- Achieving your goals; completing your qualification
- Developing your portfolio of evidence and personal development plan
- Becoming a professional in what you want to do

Professionalism includes personal qualities and behaviours. For example:

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Trustworthiness
- Politeness and respect – both in university and the workplace
- Try to do the right thing

As professionals, we should look out for each other and find ways to work together. Teamwork is an important part of professionalism.

This is not always easy especially if others are not respectful to you, but remember it's important to do the right thing. We should look after each other and be kind.

Being reliable allows others to depend on you to get the job done:
- Try to arrive at your lecture or complete work set on time
- Make a valuable contribution to lectures

We prepare you for working life by setting assessments and deadlines. This is to help you become more reliable.

When you finish your course and get a job you will need to arrive on time. Things will now be different when you are in employment. There may be consequences at work if you are consistently unreliable.

Professional accountability is an important part of professionalism and can include:
- Being responsible
- Competence and confidence in knowledge and skills
- Accepting ownership and consequences if things do not quite work out
- Regulation by a governing body

People who care about their work will be honest when things go wrong and make sure they own up or put things right. Be open and honest and own up if you make a mistake.

Some examples of professional regulation might be:
- Doctors are regulated by the General Medical Council and are accountable for the way they treat us as patients.
- Solicitors are regulated by the Solicitors Regulation Authority to support and guide the public with legal matters of concern.

Professional image is important to being professional. This might be different for your chosen career.

Looking the part can help you feel more confident and show others you take your job seriously. You should be clean, smart and dress appropriately. It may involve wearing a uniform with pride. Nurses could be an example of this, there is an expectation of how they should wear a uniform to look professional.

Finally, professionalism SHOULD include the following:

- Competence, skills and knowledge
- Honesty and Integrity
- Effective communication
- Confidence
- Avoiding conflict
- Being respectful
- Being polite
- Reliability – be on time & complete work on time
- Accountability – stand up for your actions, own up if it goes wrong
- Professional image – look smart, dress appropriately

True professionals embrace every opportunity to grow and develop, they care about what they do and want others to grow with them.

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