On-Campus Student Employment -
Tips for Your First Year on the Job

1. **Learn everything you can about the department.**

   Take the time to read and review the department’s website, annual reports, or publications. Also study the organizational chart. The more you know about the department – what they do and how they do it - and how they fit into the overall Clark structure, the better equipped you will be to fulfill the duties of your role.

2. **Ask a lot of questions; be an active listener.**

   Don’t be afraid to ask questions. Your colleagues and bosses alike understand that you are transitioning into a new position and will be more than willing to help you when needed. Asking questions serves a dual purpose: 1) it continues your learning process; and 2) it helps you to create a positive image of a hard-working and motivated employee. When asking questions, always be certain to listen attentively. Although questions are great, asking the same question twice is not.

3. **Develop time management skills.**

   Although your supervisor will understand that you are a college student with a demanding course schedule, you cannot skip work because you have a paper due or a test to study for that day. Make sure to set deadlines, giving yourself sufficient time not only to complete the task, but to complete it well. Use your calendar to plan ahead so you can request time off in advance when needed.

4. **Seek opportunities for professional and personal development.**

   Attending trainings and workshops can further your professional development and networking. The LEEP Center facilitates several sessions throughout the year; your department also may organize optional workshops. Participating in such trainings will show your commitment while also giving you the skills, resources, and competencies to excel in any position.

5. **Accept responsibility when appropriate.**

   In your first year it is expected that you will make several mistakes—after all, nobody is perfect. Therefore, it is important that you accept responsibility for your own errors. This will keep your conscience clear while also strengthening your reputation for being honest and forthright.
6. **Be prepared for meetings.**

As a student employee, you may be asked to attend department meetings or to represent your department in larger meetings. It is important to be professional and to show up on time prepared to engage in the discussion. To showcase your talents, rather than highlight any weaknesses, make sure to be well versed in the topic you are discussing, have something to contribute, address your comments to the entire group, and listen to others’ questions, comments, and concerns.

7. **Find a mentor.**

Seeking out a mentor in the department is a great way to receive meaningful encouragement, constructive criticism, and feedback. Mentors help you understand the ins and outs of an organization, while simultaneously helping you to identify problems and create comprehensive action plans. Mentors also serve as a great resource for networking both inside and outside of the department and the Clark community.

8. **Learn how to market yourself and stay competitive.**

Even after you are employed, it is important to consider how this position connects to your academic interests and future career goals so that you can be competitive for future opportunities. To do this, volunteer to be a part of projects that interest you and which you feel you can contribute to, and connect with your LEEP Center Advisor to discuss your interests and opportunities.

9. **Be nice and get to know your colleagues.**

Avoid office politics and be nice to all staff, ranging from the custodial staff to the department chair. Furthermore, getting to know individuals from diverse backgrounds and different levels within the company will help you form more alliances and have access to more resources and knowledge within the organization.

Questions? For further assistance, please reach out to LEEP Center at leepcenter@clarku.edu.