

# Competent, Prompt, and Diligent Representation

A message from the MSBA Student and Professionalism Committees

There are five core values in the legal profession: 1) Respect & Fairness; 2) Service; 3) Honesty, Integrity, and Trustworthiness; 4) Competent, Prompt, and Diligent Representation; and 5) Quality of Justice. This piece addresses Competent, Prompt, and Diligent Representation.

People will rely on you to have the judgment and expertise to serve their legal needs. As a professional you are expected to know the law, the legal process, and how to interact with your clients.

## Core Value: Competence, Promptness and Diligence

### ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct

#### Rule 1.1 Competence

A lawyer shall provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.

#### Rule 1.3 Diligence and Promptness

A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

## Resources:

Minnesota State Bar Association  
612-333-1183

[www.mnbar.org](http://www.mnbar.org)

Minnesota Continuing Legal Education  
612-227-8266

[www.minncle.org](http://www.minncle.org)

Hennepin County Bar Association  
612-752-6601

[www.hcba.org](http://www.hcba.org)

Ramsey County Bar Association  
651-222-0846

[www.ramseybar.org](http://www.ramseybar.org)

## What does this mean for me?

Maintaining these values means that you:

- **Be punctual and meet deadlines.** Meet your deadlines whether in class or a clinic. Punctuality is essential whenever you are dealing with the court. Being late is not tolerated in practice, and jeopardizes client interests.
- **Work hard.** Invest time and effort in all assignments. Recognize that you are learning skills that will help you represent real people with real problems. Practicing law is a vocation, not an academic exercise.
- **Expand your knowledge.** Look at research projects as opportunities to further your legal knowledge. The greater your knowledge, the better able you will be to give legal advice to clients in a wider array of situations.
- **Recognize limitations.** The law is a highly specialized. Do not expect to be knowledgeable in every area of the law. Your client has the right to demand your utmost competence.
- **Utilize CLE courses and lunchtime lecture opportunities.** The Bar offers many opportunities for law students to attend CLE courses for free or at a reduced rate.
- **Seek help when you need it.** If you are working as a student attorney, never hesitate to seek advice and help when you are not sure what to do. Never guess. As you begin your careers, seek out a mentor and others to help you provide the best representation you can.