

Guiding Principles of Onboarding

- **Engage new employees early and often.**

As soon as new employees are hired – and even before they officially start – connect them to the WSU community. Send them their official offer letters, make welcome phone calls, and provide them with links to key resources via the New Employee Resources web page:

hrs.wsu.edu/employees/new-employee-resources

- **Onboarding is a process that occurs over time (6-12 months).**

Onboarding new team members is a process that takes time – it’s not a singular event. Onboarding needs to extend beyond the one-day orientation program.

- **Managers play the most important role.**

Orientation at the departmental level (not at the organization level) is **the** most important part of the onboarding process, and a new employee’s relationship with their manager is often the most significant in an employee’s work life. When managers take the time to create strong onboarding practices and meet with new employees frequently, employee productivity, retention, and loyalty is higher.

- **Deliver the most important information first.**

Before new employees can look to the needs of your team, they need to know what affects them individually and to feel secure on a personal level.

That’s why the first day on the job probably isn’t the best time to talk in any detail about your team’s strategic goals or budget.

- **Onboarding is essentially a three-step process.**

First, new employees need to know things that affect them personally, such as “Where should I park?”, “What should I wear?”

Second, they need to know about things that affect them as a member of a department/school, such as “Who will I be working with?”, “How will my work be judged?”

Once these questions are answered, they are ready to learn more about the University’s goals and mission.

- **Facilitate the process of socialization.**

New employees who feel connected to other new hires, experienced staff members, and other members of the community are much more likely to stay and be productive in their new job.

- **Provide early exposure to senior management.**

A very positive and motivating message is sent to new employees when a senior staff member takes the time to speak to new hires; it helps strengthen the employee’s connection to the University.