Onboarding:

Role of a Postdoc "Buddy"

The **Postdoc Buddy system** is designed to support and provide new Postdocs with guidance and information to help assist them transition into their new role. It is also an opportunity for the assigned buddy to directly (and positively) affect the experience a new hire has with the organization. The "buddy" is not a replacement for the hiring manager, but rather a colleague who "knows the ropes" and is able to partner with the new Postdoc to offer advice and guidance on how to "get things done".

The potential benefits of the buddy system are:

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

The Buddy Relationship

The relationship of a buddy is ongoing. Initially, it is expected that the buddy will be in contact with the new Postdoc frequently; however, as the new Postdoc becomes more comfortable in their role, the contact will become less frequent.

The assigned buddy is expected to:

- Have enough organizational experience to competently assist the new hire in navigating the processes, policies, procedures, and norms at the U of C.
- Be a positive role model and strong performer.
- Be willing to make the time to take on the "buddy" role and the associated responsibilities.

Key aspects of the relationship are:

- Confidentiality and trust.
- Development of rapport and respect.
- Continuous interest in, and communication with, the new Postdoc.
- Accessibility of the buddy to the new hire.
- Sharing knowledge and experience.
- Ensuring the new Postdoc feels that they are working effectively.

Buddy Responsibilities

The following are suggested guidelines and responsibilities of the buddy:

- Be available to greet the new Postdoc on the first day.
- If needed, accompany the Postdoc to pick up key documentation such as:
    - **SIN card** - For international Postdocs, registering for a SIN is essential and necessary before bringing the Postdoc to the Postdoc Office for introductions. The new Postdoc cannot be added to the HR system without a SIN number. For details on obtaining a SIN card, see the '*After Arrival*' section on the Immigration Guidelines webpage.
    - **Alberta Health Card** – See the Healthcare Services webpage for details.
    - **Driver's License** – See the Getting Around website for details.
- Guide the Postdoc to the Postdoc Office for a pre-scheduled appointment with the Postdoc Program Coordinator.
- Show the Postdoc around campus; e.g. take them to the Main Lobby of the International House to get their UCID card.
- Organize coffee/lunch on the first day (if possible with team members).
- Check in at least once a week for the first month to answer questions, etc.
- Direct the Postdoc to the Living in Calgary webpage to help them get information on:
    - Immigrating to Canada
    - Finding a place to live in Calgary
    - Daycare options for children
    - Setting up a bank account
    - Finding a doctor
    - Applying for Alberta Health Insurance
    - Getting an Alberta driver's license
    - And much more …
- Direct the Postdoc to appropriate resources (online/people) needed for the job.
- Provide guidance on completing first assignments and navigating the department.
- Listen to concerns and suggest solutions.

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 welcoming environment.
- Reach out to *onboarding@ucalgary.ca* if you have any questions.

Ultimately the goal of the buddy system is to put the Postdoc at ease as they integrate into the University community. Throughout the onboarding process, we want the Postdoc to feel welcomed, included, and part of our ‘One University’ team.

Visit the Onboarding – Postdoc page for more information on how to help ensure your Postdoc is set up for success in their new role.