

## **Supervising**

Think of a supervisor you admired. What impressed you most? Did you feel mutual respect? What can you do to integrate that supervisor's strengths into your own leadership style?

To build credibility as a supervisor, treat people fairly and consistently, and treat your staff with the same respect with which you would like to be treated. You should avoid gossip, and form impressions of employees based on your own experience rather than on rumors.

### **Responsibilities**

1. During a job interview, it is essential to clearly explain job responsibilities, performance expectations, pay rate, and work schedules associated with the position.
2. Once hired, provide the appropriate training and workspace for each student employee.
3. Remove the job posting from Handshake when it is filled and notify all applicants.

### **Department Expectations**

Each department should have clear standard guidelines and procedures for their student employees to follow. Here are some areas that should be included:

#### **1. Customer Service**

When addressing the public, whether on the phone or in person, it is of utmost importance for the employee to be friendly, kind and helpful. Student employees are extremely valuable ambassadors for the University. It is critical that all customers (students, prospective students and families, staff, faculty, or off campus constituents) are treated with respect and grace.

#### **2. Personal Appearance**

Although there is no set dress code for most campus positions, students are expected to dress neatly and appropriately in their role as a student employee. Student employees should avoid wearing tank or crop tops, tattered or ripped clothing, or sweat pants, and must wear shoes at all times. Clothing that could potentially interfere with their work or be distracting or offensive to others is not permitted. Departments may require different clothing rules based on their interaction with the public and the type of work that is performed. At all times, student employees must present themselves in a way compatible with the mission of Carnegie Mellon.

#### **3. Telephone Use and Personal Visitors**

In most departments, students are not permitted to receive or make personal phone calls while at work, except in the case of an emergency. When meeting friends or family at the work place, student

employees should be encouraged to arrange to meet them in the lobby or outside of the work area. Most departments have limited space and are open to the public, so it can be very distracting to other staff members if personal discussions are taking place. All visiting (on the phone or in person) should take place during scheduled breaks or lunch periods. This also applies to student employees visiting with each other within the confines of an office. Supervisors should provide guidance regarding times when visiting with other employees is appropriate.

#### **4. Computer Use**

Many students may receive email messages that are directly related to their work. While it is appropriate to read and respond to work-related email, it may not be appropriate to read or respond to personal email while at work. It may also not be appropriate to surf the Internet or use work computers for personal reasons. Make sure to discuss your rules on this issue with your students.

#### **5. Work Area Expectations**

Departments may have specific work spaces set aside for student employees or may have students share space and equipment with other staff. In either case, it is important that student employees are considerate of others and keep the work area clean and presentable. Supervisors should discuss specific expectations with student employees.

#### **Performance Evaluation**

A work performance evaluation is an effective means of ensuring communication between the student employee and supervisor. If you choose to conduct performance appraisals, all students should receive them. The Student Employee Appraisal Review Form is available in the Student Employment website. Both the student and the supervisor should discuss the evaluation results and formulate goals for the future.

#### **Addressing Work Performance Problems**

Addressing work performance problems is one of a supervisor's most difficult and stressful responsibilities. The following guidelines may help you deal with such situations:

- Plan ahead what to say. Focus on the gap between expectations and performance.
- Talk about the problem in concrete terms and don't use subjective judgments.
- To improve the performance, develop specific strategies. Stay away from generalities about overall needed improvement.
- Give feedback, especially negative feedback, in private, and make sure there are no interruptions when you are meeting.
- Ask the employee what ideas he/she has for improving performance.
- Prepare your suggestions for improvement in advance and develop a plan of action.

## Motivating Student Employees

One of the most effective ways to enhance your experience as a supervisor is to be able motivate your student employees to want to be great performers in the workplace. Here are some tips to help you:

- Strive to be a considerate and supportive supervisor.
- Express appreciation and listen to students' opinions and input.
- Nominate your student for the Student Employee of the Year Recognition Program.
- Provide adequate space, tools, and guidance to help student employees succeed.
- Allow controlled use of available conveniences (copier, fax, phone, etc.) by student employees.
- Include student employees in department celebrations.
- Give special recognition to those students graduating.
- Start an award recognition program. Buy low cost, blank certificates and create special awards such as Employee of the Month/Week, Great Idea Award, Gotcha Award (for when you catch a student in the act of doing something great).
- Attend the Student Employee Appreciation Lunch sponsored by the Career and Professional Development Center.

*For more ideas on motivating student employees, contact Pati Kravetz, Associate Director for Experiential Learning and Student Employment, at [pk13@andrew.cmu.edu](mailto:pk13@andrew.cmu.edu)*