



WVNMU

**Service Excellence
Strategy & Standards Manual
2022-2023**

Table of Contents

Overview – WNMU Service Excellence Strategy & Standards	2
Project +1 Charter	3
Service Excellence Strategy Statement	5
Service Excellence Standards – Key Elements.....	6
Standardizing Responsiveness	7
Creating A Collaborative Environment.....	12
Engaging with Professionalism.....	13
Adopting A Continuous Learning Mindset	14
Embracing the Feedback Analysis Loop	16
Adapting to On-Going Process Improvements.....	17
APPENDIX.....	18
Appendix 1 – Pro Dev Areas of Focus.....	19
Appendix 2 – Employee Tools	20
Appendix 3 – WNMU Dress Guidelines.....	21
Appendix A – Examples	24

Overview – WNMU Service Excellence Strategy & Standards

This manual is a by-product of the WNMU Project +1 initiative, created as an educational tool to help communicate WNMU's service expectations, document the necessary processes, and implement training for a campus wide service excellence strategy and standards initiative.

This manual will function as an interactive guide and its primary objective, along with formalized training, is to provide guidance in creating a culture of service excellence while promoting healthier relationships among all employees (as identified below in the project charter), students, and the community. The overall program will be managed through the Department of Professional Development and aligns with the Road to 4K initiative sponsored by the university president, Dr. Joseph Shepard.

BACKGROUND: In April & May 2021, a group of employees attended customer service training venues through several different companies where customer service is the foundation of their success. The absence of a formal service strategy and defined service standards was identified through the discovery & debrief process and the Project +1 team was formed and tasked with creating and defining WNMU's service strategy and standards. This also aligns with the rollout of a formal, campus wide service excellence training program in early 2022 and will be integrated into the New Employee Onboarding program. All new employees will be required to complete the service excellence standards and training program as part of their 30-60-90-day onboarding process.

CHALLENGES: One major challenge will be to get employees on board with such changes because there had been no guidelines for providing service at the college and therefore employee buy-in of the concept was necessary. Divisions and departments had set some criteria but there was no consistency.

TIMELINE: The planned rollout of the communication plan will be in March 2022. This will align with the Service Excellence training project that will have already launched throughout the campus. **UPDATE:** The Service Excellence Strategy & Standards are now a part of New Employee Orientation and are shared in conjunction with the Service Excellence training program.

Project +1 Charter

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Create a customer-centric culture by developing a consistent service strategy for the campus where service standards are identified and adopted by all employees, and that ties back to the common mission, goals, and purpose of the university. (Employee is defined as the following: Regular Full Time/Part Time or RPE Part-Time, Limited Term, Temporary, GM Personnel, Tenured Faculty/Tenure-track Faculty, Limited Term, Adjunct, Student Work-Study)

ISSUE TO RESOLVE: The “Western Way” culture tends to have a negative connotation attached to it. There is a breakdown in communication across departments which leads to inefficiencies and inconsistencies in how services are delivered both internally & externally. There needs to be a clear understanding across the campus of who the customer is, how each role impacts the successful delivery of services to our internal and external stakeholders and how our internal systems can prohibit us from delivering service excellence.

Sponsor:	Kelley Riddle
Project Lead:	Bobbi Dodson & Jennifer Truitt
Project Team:	Scott Smith, Susan Hasse, Jason Quimby, Dr. Gordon Flanders, Bailey Pagels, Michael Acosta, Kathy Sorrells, Amanda Stern, Jessica Enriquez, Shelby Turner, Heather Rux
Scope:	<p>IS: Developing a strategy where we define who the customer is, we develop service standards that promote service excellence and employee engagement, and creating a standardized model where we have mechanisms in place to collect data and ensure everyone understands the importance of their roles.</p> <p>IS NOT: Defining process redundancies or improvements nor is it developing standard operating procedures for each department</p>
Project Goals:	<p>1) Re-defining the Western Way where we create a culture of ownership & pride based on trust, respect, integrity, and the promise to uphold each other to be their best; 2) Develop an effective collaboration forum between departments to enhance communications and customer service expectations (ex. Cross-training, points of contact); 3) Define standards that establish the appropriate parameters around the urgency of task (i.e. email response, service requests, etc.) 4) Create an appropriate feedback collection mechanism to measure results and improve the way we serve our customers.</p>
Project Deliverables:	<p>Customer service code of conduct; dress standards-expectations; Training (what not to say); clearly defined and shared identify standards; defined response times for email, phone calls, faculty grading, that impact customer service; communication plan for standards; broader understanding of systems & tools – ensure tools are relevant (updated, current, etc.); customer service manual (total separation from Staff/Faculty Handbook); Identification of triggers for standards</p>

	(impact of fiscal, calendar, academic & financial aid); defined feedback mechanism to collect data
Key Measurables:	Established baseline of data through Customer/Employee satisfaction survey scores; Current/post perspectives of university-surroundings; Amount of calls lost or dropped; improved response/turnaround times to calls, emails, grading; shared results between departments; shared positive/negative feedback; shared data (dashboards, reports, understanding of what data to report, where it comes from and what it represents.)
Key Risks /Dependencies:	Annoying our customers; loss of knowledge base/personnel due to non-conformance to change; costs of increased customer service; inter-divisional training; the mentality of “it’s my job” and lack of trust; the Limited Term stigma; Employee buy in’; a hostile environment may not change; duplication of processes; semester withdrawals.
Aligned with Strategic Goal:	G1.D, G2.B, G5.A, and G5.B

Service Excellence Strategy Statement

Transforming the Future by ...

- 1.0 Providing dependable, relevant, personalized customer service that makes our customers happy
- 2.0 Creating an environment of service excellence where...
 - 2.1 Everyone (I) represents “WNMU”
 - 2.2 Everyone is (I AM) important and serve(s) a valuable purpose (trust, integrity, respect)
 - 2.3 Everyone is (I AM) a potential customer
- 3.0 Creating customer & student loyalty by empowering employees to own and resolve issues from end to end in a timely fashion that will enhance the customer experience (internal/external)
- 4.0 Communicating our successes throughout the campus community & recognizing what we accomplish
- 5.0 Creating a feedback mechanism and using collected data to improve performance requirements for customer service.

Service Excellence Standards – Key Elements

Standardizing Responsiveness	Reacting in a timely and positive manner to all inquiries Respond – 24 hrs.- Resolve – 48hrs. - Escalate beyond 48 hrs. as needed
Creating a Collaborative Environment	Work jointly to improve communication, processes, and issue resolution across campus; engaging and empowering employees.
Engaging with Professionalism	Treating others with respect and integrity; taking pride in our representation of WNMU
Adopting a Continuous Learning mindset	Enthusiastically, advancing & improving skills with additional training to expand knowledge to provide a consistent, high-quality job performance.
Embracing the Feedback Analysis Loop	Actively participating in collection and feedback based on data, analysis, monitoring to make WNMU a better place to work/attend.
Adapting to on-going Process Improvements	Quickly adapting to changing practices as process improvements are identified and implemented.

Standardizing Responsiveness

All employees are expected to greet & acknowledge anyone (customer, student, requestor, co-worker) who requires something from you, whether it be face to face or virtual/electronically. In addition, it is the responsibility of the employee to appropriately resolve the issue/request as soon as possible.

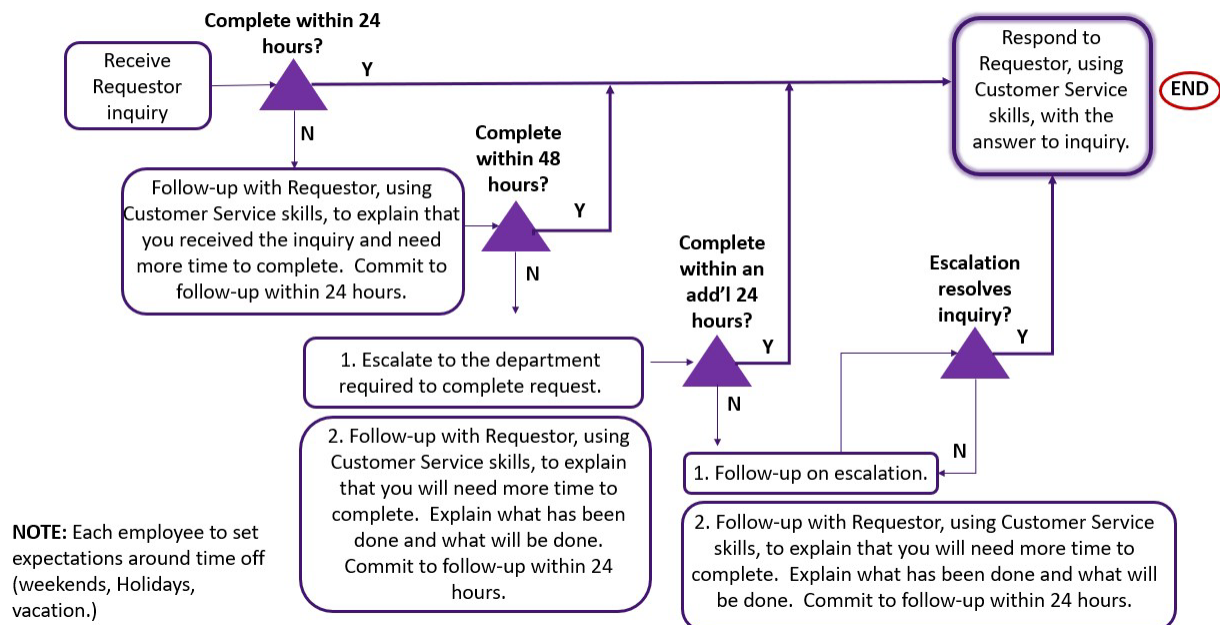
For those times that employees are not able to resolve on initial contact, it is their responsibility to take ownership of the interaction until resolution. This includes keeping the requestor updated on progress until the issue is resolved. The expectation will be that all requests are resolved within 24 to 48 hours where applicable.

- Please note – it is the employee’s responsibility to set follow-up expectations around time off (weekends, holidays, vacations).

If an issue/inquiry cannot be resolved within 24/48 hours, it will require the employee to escalate to the appropriate department/co-worker to resolve. (See attached process flow and table of expectations)

This section, at this time, describes an Anticipated Response to inquiries/issues as a basic requirement to resolve issues. (See process flow and LEARN (Listen-Empathize-Apologize-Resolve-Notify tables)

RESPONSIVENESS REVIEW – 24/48 To Escalate Timeline Flow



	WHEN TO EXECUTE	COMMUNICATION EXAMPLE
L E A R N	Initial Contact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greet the Requestor: "Welcome to (Department/Office), I am X. How may I help you?" or if you are working with someone already and another person joins the line, acknowledge the next person. "Hello and welcome to XX department. I'll be with you in a moment." • Listen: (Close mouth, open ears.) • Restate Inquiry: "Please make sure I understand the question. (Restate inquiry), did I understand correctly?" Add empathy and apology when required. "I am so sorry that you are going through this. Let's see how we can fix it." • Discuss a plan to resolve: "I see that XX. I will take X actions; would you be able to XX?" • If successful, use Close contact in Inquiry has been resolved. If not, move to Follow-up contact.
	Inquiry has been resolved (after initial contact)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greet the Requestor: "Hello XXX, I am XX from XX. " • Acknowledge Inquiry: "Thank you for your inquiry about (restate inquiry); it has been resolved by (explain resolution)." • Provide further instruction: When required. • Close the Contact: "Has this resolved all your questions? Please feel free to contact us anytime at (contact information)."
	<p>1. Follow-up contact when inquiry takes more than 24 hours to resolve</p> <p>2. Every follow-up contact until resolution</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greet the Requestor: "Hello XXX, I am XX from XX. " • Acknowledge Inquiry: "I am following up on your inquiry about (restate inquiry)." • Apologize: "I apologize that it is not resolved yet, but I am confident that we will be able to resolve it soon." • Explain process: "Here are the actions that have been taken (explain actions). Here are the actions that will be taken (explain actions)." • Commit to follow-up within 24 hours: "I will contact you within 24 hours and let you know of the updates." • Close the Contact: "Thank you for allowing us to resolve this for you. I look forward to speaking to you tomorrow."

Standardize the use of all greetings to set personal responsiveness expectations.

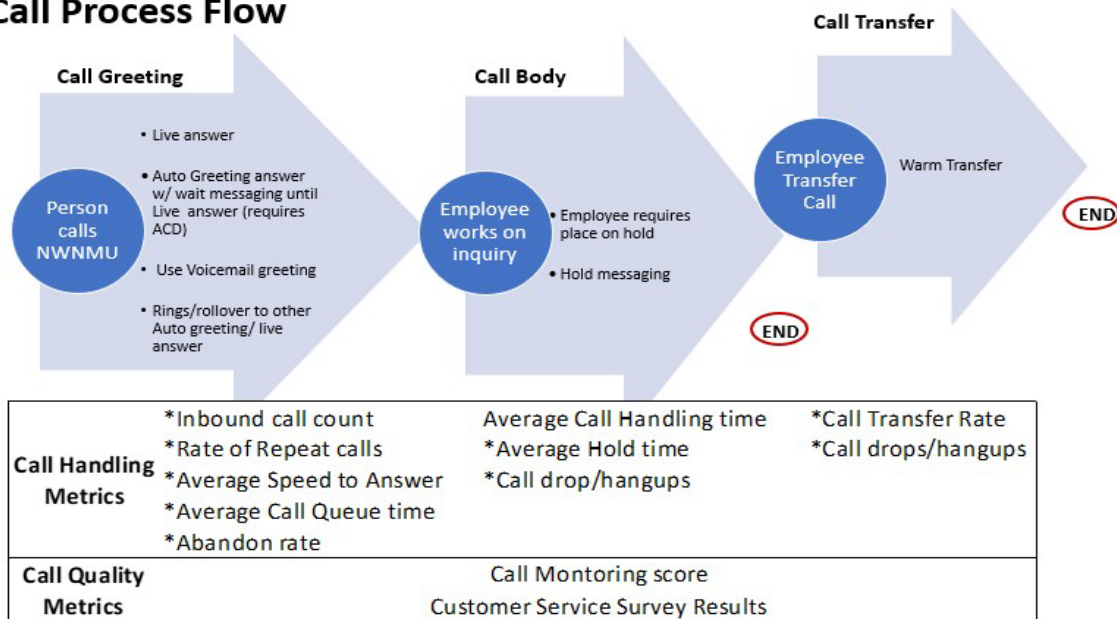
1. Email: Automatic reply during heavy email volume); Out of office reply when OOO; include mobile phone for URGENT requests (where applicable); add a point of contact in absence.
2. VM (office/mobile): Customized greeting anytime, and to notify of heavy call volume; Out of Office reply when OOO; includes mobile phone for URGENT requests (where applicable); add a point of contact in absence.
3. IM/TEAMS: Customized status anytime and to notify of heavy call volume; Out of Office reply when OOO; includes mobile phone for URGENT requests (where applicable); add a point of contact in absence.
4. Other options - WIP NOTE: Certain times of the year these goals are not achievable due to schedules, enrollment, call volume, disenrollment, etc. call forward or outsource options have not been successful.

EMAIL	Signature (at the end, for example)	“Please note: Please expect increased response times during the first 2 weeks of the Semester.”	Upcoming time off; Labor Day, Mon 9/6
	Automatic Reply	“During the first 2 weeks of the Semester, please expect increased response times to 48-72 hours. If urgent, please contact me on (mobile phone #).”	“Hello, I am out of the office starting Fri 9/3 at 5 pm returning Mon 9/13. I will respond as soon as I can upon return. If urgent, please contact XXXX on XXX. He/she will be able to assist you. Thank you.”
VM (office/mobile)	Greeting	“Hello and thank you for calling. I will respond as soon as I can. Please note that my responses may be delayed during the first 2 weeks of the semester. If urgent, call me on my mobile at (XXX-XXX-XXXX). Thank you!”	“Hello and thank you for calling. I am out of the office on vacation returning Mon 9/13. I will respond as soon as I can return. If urgent, please contact XX on XX for assistance in the interim.”

In addition, a future project team will research other ways to improve responsiveness/ set expectations.

1. Better utilize Call Handling technology to improve responsiveness:
2. Maximize use of call handling technology (call pick up, call routing) to aid in responsiveness, esp. for heavy call volume
3. Use messaging: At greeting, wait, hold stating heavy call volumes; ensure greeting clearly sets expectations while on hold
4. Quality Management on phone recording/monitoring services
5. Review information from (DVS Analytics)

Call Process Flow



Responsiveness Standard Discussion Notes/Recommendations:

1. Under Review

- Need to address those busy times of year (ex. Semester start) when cannot meet these standards.
- Set a different standard for this time.
- The expectation is to use available messaging tools (email, vmail, and IM) to set department and personal responsiveness expectations. ***See Standardize use of all greetings to set personal responsiveness expectations matrix***

2. Investigate

- Use Wait room/ admit feature to manage queue; confidentiality
- Process 1 at a time; what if a large queue?
- How to message those in the queue?
- Look for best practices from Faculty.

3. Other technologies - Future team to investigate with IT/Business Office/Financial Aid/Admissions

- Pure Chat – web chat options?
- Unified communication - organizing the points of contact to make it easier to respond. (VM/CHAT/IM to email – all users should be able to use this feature) ***This requires a license per IT Telecommunications.***

4. Other standards

- Develop a detailed and organized inbox to ensure all emails are categorized and answered promptly (use of folders, views, search methods, flags, rules, mark as...) Training can be completed via SKILLSETS for additional information.

5. Additional contact points to review –

- Inquiry at bottom of page...each department can set it up individually. (research – where they go today and how to make it better)

- b. Web page chats – behind the scenes, where does the information go; is it being followed up on; are we losing potential customers due to service requests not being answered.

6. Request forms:

- a. Department-specific, located on website or CANVAS
- b. Some are part of workflow process (are managed by appropriate department)
- c. Ex – Marketing request project: 1 week.; Rooms and facilities
- d. Map of scenarios to see how responsiveness is handled.
- e. Call tree handling
- f. Call monitoring capability & feedback
- g. Quality Management on phone recording/monitoring services
- h. Review information from (DVS Analytics)
- i. Grading timelines for Faculty

SERVICE EXCELLENCE - How to make WMNU responsiveness performance legendary?

- Resolve more inquiries within 24 hours and reduce the number of escalations
- Ensure your response is appropriate and professional – evaluate who needs to know - not EVERYONE has to be included in email notifications.

Creating A Collaborative Environment

COLLABORATION - Work jointly together to improve communication, processes, and issue resolution across campus; engaging and empowering employees to work towards a common goal.

1. Communication – Interpersonal Interactions

- a. All employees are expected to communicate in a courteous, respectful, and approachable manner. Likewise, employees are to receive communication in the same non-judgmental manner. This includes spoken, written, and non-verbal communication.
- b. For example., you receive an email from XX and you feel it is tersely worded. Instead of being offended, you assume that the sender was busy and did not intend to slight you. You respond in a professional manner.
- c. Employees are expected to communicate clearly, participate by actively listening, respect diversity of thought from their colleagues and make an intentional choice to be open / accepting of new ideas
- d. Employees are expected to respond to other employees based on the response times, as indicated in the Standardizing Responsiveness section above, to allow for effective customer service campus-wide.

2. Teamwork

- e. Employees are expected to take ownership of issues end-to-end, acting resourcefully, across departments as needed. Employees are expected to create an environment of lateral service (i.e. You see a co-worker needs help setting up a meeting as you walk by, so you offer them assistance, so the needs of customers and each other are met.)
- f. Employees are expected to positively contribute in any interaction with any information they have available on the subject at hand to further enhance the customer/ co-worker experience.
- g. Employees are expected to support their co-workers and work together to create an environment of trust where each party feels they can depend on another to do what they say they will do. Interdepartmental and cross-functional employees are to work together to achieve departmental and institutional goals including cross-training resources to enhance the customer experience.
- h. Employees will be provided an internal directory, at least annually, with direct contact information for employees. Anytime there is a new hire/transfer of an employee to a new department, internal email notification, by the department, will be sent internally to allow for effective communication and transparency.

SERVICE EXCELLENCE - How to make WMN's collaborative environment legendary?

- Service Excellence Training Module 2 – The Polished Professional – 5 C's of Communication

Engaging with Professionalism

PROFESSIONALISM – treat others with respect and integrity and take pride in your representation of WNMU (proficiency, behavior, language, appearance, attitude)

1. Proficiency

- a. Employees are expected to conduct their duties and responsibilities with competency, efficiency, accuracy, dependability & timeliness, and adapt to necessary changes as they occur.

2. Behavior & Language

- b. Employees are expected to treat others in a pleasant, courteous & respectful manner. When pleasantries are not possible, employees are expected to be assertive, not confrontational in response. Employees are empowered to remove themselves from a confrontational situation.
- c. Ex. “I feel like you are not communicating respectfully and I removing myself from this interaction.”
- d. With every interaction, on/offline & on/off-campus, you represent WNMU; employees should conduct themselves with integrity and ethics.

3. Appearance & Attitude

- e. Employees are expected to dress/groom in a professional manner adhering to the standards outlined in the WNMU Dress Guidelines in Appendix 3.
- f. Manner of dress/groom should identify you as a university employee.
- g. Departments need to hold employees accountable and address issues appropriately if non-compliant.
- h. Department Uniform exceptions are addressed in the WNMU Dress Guidelines Exceptions Section (Mailroom, Athletics, Student Services, etc.)
- i. Employees need to be mindful of workspace and surrounding environment appearance; limiting personal items to appear uncluttered and organized.
- j. Employees should approach work with a positive, confident attitude; becoming an asset in every interaction applying critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

SERVICE EXCELLENCE - How to make WMN’s professional image and behaviors legendary?

- Service Excellence Training Module 2 – The Polished Professional – First Impressions
- WNMU Dress Guidelines

Adopting A Continuous Learning Mindset

Providing ongoing professional development training opportunities where employees will have learning opportunities to advance their skillsets.

1. Employees will be expected to demonstrate skills learned from service excellence training delivered through New Employee Orientation/ Onboarding/Campus-Wide rollout programs to meet WNMU expectations for customer service.
 - a. Training consists of:
 - i. WNMU Service Excellence Training & review of service strategy/standards
 - ii. Training will be reviewed annually and modified as required
 - iii. Delivered to the Campus community through departmental reviews/venues
2. Each employee will be able to expand their knowledge with additional training opportunities provided through the Professional Development department. They will be responsible for identifying their own performance/development plan created with their sup/mgr.
3. The Professional Development Department will act as a resource to assist Managers & employees with tools designed to assist in development planning.
4. Need to understand what campus tools are available to each employee today and close gaps where necessary.
 - a. Define what tools are available to employees (Website, directory, software apps, etc.)
 - b. Find new tools and technology and provide training as needed
5. Training/Mentorship Opportunities
 - a. Set up new employees with mentors, if available, that hold parallel positions on campus to assist with job responsibilities/duties that are cross-departmental/cross-divisional (ex: Administrative Associate positions). Handling of mentors through Professional Development and/or Staff/Faculty Senate to establish the connection between existing employees and new employees?
 - b. New WNMU Supervisors and/or first-time Supervisors will be granted access to the Skillsets training module to provide guidance on supervisory details.
 - i. Will also have a mentor connection.
 - ii. HR Training being offered by semester—WNMU specific guidance.
 - iii. Collaboration between HR and Professional Development Department to identify and do outreach, personal, to training sessions that are helpful to a new position.
6. Succession Training
 - a. Departments should establish documentation of processes and procedures to ensure smooth transitions for anyone accepting a new role in the department, or for anyone who may be covering for a coworker due to leave or unexpected departure.
 - b. The manual or plan should cover all aspects of staff duties from how to work the phones and equipment to step-by-step processes of duties the employee is expected to perform both daily and intermittently. The manual should also include the directory and organizational charts mentioned above.

- c. If an employee improves upon or streamlines any processes, the new procedures should be updated in the manual.
- d. Manual should be made easily accessible in a digital/shared format so that updates can be made as needed.

SERVICE EXCELLENCE - How to make WMN's continuous learning mindset legendary?

- Continuation of programs and training curriculum resources provided by Professional Development

Embracing the Feedback Analysis Loop

Use data to improve performance requirements for customer service

1. Employees will be responsible for participating in the feedback collection process for data analysis and suggested improvements. Employees need to be receptive to feedback obtained through direct/indirect mechanisms and be willing to improve, as needed.
2. Professional Development Department will assist in developing the means to collect data to measure results for enhancing the customer experience.
 - a. Surveys, online, web-based, QR codes, application s/w
 - b. Identify what to monitor and report on (TBD)
 - c. Evaluate where to share the data (TBD)

SERVICE EXCELLENCE - How to make WMNU's feedback loop legendary?

- Employee Engagement Survey team participation
- Survey analysis complete, communicated and recommendations implemented

Adapting to On-Going Process Improvements

Continue to evaluate all processes and implement meaningful and effective changes where needed. Processes include, but are not limited to:

- Recruitment
 - Admission
 - Advising
 - Scheduling
 - Support (students, faculty, staff)
 - Financial aid
 - Business operations
 - Marketing
 - Articulation for transfer
 - Academic program requirements
 - Community connections, etc.
1. University processes should be documented and updated regularly to ensure consistency across divisions; process documentation should be publicly made available. (i.e. Canvas, Web site, Departmental)
 2. Process best practices can/should be shared across divisions to drive efficiency.
 3. Ensuring departments have a process to ensure knowledge base is retained when a Subject Matter Expert leaves the university. (Transition Planning)
 4. Division/Department can determine the priority of the process to be reviewed and should submit to Pro Dev for planning and evaluation.
 5. There will be a formal planning cycle during the Spring semester to evaluate what processes should be reviewed. Pro Dev will submit a final proposal to divisional VPs or leads and solicit team members for participation in project planning.
 6. This evaluation is supported through the 4K Initiative but is not limited to any specific division/department.
 7. **PLEASE NOTE:** This is a Work in Progress program and is subject to change at any time, given new initiatives, funding opportunities, etc.

SERVICE EXCELLENCE - How to make WMNU's process improvements legendary?


- Review current processes and allow for recommendations for improvements
- Develop documentation of all WNMU processes and identify key points of contact to own

APPENDIX

Appendix 1 – Pro Dev Areas of Focus

This section describes the 4 major areas that the Professional Development Department will focus on for the planning year. Focus on New Employee Programs and Customer Service Training is the priority.

Professional Development Department - Current







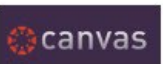
	New Employee Orientation & Onboarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All new hires and new to position employees Employees are required to attend within 30 days of start date. Campus tools, skillsets, customer service strategy & standards, dress guidelines
	WNMU Customer Service Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interactive curriculum - customer experience focused program We are Mustangs serving Mustangs! Campus wide rollout - Spring 2022
	Staff & Faculty Professional Development (Futures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structured plan for faculty and staff development opportunities Professional certification prep (PMP, Lean, AGILE), presentation skill building, mentoring programs, development planning. Faculty will track separately. (MBO, Instructional certifications, scholarships, etc.)
	Business Process Management (Futures)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation of current processes and implementation of changes for better efficiency. Prioritization review at department level. Website, communication planning, rewards/recognition

Appendix 2 – Employee Tools

This section describes basic employee tools that can be used for setting up your messaging in email, voicemail, Teams/Zoom, etc.

Employee Tools Trainings



	Use	Tool	Notes
	Email	Outlook	When at work, open Outlook email on your computer. Check email consistently; respond within 24 hours or set expectations as to when can respond
	Messaging	Teams	Please logon / have open so people can IM you!
	Voice	Desk phone	Answer if it rings!! Respond to request by end of day or set expectations as to when can respond
	Voicemail		Check your voicemail several times a day (or look for the VM indicator light on phone).
	Online Meetings	Zoom	Check with your department about which it prefers!
		Teams	
	Canvas	Coursework	
	Department Documentation	Canvas	Check with your department as to which it uses.
		Teams	



Transforming the Future Together!

Appendix 3 – WNMU Dress Guidelines



WNMU Dress Guidelines

Introduction

Western New Mexico University is an institution that is in support of free-thinking, free thought, and freedom of expression. With proper guidance and fostering the nature of professionalism, we can promote these aspects of higher learning. In doing so, we seek to set guidelines for the University to set a standard of conduct and presentation conducive to the prestigious nature of a University.

As Faculty and Staff, we have a profound impact on students' perception of our knowledge and credibility, rapport, and fairness (Slabert, 2019). In addition, "research indicates that both dress and students' attitude are the important factors to increase the weight on students' learning" (Kasheml 2019). This could ultimately transcend to job placement and confidence in the workplace for current and future students. Ultimately, we can increase one's opinion of their experience in the University setting improving our reputation and perceived quality of education (Carr, D. L., Davies, T. L., & Lavin, A. M., 2010); something we are well aware we already provide.

Whether on the job, in the classroom, on a ZOOM meeting, or attending a formal University event, always remember, you are representing WNMU. We hope to inspire you in joining us on this adventure in redefining the Western Way!

Definitions

- **Business Professional**- generally conservative clothing to portray yourself professionally.
- **Business/Smart Casual**- relating to or denoting a style of clothing that is less formal than traditional business wear, but is still intended to give a professional and businesslike impression.
- **Mustang Fridays**- a time to show your University spirit, relaxed wear expressing mustang labeled clothing or school colors. Athletic shoes are acceptable to wear but must be neat in appearance.

Standards/Examples

Business & casual wear encompasses many looks, but it really means clothing that is appropriate for a professional office environment - neither of these examples equates to sloppiness. It is clothing that allows you to be comfortable at work, yet always look neat and professional. Employees should consider each day's activities when determining what to wear.

All employees are expected to present themselves in a neat and well-kept manner. Clothing should fit appropriately, be neat, clean, in good shape, and free from visible rips, tears, holes, or other heavy wear. Appropriate footwear should be worn at all times.

Examples of appropriate attire include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Dress/khaki pants, or jeans, skirts, dresses w/modest hemlines,
- Dress tops, button-up shirts, collared shirts, or collarless polo shirt
- Loafers, mules, dressy clogs, boots, flats, dress heels, dress sandals, leather deck-type shoes, conservative athletic or walking shoes, and office sneakers.

Examples of inappropriate attire include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Excessively worn Jeans, faded, or have rips/holes
- Items bearing controversial or offensive graphics or slogans
- Overalls, sweats, workout clothes, or jogging suits
- Baggy, form-fitting, or revealing clothes unless covered with an appropriate top or bottom
- Pajamas and other casual home attire
- Flip-flops and slippers; shoes that could pose a safety hazard

Considerations

T-shirts are appropriate in the office setting as part of an outfit with a covering top, jacket, or dress. T-Shirts/Sweatshirts can be worn during Mustang Fridays and should have a WNMU Logo or be of team colors.

Please use perfumes, colognes, and other scents with restraint to reduce any allergic reactions of your coworkers. Minimize distractions from unpleasant body odors and disheveled appearance.

Commencements and Formal University Events

During Commencement, when participating in the events, staff and faculty shall wear matching regalia, dark pants, and preferably dress shoes.

Examples of formal University events are, but are not limited to, Staff/Faculty Senate meetings, honor breakfasts, division quarterlies, one-on-one supervisory meetings, Spring and Fall Convocations, and Regents meetings.

Online Zoom/Teams Courses/Classes/Meetings

For any virtual meeting/event (Zoom/Teams/Online Class, etc.) employees should follow the same guidelines established for office attire and dress appropriately for the event. In addition, backgrounds should be clean in appearance with no offensive items showing. Blurred backgrounds and any digital background with WNMU photos, insignia, logos, etc. are acceptable. An employee should meet the same standards as a physical classroom and/or office.

WNMU is sympathetic to the lives we carry on in the community. We adhere to the life-work balance, and we are aware some of us have children and animals we care for and love. During official school business (e.g. online class, meetings, etc.) attempt to keep all distractions to a minimum giving your attendees your undivided attention and service of care.

Exemptions

Supervisory discretion/implementation of these guidelines shall be based on professional judgment. Things to consider are environment, time of year, and location. During retreats or team-building exercises, directors and supervisors may decide to incorporate temporary exemptions.

Facilities and Applied Science Welding/Electrical have safety standards in which these guidelines may not have a practical and reasonable application. These guidelines default to the departments to make the proper decisions in ensuring their employees are safe.

Athletics also falls under safety regulations with regard to competition and practice. This guideline defers to any dress code or standard they have incorporated in their policies.

Final Note

Clothing that you would wear to go exercising, lounging at home, going to the beach, or going to a club isn't suitable for the workplace. While keeping these standards in mind, employees can still look well-groomed and feel comfortable when following a business/casual dress guideline.

Photo examples are available in APPENDIX A.

Citations:

Kasheml, M. A. (2019, December 26). The Effect of Teachers' Dress on Students' Attitude and Students' Learning: Higher Education View. In Hindawi Education Research International. Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1155/2019/9010589>

Carr, D. L., Davies, T. L., & Lavin, A. M. (2010). The impact of instructor attire on college student satisfaction. *College Student Journal*, 44(1), 101+. https://link.gale.com/apps/doc/A221092142/AONE?u=nm_a_wnmu&sid=bookmark-AONE&xid=0e78bfd6

Slabbert, A. (2019). Lecturer dress code and student perceptions of lecturer professional attributes. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 29(2), 176–181. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14330237.2019.160334>

Heathfield, S. (2021) Photos of Attire for a Workplace With a Casual Dress Code. Photos Help You Understand Proper Work Attire for a Casual Setting (Appendix A.) Retrieved from <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/casual-dress-code-4051114>

Appendix A – Examples

Photo Examples & Descriptions of Standard Business/Smart Casual

The following photos allow you to see what is appropriate to wear to work in an environment that allows employees to dress casually for work. While some work environments require formal dress attire and others, business casual, more and more organizations are offering employees the work incentive of casual dress for work. Employees rightly view more casual dress codes as an incentive and as a perk. Employees are attracted to organizations that allow employees to dress comfortably for work.



EXAMPLE 1: You can definitely sport your denim while still looking professional, as long as you steer clear of the t-shirt. A simple patterned or solid color top is all it takes. Additionally, a look that could be considered slightly more business than casual would be a silky top tucked into a solid color pencil skirt or a summer dress paired with a blazer.

As for footwear, choose something along the lines of a sensible flat or a simple ankle boot. Sneakers aren't completely out of the question as long as they're presentable and don't have that dirty, worn-in look.



EXAMPLE 2: The images featured are great examples of appropriate clothing for a casual work environment. Other dress codes exist that are more appropriate for formal, business casual, and smart casual workplaces.

A casual dress code means that employees can dress in comfortable, informal clothing. Although the employees' comfort is a priority, certain standards are required—clothing must be appropriate and still professional.



EXAMPLE 3: These employees are dressed well, in comfortable and relaxed clothing, but they still maintain a professional image. Also, keep in mind that modesty in dress is not only important but so is modesty in accessories.

Although the degree of informality may vary from more casual to a little dressier in some cases, it is important to remember that employee comfort is the main priority, as long as the employees still look professional and are dressed appropriately for the workplace.