



Onboarding: Assigning a Buddy/Colleague

The buddy system is designed to support and provide new hires with guidance and information to help transition them into their new role. It is an opportunity for the assigned buddy to directly (and positively) affect the experience that a new hire has with the University of Calgary. A buddy is not a replacement for the hiring manager, but rather a peer who “knows the ropes” and is able to partner with the new employee to offer advice and guidance on how to “get things done”.

The Benefits of the Buddy System are:

- Faster integration into the university’s culture and processes
- Increased employee satisfaction, morale, and retention

Selecting a Buddy/Colleague

The assigned buddy should meet the following criteria:

- Be a peer of the new employee
- Have enough organizational experience to competently assist the new hire in navigating the processes, policies, procedures, and norms at the University of Calgary
- Be a positive role model and strong performer
- Show initiative to take on the role and is willing to take on additional responsibilities

The Relationship

The relationship of a buddy is ongoing. It is expected that the buddy be in contact with the new hire frequently; however, as the new hire becomes more comfortable in their role the contact will decrease over time. Key aspects of the relationship are:

- Confidentiality and trust
- The development of rapport and respect
- Continuous interest in, and communication with, the new hire
- Accessibility of the buddy to the new hire
- Sharing knowledge and experience

Buddy/Colleague Responsibilities

The following are suggested guidelines and expectations of the assigned buddy:

- Be available to greet the new hire on their first day
- Organize coffee/lunch with team members on their first day, and at least once a week for the first month
- Direct the new hire to resources that will support them in their role
- Provide guidance on completing first assignments and navigating the department
- Answer questions and check in periodically
- Show them around campus
- Suggest training (if appropriate)

Work from Home Buddy Tips (Online Buddy)

Due to current circumstances, the buddy system has moved to an Online format. Below are some tips that will assist you with how to be an effective “buddy from home”:

- The relationship has not changed. Support for new employees is still required when working from home
- Create an Outlook “meet and greet” calendar invite for the new hire’s first day of work
- Meet and greet the new hire on their first day using Skype, Zoom, or Microsoft Teams. Introduce yourself as their buddy and define your role and how you are able to help
- Set a series of Outlook calendar invites to check in. We recommend weekly check-ins for the first month of employment
- Chat to the new employee often. Email, phone, or instant message them daily in order to create a welcoming environment
- Reach out to onboarding@ucalgary.ca if you have any questions

Ultimately the goal of the buddy system is to put the employee at ease as they integrate into the university work force. We want them to feel welcomed, included, and part of our ‘One University’ team throughout the onboarding process.