

# The Do's and Don'ts of Up and Coming Professionals

Survey of leaders in international education

Do:

Dedication, Integrity, and Enthusiasm (25)

Be open to new ideas/actively contribute (13)

Offer new ideas/fresh perspectives (10)

Show a Positive Attitude (9)

Get additional experience -volunteer, present, etc. (9)

Professional Image (6)

Preparation (5)

Ask Questions (3)



6. Seek out the advice of more experienced professionals in making judgment calls
7. Been tolerant and receptive to learning about others (cultures, etc)
8. A willingness to learn new skills.
9. Willingness to ask questions and learn at conferences.
10. Expressing a genuine interest in other cultures and caring about the individual before them without being limited by the filter of recent history or stereotypes.
11. Reaching out to colleagues to talk through confusing issues, no matter how "basic" it may seem. Asking for advice shows thoughtfulness and caring - and shows self-reflection.
12. Seek out a variety of opportunities to observe and learn more about the diversity within the IE profession.
13. Engage in dialogue when they have ideas/contributions while also actively listening to the contributions of others.

#### Offered New Ideas – 10

1. Tell me things about the field I don't know (offer fresh perspectives)
2. Find new avenues of communication with students.
3. Create new models for international student cross-cultural exchange.
4. Create interactive learning opportunities, including teaching regulations.
5. Educate staff and faculty about different cultures and learning styles
6. Thinking creatively and offering suggestions to make our office more effective, provide better service, or in some way enhance what we do.
7. Bringing suggestions that have been thought through, such as developing an idea into a proposal that answers the questions: Why should we do this/what will it do for whom? What will be required/what might it cost? What are potential negative consequences (best and worst-case scenarios)? How will we know whether we're succeeding? How might we begin to implement it?
8. Volunteering to review, reimagine, and improve internal ISSS office processes.
9. Sharing of knowledge and resources
10. Engage in dialogue when they have ideas/contributions while also actively listening to the contributions of others.

#### Showed Positive Attitude – 9

1. Smile. Be positive and offer to help or volunteer---you will be surprised where/what it can lead to.
2. Be positive!
3. They are compassionate and empathetic.
4. Exhibiting a positive attitude toward international education and the acceptance of new students from around the world
5. They bring a positive and less jaded attitude to the table. They seem more willing to work with government agencies with less frustration and impatience.
6. open and friendly demeanor
7. overall positive attitude about their work and life
8. Collegiality
9. Be kind, warm and understanding of those who you are advising

#### Additional International Education Experience (Volunteer or Professional) – 9

1. Been involved in professional activities
2. Offered posters or sessions at regional and annual conferences
3. Taken full advantage of opportunities for networking and better understanding the field at conferences

4. Involvement in state-level international education organizations.
5. Get involved early at a local level (take initiative)
6. Becoming involved in the immigration and international education discourse on a level higher than the local campus.
7. Participating in professional development activities
8. Participation in professional meetings and professional development opportunities - no matter how small or big. I'm always impressed with new (and prospective) professionals who challenge themselves to present (or co-present) about any aspect of the work they do (or want to do). There's always something new to be learned, and new professionals have something to share -- even if they don't realize it at first. Participation requires collaboration, and collaboration is how we network.
9. Volunteering in the field - volunteering at a regional or annual conference is a great way to learn about the field

#### Professional Image – 6

1. Write well and speak articulately.
2. They are organized.
3. Introduced themselves confidently and professionally and told me what they were looking to accomplish
4. Demonstrated intelligence (new professionals are capable of learning and continually improving themselves and their work product)
5. Professional demeanor and dress.
6. Behave professionally and be courteous. Manners count

#### Came Prepared – 5

1. Be prepared. Do your research ahead of time so you can showcase your knowledge
2. Been able to speak intelligently about the field
3. Shown evidence of having done some research on the field and best practices independently.
4. Demonstrated an awareness of global affairs and have the capacity to discuss how our work may influence or be impacted but world events.
5. Done research on my office and myself before applying for positions - this shows up in cover letters, etc.

#### Additional NAFSA Experience – 5

1. Attended NAFSA conference (both regional and national)
2. Applied for a NAFSA leadership position
3. Presented a NAFSA session
4. involved in the field (NAFSA leadership positions)
5. Participation in state and regional programming and volunteer opportunities, and the NAFSA Academy.

#### Asked Questions – 3

1. Asking questions.
2. Asked informed questions
3. Ask questions - we are always learning and this is especially true of new practitioners.

#### Other – 19



10. Acting with an absent mindedness of the common humanity shared by people from all reaches of the globe.
11. Negative and cynical attitude.
12. Over confidence.
13. Showing a lack of enthusiasm.
14. Not having a sense of humor about the stress
15. Expressing shyness rather than openness and friendliness.
16. don't practice active listening skills

Not willing to accept work outside of or learn more than what's in their strict job description - 13

1. The "that's not my job" attitude that insists on a narrowly defined job description rather than rests on a broadly defined willingness to provide the best possible service. (My assumption is that an office is not abusing this and is reasonably well-

4. Using finite experience ("the one time I dealt with this situation") as entirely dispositive information on a given topic
5. Not being curious about the wider landscape of international education and the populations with whom we work
6. focus only on the small picture of what they are tasked with doing instead of the big picture of internationalization
7. Only focus on what they think they want out of IE, look too narrowly at the field of IE and miss opportunities to engage in diverse activities.

#### Acted entitled to a better job - 7

1. Some don't want to grow into leadership roles. They want to start off as managers or assistant directors right away.
2. Expressed/demonstrated a sense of 'entitlement' to advance professionally with minimum real-life experience (i.e. one study abroad program, 1-2 years of professional experience, etc.)
3. Assume that working for a few years in the field means that they are ready for a senior leadership position.
4. Assumption that a Master's degree entitles them to a higher level position and an office with a door.
5. Trying to leapfrog over more experienced professionals in the field, and assuming positions they really aren't ready for
6. Seeking rewards (bonus, promotion, salary increase) without having shown that one can deliver at a higher level than the strictly interpreted current job description. Advancement must be earned.
7. Demonstrated a sense of entitlement or overestimated their own worth/abilities

#### Overly Focused on International Travel - 5

1. Act entitled (to int'l travel, specifically!)
2. Some think international education equals international travel. It certainly can, but that includes working while traveling, not a vacay with a bit of work thrown in there.
3. Showed passion for international travel, but not true international education (as a professional field)
4. Thinking IE is all about travel
5. Wanting to get into the field for the express purpose of traveling.

#### Xenophobic/Intolerant of Other Cultures - 4

1. Xenophobic
2. Not modeled a high level of intercultural competence/awareness/sensitivity)
3. Disrespect of cultural differences
4. Letting personal bias influence their work, whether it's bias against a particular cultural group or a

2. Tell negative stories.
3. Complain, complain, complain.

#### Dismissive/Critical of NAFSA - 3

1. Criticized NAFSA
2. Not made the effort to get to know NAFSA staff
3. Presented poorly at a NAFSA session

#### Not Respecting Regulations - 3

1. New professionals are sometimes unaware of the hierarchy of law
2. Not referring to the regulations
3. Showing fear and resistance when hearing about regulations.

#### Patronizing older people w/ respect to technology - 2

1. Treat people older than them as if they are clueless
2. Show disrespect when someone older does not have technology strengths as they do.

#### Pestering, esp. about job openings - 2

1. Email me regularly after an informational interview, especially if it is to see if I have any job openings.
2. Always asking for a job.

#### Other - 25

1. Favor one group (or student) over another
2. Feel that their job only involves filling out immigration paperwork.
3. Unwillingness to do the work to build their career and their skills.
4. Unwillingness to listen and learn from others. (Ego)
5. Assuming the exception is the rule
6. Tried to share their religion
7. Said they are willing to learn and be trained when they really are not, to take criticism/feedback when they are not
8. Been undependable (late to the office, too often out for various reasons)
9. defer to me on all decisions without giving their own input or ideas
10. refer to policies and procedures to know what to do instead of problem-solving on their own
11. New professionals sometimes seem to present an unrealistic view of what international educations can actually do to help our students and scholars.
12. New professionals are sometimes unaware of available resources
13. don't seem to want to learn, not understand the importance of institutional (*International?*) culture
14. being overly dramatic when something goes wrong
15. lack of understanding that they are on a team
16. not staying updated on recent changes
17. Not communicating their needr



23. Fail to engage productively in conversations by either being overly engaged and not actively listening to others or by not contributing because they are not confident in sharing ideas, educated opinions or experiences that would add value to the dialogue.
24. Asking broad, general questions about the field that can easily be answered by doing a little research
25. Trying to impress me with how much they know and exaggerating their knowledge/experience; selling themselves too hard

## **Strategies**

Improve yourself/Adapt to the work – 18

1. Do self growth work to better understand how your own identity plays into your effectiveness.
- 2.

2. Gathering materials that my colleagues use at their institutions is very helpful (policy manuals, orientation schedule, communication plan, etc.)
3. Visiting colleagues to observe how their office works is always useful.
4. Listening
5. Acknowledge I don't know many things and learn from others (including students!!)
6. Find those within NAFSA with whom you share a similar philosophy and learn from each other.
7. I rely on the experiences and knowledge of others - even those whom I supervise.
8. network to learn from others
9. Be interested in the work that others are doing. Learn from the accomplishments (and sometimes failures) of others. NAFSAs are very open to sharing knowledge and expertise. Take advantage of that.
10. The other thing that I have found really useful and interesting is observing other people do their jobs through shadowing them for a day. I have spent a day with two different immigration attorneys, audited classes, gone on tours of airports with CBP officers, and attended events for international students/scholars hosted by other schools. Shadowing gives me the opportunity to learn something new, gain a different perspective, meet people in the field or a related field that I wouldn't otherwise meet, and most importantly it helps me be a better advisor and provide better service to my students.
11. I'm also not afraid to acknowledge what I don't know and I inquire with colleagues - I also read a lot of international higher ed media outlets and professional journals
12. Opening myself up to meet other practitioners in the field and always asking questions as I do not always have the answer. However, be careful the questions (and answers) do need to come from a foundation in the regulations. But sometimes you will be through into other areas beyond immigration advising. These often are more challenging and require a good sense of humor with a deal of outside the box thinking.
13. Recognize that no matter how experienced I am, there is always someone who is more experienced.  
Listen first. Ask the right questions so you can give the right answer.

Being open to new ideas and suggestions

#### Network with Others – 11

1. Get involved to meet as many new people as possible.
2. Networked with international educators
3. Get to know people in the field and ask questions.
4. I network but I'm not cheesy. I used Facebook and LinkedIn to connect
5. Building relationships with more experienced colleagues in the field has been invaluable. They can provide guidance when I have tough questions, and they also help to open doors to professional development activities that I wouldn't have otherwise known about.
6. Build your network of professionals who can help and advise you
7. I work closely with the most knowledgeable I j4(In2t4Tf1 0 0 1 805/F710 0 1 4a6n[(Lis1 0 0 1 9.024 253.3 Tm[(5.)] T

3. Get involved in the field
4. Go to state, regional and annual NAFSA conferences and go to as many sessions, networking opportunities and meetings as possible; take business cards and carefully prepared resumes with

my privileged identities. Now, when I find myself questioning "why does that issue matter?" I know that this is an area where I probably have privilege and need to do some self-education on that topic.

2. Understanding the unique circumstances that arise in the field, and always being empathetic to the strain that these circumstances can put on both the students and the offices or departments working with the students

#### Work as a Team – 2

1. working collaboratively with other units
2. Be helpful to others (be a team player)

#### Other – 31

3. I had to change myself from a cynic to an optimist. That wasn't easy. I got sick of hearing myself complain about things so I started working on improving skills both hard and soft. It was my responsibility, not anyone else. I moved outside my comfort zone. I don't like public speaking so I volunteered to do it. I didn't know much about J visas so I volunteered to do J-1 workshops and then H and then PR (sorry NAFSA). I remembered names and faces not because I was ambitious but because I like hearing folks talk about themselves and enjoyed their fellowship. I taught myself to build a mission and goals and align my actions to those goals. It saved a lot of wasted time. I respected the our profession and worked to get my leadership to see it as a profession. I learned that a plan beats no plan and that The Perfect is the enemy of The Good.
4. But I never learned to trust myself until recently. Don't do that. Leave time for others to learn and be respectful of different types of institutions and perspectives. Be tolerant.
5. Serve others as you help teach the law.
6. Recognize the breadth of the field of IE.
7. Strong communication and a passion for helping others.
8. Stick to your principles and ethics -- once those are compromised, it's a slippery slope.
9. Remember this always: we work with people, not widgets. People are messy and complicated and time consuming.
10. Share knowledge with others.
11. I'm not afraid to be wrong.
12. It has been extremely important in my career that I make the case for my own professional development by clearly articulating how it would benefit the institution and my advising population
13. I've made some edgy decisions in my career, and they have fortunately all worked out - I wasn't afraid to try new things and to take risks.
14. It is also critical to be patient, to play politics VERY wisely (understanding that, particularly for those in leadership positions, they must be played), and to be respectful, at all times, of everyone.
15. being creative in problem-solving and coming up with options if possible
16. modifying programs and services based on student feedback but not being slavish to their demands
17. writing clearly and concisely
18. documenting decisions and student acceptance of decisions on difficult matters or grey areas of the regulations
19. I read and re-read the regulations.
20. I keep on top of guidance and discussions.
21. make sure to make time for your own PD(?), it's important!
22. learning the different resources
23. keeping a repository of information that I need
24. clearly communicating my needs, strengths, and weaknesses with my colleagues.



4. make the most of every opportunity to network and get advice from experienced professionals (online and in-person)
5. Network, but in a sincere way. People want to know that you really care about their experiences and their advice.
6. Get involved: present at local conferences, volunteer for committees and network with others in your area.
7. Network.
8. Get to know others in the profession.
9. Be an engaged professional.
10. Volunteering and even posting discussion topics online about IE is a great way to show your passion for the field, make great connections, and develop yourself.
11. Introduce yourself to everyone.
12. Network, network, network
13. Introduce yourself at conferences. Get to know your colleagues on recruitment trips
14. Sit next to people you don't already know in professional situations, dress in business or business casual clothing that doesn't highlight your status as a "young professional", wear a name tag and be prepared to engage the other person in professional discussion.
15. Look for as many opportunities to network and build resource groups as possible. Present a positive and welcoming attitude and be willing to listen, as opposed to trying to be an expert and overstate experience.
16. Don't be shy about introducing yourself to other persons in the field, especially at conferences.

#### Be Friendly & Respectful – 13

1. Be the person folks want to sit next to in a cubicle for the next 10 years
2. Be authentic.
3. Help others along the way up.
4. Listen (don't always dominate conversations with your own travel experiences, but listen to others and ask directive questions to build intercultural awareness in others (and self))
5. Be patient - with yourself and with others.
6. Be seen as a proactive, pleasant problem-solver.
7. Try to leave your ego at the door.
8. Humility!
9. New opportunities come to people known for being able to get things done, and getting them done in a collegial, collaborative way that builds g(7N)1(l)5( a(n) -) T J5(6)5)-5(ou)44(i)sdonell-(w)11(n f)-(r b)-11



