

## Expectations for Professional Behavior of Chemical Engineering Students

In addition to core technical training to be a chemical engineer, it is exceedingly important to focus on the “softer” side that makes us successful—respectful and professional interactions with others. Employers have told me time and time again that they hire RIT students for their soft skills—they already are calibrated to student capabilities technically via their GPA. Do not underestimate the power of the “Soft Side.”

In the same way you cannot just turn on work ethic, respectful and professional interactions need to be practiced. Additionally, due respect must be given to your older colleagues and managers who you inevitably will work with, while still working alongside these individuals on teams in a productive way. That practice starts with interactions with your faculty, staff, and classmates right here in the department and on campus. Remember that it is exceedingly important for you to represent the Chemical Engineering Department well by the application of your skills and your behavior, as it affects our ability to place you in co-ops and increases the value of your degree through our reputation.

*In this spirit, here are my expectations for professional behavior for all students in their interactions with ALL faculty and staff:*

1. Emails will be respectful and professional. Start with a heading and end with a closing. Language should not be demanding and should convey a tone that is respectful. State your case, and ask for guidance or help.
  - I have instructed all faculty and staff to return emails to you that are not viewed as respectful/professional, with a reminder for you to resubmit your email with the appropriate language.
2. You will practice good classroom etiquette
  - If you are doing something that you would not want others to do to you, do not do it.
  - Be respectful to your professors, always! Do not disrupt classes with outbursts about class policies and procedures, or the way something is being taught. Certainly ask qualifying questions, and meet with professors outside of class if there are other concerns. No one likes to feel like they are being attacked.
  - You will adhere to classroom policies set out by the instructor (e.g., no electronic devices etc.), and will discuss with them in advance if there is some accommodation needed.
3. You will treat all department staff and faculty with respect in public and in private conversations.
  - Debate is encouraged, but it cannot go over the line.
  - You need to recognize that we are effectively your “managers” so our decisions need to be respected. You may not always agree, but we do our best to justify why we are doing what we are doing.
4. Practice the Golden Rule in your interactions—It is a great guide to help you navigate the best way to treat a new situation and remain professional and respectful. Treat others in a way you would like to be treated (put yourself in others shoes!)