

Conversation Guide for Supervisors/Managers

As busy supervisors/managers, engaging your new employee is sometimes challenging. However, a critical component of the onboarding process involves having *regular*, one-on-one meetings with your new hire (both formal and informal). The benefit of these discussions is the new employee will be more engaged, clear on expectations and policies, and well acclimated. Overall, your goal should be to create an environment where your new employee feels they can openly come to you with questions, concerns, and even constructive feedback.

The following topics and questions have been developed as a guide to be used in conjunction with the Onboarding Checklist, located on the Onboarding Program Resources webpage, to facilitate ongoing conversations with your new employee. In addition, you should also consider asking your team what they wish *they* would have known as new hires to the department and incorporate their feedback into your discussions. Ensure alignment with any onboarding materials provided by your department as well.

First Day/Week/Month

Getting to Know Your New Employee (and You):

- Talk about the new employee's employment background and comfort level in completing certain tasks relevant to the position.
- What are the employee's training preferences—online, live, self-study, hands-on, on-the-job training, shadowing?
- What motivates the employee to be successful? For example, regular acknowledgement/feedback, public or private recognition, to work independently or as a team?
- Talk about the role of the employee's assigned onboarding sponsor and why you chose this individual.
- What are your new employee's professional goals?
- Share your professional background/history.
- Discuss your preferred communication style, management style, and work schedule.

About the New Position:

- Discuss how the new employee fits into the organization and the line of supervision.
- Walk through the department's organization chart.
- Talk about how decisions are generally made. What is the process flow? Also, outside of the unit, who are important stakeholders in decision making?
- Elaborate on how your new employee's position contributes to the unit/division/department—basically, how/why the position is meaningful and contributes to the organization's business goals/mission/vision.
- Talk about what your work unit values *most* (for example, customer service, meeting deadlines, collaboration/communication, etc.)
- Explain any current or upcoming projects of interest and your new employee's role.

About Your Team:

- Explain each team member's role and responsibilities (who serves as lead, who is the "go-to" person for different questions/subject areas, etc.).
- Discuss how the team prefers to work (independently versus collaboratively, etc.). Help your new hire fit in with the rest of your team.

About the Organization:

- Review organizational chart for the department.
- Review your department's Strategic Plan, your team's role in fulfilling it, and any questions.
- Share the challenges that the organization is facing (if appropriate to share).
- Illuminate the unwritten rules, cultural norms, the "personality" of the department, "right" behaviors/social rules, etc. For example, how would you describe the organization's overall environment? Is it fun, serious, data driven, complex, etc.?
- Describe, based on your experience, the three *most* important things to know about the organization.
- Consider sharing any lessons learned on your part that might help your employee avoid certain cultural/political missteps.

Performance Management:

- Discuss, if applicable, the probationary period and how your new employee will be evaluated.
- Communicate your expectations for success and specific goals for your new employee.

Ongoing Throughout the Year

Schedule frequent one-on-one meetings at least at 30, 60, 90 days post hire. The following questions are grouped together for convenience, but should be considered and repeated at regular check-in meetings as appropriate.

How's It Going?

- Is the job what the employee expected it to be? Is the employee feeling properly challenged?
- Does the employee feel generally comfortable within the organization and its culture? Does the employee have role clarity?
- Does the employee have support and resources to do the job successfully?
- How are team dynamics? Is the employee getting necessary support from others within the unit/department?
- How is the employee's partnership with the selected onboarding sponsor going?
- Discuss tasks and projects the employee has performed. Has the new employee developed and/or strengthened *new* skills? Are there other skills the employee would like to develop further?
- Is the employee receiving enough assistance and feedback from *you*? If not, what else is needed? How can you support the employee?

Performance Management:

- Give regular performance feedback. Is your new employee progressing as well/fast as you would like? Are milestones/deadlines being met? (If not, be sure to have a specific plan which includes deadlines/milestones and other measureable tasks.)
- Schedule probation report discussions.
- Determine if additional training/job shadowing would be helpful.
- What's on the horizon in terms of the new employee's workload (if applicable) and your expectations?
- Review [statewide training](#) for continuous professional development opportunities.