

REAL SUCCESS: SUPERVISOR TIPS AND TOOLS

Students are valuable contributors in work settings that offer the opportunity to apply skills and knowledge from their courses. Depending on the student's prior experience in a work setting, it is important to clearly define expectations for work standards that are reasonable, attainable, and agency/organization appropriate. Below are some tips to assist REAL Supervisors and partners with establishing work standards.

1. **Onboarding:** Students need a basic orientation to the agency. Orientation may include: an overview of the mission of the agency or organization; guidelines and resources for performing assigned tasks; office policies and procedures; safety protocols and professional dress code expectations. Additional orientation basics may include: introduction to others in the office with whom the student is likely to interact, a tour of the facilities, and demonstration on office equipment use.
2. **Adequate work resources:** Students should have access to the resources needed to accomplish the position objectives. Resources may include desk and computer, calling plan for long-distance calls, a name badge, access card(s), time sheets or other items as deemed necessary. During remote work, discuss expectations for what resources the student needs to provide personally.
3. **Assignments:**
 - Students perform at their best when provided with defined timelines. Depending on the time of year, the student may also be juggling course attendance and assignments. Timelines help assure that competing priorities can be managed and work completed on time.
 - Students benefit from experiencing the operations of the worksite that may go beyond the position objective, including observing management discussions, participating in strategic planning, and attending seminars.
 - Students benefit from being able to apply what they have learned in graduate school to the success of the agency. They also benefit from being exposed to opportunities that challenge them.

4. **Regular Contact and Supervision:** The student and their REAL Supervisor should plan opportunities to meet regularly (by phone or virtual conferencing) to review project progress throughout their time with the agency. Check-in at least biweekly so that you can confirm their hours in ETAS.

5. **Developing Work Plans:** The student should work with the REAL Supervisor to develop objectives for the position and form a work plan that is achievable. A template for the workplan is available [online](#). The work plan ideally should expose the student to a broad range of activities and decision-making processes and give the student some in-depth exposure to issues pertinent to the agency or organization's activities.

6. **Mentorship:** In addition to regular check-ins to review project progress, the REAL Supervisor should schedule regular meetings to mentor the student. These activities may include discussing the activities of the agency or organization and analyzing successes and problems that arise over the course of the student's position. The REAL Supervisor might also assist the student in developing insights into public health practice, the organization's work, and otherwise provide guidance that can assist the student in launching their career. This kind of mentoring can have tremendous educational value to the student, transcending even the value of the professional practical experience the student gains through the REAL position.

7. **Evaluation:** At the mid-year and at the end of the academic year, the REAL Supervisor will be asked to complete an evaluation assessing the student's performance. This form, and a program evaluation, will be emailed to you. REAL strongly encourages Supervisors to schedule a one-on-one meeting with the student to discuss the evaluation and their work performance. The opportunity to provide constructive feedback can be a powerful learning experience for the student and mirrors what they can expect in the workplace.

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