

Employee Onboarding

A guide to develop a customized and engaging onboarding plan/agenda for new hires



What is an onboarding plan/agenda?

- The onboarding plan/agenda is a pre-planned structured document that serves as a *two-week (or more)* schedule for your new hire.



Why is the onboarding plan/agenda important?

- There are several stakeholders involved in a new hire's onboarding, which means the onboarding plan/agenda ensures **accountability** and **participation** by confirming who is responsible for each meeting/discussion in the plan.
- Scheduling ahead is pivotal, particularly in our virtual environment where casual 'pop-ins' are no longer. It's not just about scheduling – it also shows our new employee that we have thoughtfully and purposefully planned out their first few weeks with the intent to make their experience **memorable** and **fulfilling**.
- This **structured plan** will set new hires up for success.

How do we design and execute a customized onboarding plan?

- Planning ahead is critical and we recommend utilizing the tools and resources within this guide
- Throughout your recruitment process - ideally when you have identified a need in your department, start to map out your onboarding plan by filling in the six elements listed in this document. Once you have identified these pertinent details, the onboarding plan will encompass the critical elements needed for success!
- Use a word/excel document or pen and paper – do what works best for you to brainstorm.

Step 1:

Identify key stakeholders that your new hire will be working with, partnering with and/or supporting

- Provide your new hire with pertinent details: name, job title, relationship context and the purpose of the meeting – this will allow your new hire to generate questions in advance and come prepared to the introductory meeting(s).
- Avoid booking numerous back-to-back meetings – this will prevent onboarding burnout.
- Intentionally plan time between meetings to allow your new hire to decompress.



Step 2:

Identify key training

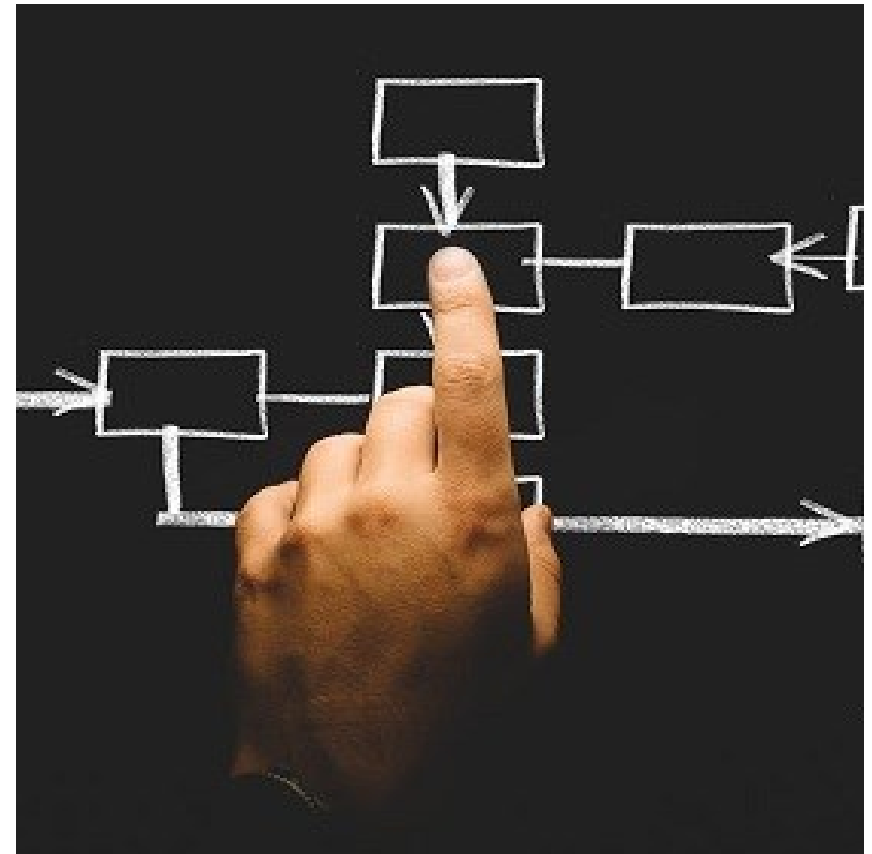
- Provide your new hire with any links and/or resources required for the training
- This includes system training, department training, as well as job shadowing



Step 3:

Identify key senior leaders for your new hire to meet

- It is important for new hires to connect with the senior leadership team to understand departmental and organizational expectations
- Spending time to foster these positive relationships will be critical to the new hire's impression of the organization
- Building the internal network is essential to ensure the employee quickly feels a sense of belonging



Step 4:

Identify frequent one on one sessions (direct Supervisor/Manager) to establish expectations and subsequently, ensure your new hire is set up for success

- Building an impactful relationship with your new hire is critical to success
- Establishing approachability from day one is pivotal
- Get to know your new hire and their communication style so you can best adapt your approach to meet their learning needs
- In order to establish this relationship, there needs to be **frequent** touch points throughout the weeks dedicated to questions, concerns and open discussion



Step 5:

Identify helpful resources, links, templates and/or documents

- Intentionally schedule open time periods throughout the onboarding plan.
- Provide your new hire with **autonomy** over their onboarding plan by providing a list of useful resources and links that can be reviewed at their own pace.
- Could include web links, shared drives, resources, strategic plans, organizational charts, literature.



Step 6:

Identify an onboarding buddy

- Mutually beneficial for both parties as it provides the onboarding buddy with an opportunity to demonstrate and develop mentoring experience and provides the new hire with ongoing support for miscellaneous questions
- Broadens the new hire's network right from day one
- Onboarding buddies bring many benefits:
 1. Provides context – determines relevant stakeholders, sheds light on culture of the organization
 2. Boosts productivity
 3. Improves new employee satisfaction



Coordinating the onboarding plan

Execution

- Once you have identified these key elements, you can start coordinating the plan using the **sample onboarding plan** below as an example.



Day 1

Sample Agenda

- Give your new employee an amazing first impression of their new career choice with an **interactive** first day
- Review the onboarding plan to set expectations for the coming weeks – **transparency** is critical
- This is our first opportunity to **wow** our new hires
- Remember, the goal is for our new employee to leave after their first day feeling **excited** and **confident** that they made the right decision to join McMaster University

Time	Agenda	Contact Details / Meeting Objective
8:30-10:00am	Welcome to McMaster! One on one meeting with direct supervisor. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review of onboarding plan and what to expect for the week• Present (or send) welcome token• Initial questions/comments	
10:00-11:00am	Join weekly team meeting to meet immediate team members. (Include interactive activity to allow new hire to get to know team members)	
11:00am-Noon	Job specific training	
Noon-1:00pm	LUNCH	
1:00pm-2:00pm	Onboarding meeting with Human Resources	
2:00pm-3:00pm	Open time	
3:00pm-4:00pm	Meeting with direct supervisor to review first day experience and discuss agenda for tomorrow	

Day 2

Sample Agenda

- Combination of open time, meetings with key stakeholders, job specific training
- Avoids several back-to-back zoom meetings to prevent onboarding burnout
- Lunch hour included
- One on one meeting/touch point with direct supervisor included

Time	Agenda	Contact Details / Meeting Objective
8:30-9:00am	Open time	
9:00-10:00am	Meeting with key stakeholder	
10:00-11:00am	Job specific training	
11:00am-Noon	Open time	
Noon-1:00pm	LUNCH	
1:00pm-2:30pm	Job shadowing	
2:30pm-3:30pm	Meeting with key stakeholder	
3:30pm-4:30pm	Meet with direct supervisor to review the day, answer questions/concerns	

Day 3

Sample Agenda

- Combination of open time, meeting with key stakeholder, meet & greet with onboarding buddy, health & safety training and job specific training
- Avoids several back-to-back zoom meetings to prevent onboarding burnout
- Lunch hour included
- One on one meeting/ touch point with direct supervisor included

Time	Agenda	Contact Details / Meeting Objective
8:30-9:00am	Open time	
9:00-10:00am	Meeting with onboarding buddy/mentor	
10:00-Noon	Health & Safety mandatory training	
Noon-1:00pm	LUNCH	
1:00pm-2:30pm	Job specific training	
2:30pm-3:30pm	Meeting with key stakeholder	
3:30pm-4:30pm	Meet with direct supervisor to review the day, answer questions/concerns	

Day 4

Sample Agenda

- Combination of open time, meetings with key stakeholders and senior leaders, job shadowing
- Avoids several back-to-back zoom meetings to prevent onboarding burnout
- Lunch hour included
- One on one meeting/touch point with direct supervisor included

Time	Agenda	Contact Details / Meeting Objective
8:30-9:00am	Open time	
9:00-10:00am	Time with direct supervisor	
10:00-Noon	Job shadowing	
Noon-1:00pm	LUNCH	
1:00pm-2:30pm	Meeting with senior leader	
2:30pm-3:30pm	Meeting with key stakeholder	
3:30pm-4:30pm	Open time	

Day 5

Sample Agenda

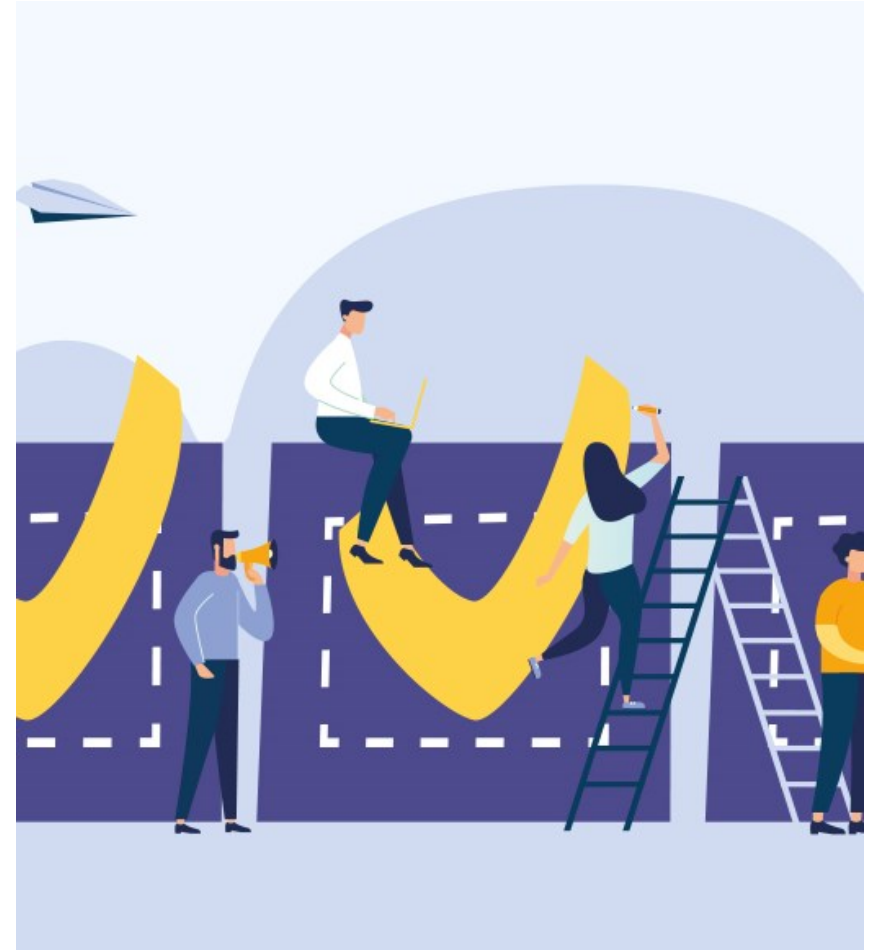
- Combination of open time, meetings with key stakeholders and senior leaders
- Avoids several back-to-back zoom meetings to prevent onboarding burnout
- Lunch hour included
- Team meeting to foster relationship building with interactive element included
- One on one meeting/ touch point with direct supervisor to answer questions/concerns and provide an overview of expectations for week 2

Time	Agenda	Contact Details / Meeting Objective
8:30-9:00am	Open time	
9:00-10:00am	Meeting with stakeholder	
10:00-Noon	Team meeting with interactive element included (icebreaker, game)	
Noon-1:00pm	LUNCH	
1:00pm-2:30pm	Meeting with senior leader	
2:30pm-3:30pm	Open time	
3:30pm-4:30pm	Meet with direct supervisor to review the week, answer questions/concerns and provide an overview of agenda for next week <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask for feedback on first week plan	

Week 2

Agenda

- Week 2 should be structured similarly to week 1
- A combination of meetings, job specific training, open time and 1:1 discussion with direct supervisor
- At the end of week 2, the onboarding plan should be re-visited to confirm all items are complete
- If anything is outstanding, it can be re-booked for the following week



Any questions?

Please reach out!



Samantha Boudreau

Talent Acquisition &
Onboarding Specialist

Boudrs2@mcmaster.ca