

Northwestern | HUMAN RESOURCES

Manager Resource Guide: Onboarding

Congratulations on your new hire! Onboarding provides an opportunity to connect with new employees and to positively impact their experience early in their employment journey. As a manager, you are critical in supporting your new employee as they get acclimated to their new role, their team, and the University.

The Manager Resource Guide equips you with resources to support your new employee in their onboarding journey.

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I. Getting Started

Visit the [Onboarding New Employees](#) website to access:

- The **Guiding Principles of Onboarding** to help you understand your role, and how to best support your new employee.
- The **Manager Checklist**
- The **Peer Partner Toolkit**
- Additional quick reference links and resources to support you and your new employee in their onboarding journey.

II. Resources

Ideas for Welcoming your New Employee

Warmly welcoming your new employee into Northwestern is critically important to creating a sense of belonging and well-being, and it is a key driver of your new employee's engagement.

Consider the following best practices as you think about ways to welcome your new employee to NU. This is not a definitive list, nor is it required that you do any or all of

these. You may select ideas particularly relevant for your unit or adapt them to best fit your organization's needs.

Beyond these best practices, we encourage you to reach out to your fellow managers for additional suggestions via the [MS Teams Manager's Corner Channel](#).

- Send an organization chart with pictures or a picture of the team with members' names included to help your new employee learn names before arriving.
- Send a welcome video letting your new employee know how excited you are that they are joining the team. Involve other team members as well.
- Place balloons, welcome notes from the team, Northwestern-branded items, or flowers in the new employee's workspace before they arrive on the first day.
- During the new hire's first day or week, have team members wear name tags, or ensure their names are visible at their workstations to help the new employee feel more comfortable learning everyone's names.
- Schedule an office tour to help your employee learn where offices are located, how to work office equipment, and to identify partner offices and eating establishments nearby.
- Schedule a social event to welcome your new employee, such as lunch with the team or a happy hour. This can be done multiple times across different groups within the organization to help your new hire acclimate.
- Schedule daily or frequent "touch base" times that are an open invitation for the new employee to ask questions or share experiences they may be struggling with as a new hire.
- Conduct an "entry interview" to find out what is important to your new employee; their likes and dislikes, motivators, and demotivators; and other factors.

Welcome Email Templates

Note: These templates are offered as examples of what you could include in a message to your new employee and to your department. Please adapt these templates to what works best for you and your school/unit.

New Employee Welcome Email Template – to New Employee (From Manager)

Dear (New Employee's First Name),

Welcome to Northwestern University (department name)! We are delighted that you will be joining our team and we are excited to help you get started on your Northwestern career.

In preparation for your first day, here is some information that will help your arrival on campus go smoothly.

Start Date:

Working Schedule (include information from your [workplace strategies](#)):

Parking/Commuting Information:

Where to meet on the first day (and who will meet the new employee):

Please review the [New Employee Onboarding Checklist](#) as there are important items under the pre-arrival section you need to complete before your first day. [The New Employee Website](#) also includes links to helpful resources as you begin your Northwestern journey.

If you have any questions about the information above or any other questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. I am looking forward to welcoming you as a new employee.

Sincerely,

(Manager's Name)

New Employee Welcome Email Template – to Department (From Manager)

Dear (department name) team,

I am pleased to announce that (new employee's name) will be joining our department as (job title) on (start date). We are delighted that (new employee's name) will be joining our team!

(New Employee's name) joins us from ____ (add in any relevant background information about employee)

(New Employee's name) will be working (add info on work schedule) and located (add location of workspace). Please stop by and introduce yourselves.

Please include (new employee's name) on any relevant distribution lists and Team channels to help acclimate them to their role and to welcome them to our department.

Please join me in welcoming (new employee's name) on their first day (add start date).

Sincerely,

(Manager's Name)

III. Peer Partner Best Practices and Resources

The Onboarding Peer Partner role is an additional touchpoint in the New Employee Onboarding journey. When surveyed, new employees assigned peer partners noted that their partners were integral to a positive onboarding experience.

**Note: This role is offered as a recommendation and should be adapted to fit your school or unit process. The following resources can be adapted to fit you and your school/unit.*

Peer Partner Selection Criteria

Hiring managers are responsible for selecting a peer partner, who embodies the traits below.

Traits of a Peer Partner

- A peer or other employee who is familiar with the new hire's role
- Ideally someone who supports the same type of work as the new hire
- Someone who is familiar with the departmental values and culture
- A trusted employee and/or role model on the team
- An individual who may be interested in leadership opportunities or development
- Is willing to be accessible for the new hire or transferring employee

**Note: A peer partner does not take the place of a manager. The hiring manager/supervisor is responsible for the employee's overall job performance and development.*

Check out the [Peer Partner Toolkit](#) for additional information on this role.

Sample Email Templates:

Email to New Employee to Introduce the Peer Partner Role: (from Manager):

This email is suggested for use if you do not introduce the new employee and peer partner in person on the first day.

Dear (New Employee's Name),

Welcome and congratulations on your new position! I have assigned (Partner's Name) (Title/Position) to be your Peer Partner during your Onboarding experience.

Your Peer Partner is an additional touchpoint for you during your Onboarding experience. They are there to help guide you as you get acclimated to your role, our team, and to the University. As your manager, I will lead your onboarding experience, but my hope is that your Peer Partner will become a trusted resource and an additional person to reach out to with questions.

(Peer Partner Name) will be reaching out during your first week to introduce themselves and provide an overview of their role. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you!

Sincerely,

(Manager's Name)

Email to Peer Partner to Congratulate them on their Selection (from Manager)

Dear (Partner's Name),

Thank you for agreeing to be a Peer Partner for our new employee, (new employees name, title, start date).

The purpose of this partnership is to ensure new employees have multiple touchpoints during their onboarding journey and that they feel welcomed, re-affirming their decision to join NU. This is a wonderful opportunity for the new employee to meet colleagues, as well as get acclimated to our team quickly and comfortably -- and an opportunity for you to support our newest employee and share your knowledge with them.

Please see the [Peer Partner Toolkit](#) to understand more about your role and responsibilities. I will look for a time for us to meet before (new employee's name) starts so that we can agree on the scope of your role and how we can best support each other and (new employee's name).

I will notify (new employee's name) of this partnership and copy you on the communication.

Thank you for serving as a Peer Partner!

Sincerely,

(Manager's Name)