



WHITMAN COLLEGE

**Onboarding student employees
with intentionality**

August 2024

Today's conversation

- What's it like to be new?
- What is onboarding?
- Supervisor responsibilities with regard to onboarding
 - Before employees begin working
 - In the early days of onboarding
 - Ongoing conversations
- Returning students



Why is it sometimes so hard to be a new student employee?

- They are likely already making a significant transition, and this is one more.
- This may be their first job.
- They may find our culture to be confusing, hard to discern, and different from anything they have experienced.
- They may not know how to act in an office setting.
- They may be challenged to balance work with their coursework and other student commitments.
- They lack relationships in your department.
- They often feel vulnerable and isolated.
- They may be afraid to ask questions.



What is onboarding?



- Strives to make new employees feel included, valued, and at home where they can feel safe being their authentic selves.
- Emphasizes learning versus doing in the early days.
- Warmly welcomes new employees to the department and people.
- Shares what is important to the department (values).
- Provides practical information, training, and tools needed to get the job done.



When done well, onboarding...

- Shows you care.
- Creates a sense of belonging & psychological safety.
- Improves engagement, productivity, and retention.



Supervisor responsibility: Before the employee begins

- Consider individual or group onboarding
- Have a checklist and plan drafted, and check-ins scheduled with you; assign pieces of their training to different staff.
- Request access to email, Colleague, other electronic accounts, K drive, Google shared drives, etc. & connect with WCTS on technology needs.
- Prepare workspace.
- Inquire about accessibility needs.



Supervisor responsibility: The early days

- Introduce them to other employees.
- Assign a mentor if helpful.
- Review expectations of the position & set short-term goals.
- Share the values of your department.
- Discuss basic office decorum/dress, and don't be afraid to state things that may seem obvious to you.
- Devote time & attention to them early on.
- Give early wins.



Supervisor responsibility:

The early days

- Provide strong direction.
 - Ask them how they like to receive feedback & provide it consistently; emphasize the point of feedback is to help them grow.
 - Share what you hope they will gain from this experience.
 - Ask them about their strengths, and enable them to find ways to use their strengths often.
- Make them feel like an important part of the team.
 - Remember they are students first.
 - Recognize that you could become a strong support to them.
 - Ask for feedback on how their onboarding process is going and what you could do differently for future students.



Supervisor responsibility: 30 day check in

- What do you like about your position so far?
- What's been going well for you?
- What still might not make sense do you?
- What support or direction might you need?
- Do you have access to the resources & tools you need?



Returning students



- It's OK to reset expectations & communicate heightened expectations.
- Help them set new goals for their position and reflect on how they want to grow.
- Involve them in the training/leadership of new students.



Please use us!



- We're here to support you in ways you find meaningful.
- Reach out if you are having performance or attendance concerns with a student employee.
- If you're doing something that's working really well, please let us know what that is.
- If you are having difficulty finding student employees, chances are we know students who need work.
- Send us any feedback!



What's next?

- Basic performance assessments (October)
- Offboarding (February)
- Student employee recognition week (April 13)
- You tell us!

