

New Employee Onboarding: Onboarding Buddy Selection Criteria

A guide to support supervisors and onboarding buddies in creating a successful onboarding experience for new employees

What is an ONBOARDING BUDDY?

An onboarding buddy is an experienced employee who is assigned to a new hire to help them navigate their first weeks and months in their new role. The onboarding buddy serves as a guide and resource for the new hire, providing them with support, answering questions, and helping them learn and navigate the UTHealth Houston culture, policies, and procedures.

ONBOARDING BUDDY Criteria

Hiring managers are responsible for matching an onboarding buddy with the new hire. Selections should be based on the following criteria checklist.

- **Knowledgeable:** The onboarding buddy should have a similar role and job responsibilities as the new hire with at least one-year of employment at UTHealth Houston and a good understanding of the organization's culture, policies, and procedures. A more tenured onboarding buddy may be required for complex roles or departments.
- **Supportive:** The onboarding buddy should be supportive and encouraging. They should be available to provide guidance, advice, and support throughout the onboarding process and make the new hire feel comfortable asking questions and seeking guidance.
- **Patient:** The onboarding process can be overwhelming for new hires. A good onboarding buddy should be patient and understanding, allowing the new hire to learn and adjust at their own pace.
- **Positive:** A positive attitude can go a long way in making the onboarding process a positive experience for new hires. A good onboarding buddy should be positive, enthusiastic, and able to see the value in the onboarding process.
- **Understands Generational Differences:** Understanding generational differences is important for an onboarding buddy because it can help them tailor their approach to meet the needs and expectations of the new hire. Different generations have different attitudes, values, and preferences when it comes to work, communication, and technology.

Hiring Manager Responsibilities

- **Identify onboarding buddy:** The hiring manager should identify the new hire's onboarding buddy using the selection criteria checklist. This individual should have a similar role and job responsibilities within the same department.
 - In the case where there are limited resources within the department and an onboarding buddy with a similar role cannot be identified, please submit the Onboarding Buddy Potential Match form for a list of employees with the same job code within the organization. Before assigning an onboarding buddy from outside the department, it's important to reach out to the supervisor for approval. This information will be included in the list. Ideally, the onboarding buddy is in the same university unit even if not in the same department.
- **Connect onboarding buddy and new hire:** The hiring manager should make introductions and connect the onboarding buddy and new hire within the first week of employment.
- **Establish clear goals and milestones:** The hiring manager should work with the new hire and onboarding buddy to establish clear goals and milestones for the first few weeks and months of the new hire's employment. A structured onboarding plan will help ensure that the new hire is making progress and getting up to speed quickly. (Please reference the New Employee Onboarding Resource for Managers)
- **Provide necessary resources:** The hiring manager should ensure that the new hire has access to all the necessary resources, such as tools, equipment, training, and support, to perform their new role effectively. The hiring manager should also ensure that the onboarding buddy has the resources they need to support the new hire.
- **Monitor progress:** The hiring manager should monitor the new hire's progress and provide feedback on their performance. The hiring manager should also check in with the onboarding buddy regularly to ensure that the new hire is receiving the support they need and feels integrated into the team and organization.

Onboarding Buddy Responsibilities

- **Welcome the new hire:** As soon as the hiring manager has made the introductions, the onboarding buddy should meet and greet the new hire to help them feel welcome.
- **Provide insight on organizational culture:** Explain the organization's culture, its mission, and its values. Provide insight into UTHealth Houston's social norms, expectations, and unwritten rules.
- **Share tools and resources:** Introduce the new hire to the tools and resources they will need to perform their job effectively. This can include helpful resources to navigate the organization's policies and procedures.
- **Provide insider knowledge and tips:** The onboarding buddy should share insider knowledge and tips about the organization, such as the organization's jargon, acronyms, and terminology; the best places to grab lunch; where to find or order office supplies; and any other tips that can help the new hire to settle in.
- **Provide ongoing support:** The onboarding buddy should check in with the new hire regularly and provide ongoing support throughout the onboarding process.
- **Facilitate introductions:** The onboarding buddy should introduce the new hire to colleagues, team members, and other stakeholders. This helps the new hire to feel more comfortable and builds relationships with others in the organization.