



Student Employee Onboarding Recommendations

Once you have received final confirmation from Student Employment that your new student employee has been hired, there is still more to do to make sure that your new student employee feels comfortable and can be successful in their new role. The following recommendations are intended to help departments when onboarding all new student employees, in addition to any position-specific training the student employee will receive.

What makes student employees unique?

For many students, a student position is their first experience in a professional work environment. While they may have excellent technical skills needed to do their jobs, they may not yet have experience in an office environment. Therefore, it is especially important that supervisors of student employees help shape positive workplace behaviors by spending time emphasizing basic workplace habits such as arriving on time, arranging for time off, and following unit and department work rules.

College is also a time of transition for many students. They are learning autonomy, discovering their personal and professional identities, and developing purpose and integrity. While this time in a student's life can contain many questions and hesitations, students will thrive in a welcoming atmosphere with clear expectations and understanding staff. One suggested method for training student employees is the "Tell, Show, Do, Review" approach:

- a. Tell them what they will be doing and why.
- b. Show them how to do it.
- c. Have them do the work under supervision, then independently.
- d. Have them review the task with their supervisor a few days later to show they can still do it correctly.

While different from regular staff, student employees are GW employees, so basic employee rights and good personnel practices still apply to them. They also want to feel like part of the team and understand how the work they are doing contributes to the department and the university. By emphasizing the student's role as part of the team that achieves a larger goal you can help students find meaning and purpose in their work, leading to a more positive experience for them and a more dedicated and energetic employee for you.

Keep in mind that student employees are still developing as professionals and individuals, and will need support and guidance along the way. One way you can assist them in that process is by focusing on helping them develop the [GW Professional Competencies](#) through their work. Employers are asked to select a few of these competencies that students would be able to learn in this role when they create requisitions in Cornerstone - think back to the ones you selected and try to incorporate them into the training you provide as you onboard your new student employee.

Please use the checklist on the follow pages as a guide to successfully on-board and train your new student employee.



Before the student's first day:

- Ensure that you have received the final notification of hire from GW Student Employment - **remember, if you have not yet received that notification, the student has not yet been hired and is not legally authorized to begin working.**
- Determine (with input from the student) their work schedule.
- Prepare the student's work area with office supplies, space for them to work, and a safe storage area for their personal belongings.
- Send a message of introduction to coworkers so they know the student will be joining your team and can prepare to meet them.
- Send a message to the student instructing them when and where they should arrive and who will greet them on their first day.
- Create a training plan for your student employee. Assign responsible and knowledgeable person(s) to help enact this plan, possibly including a model student employee in the same role.

On the student's first day:

- Give the student a tour of the office, including their workspace, kitchen or break areas, restrooms, printers / copiers, extra supplies, where you are located, and any other important locations they may need to know about.
- Provide any guidelines, instructions, or manuals that apply to the student's position, so they have a reference guide for how to do the basic tasks required of them.
- Provide any department or institutional policies that the student will be expected to follow to the student in **written** format. Potential subjects include: dress code, computer usage, cell phone usage, listening to music, eating, procedure for visitors / guests, confidentiality of sensitive information, procedure for calling in sick or notifying the office of a planned absence. Here is a sample [Professional Conduct Policy](#) that your department may use.
- Explain the mission or goals of your department, including why the work you do is necessary and important to the university and the larger community.
- Introduce the student to their direct colleagues and any other campus colleagues they will be in touch with often.
- Review safety and security measures for the office, including any emergency protocols or evacuation plans.
- [Student Worksheet](#)**: There is an optional worksheet that we have provided for students to collect necessary information about their new job - we suggest filling this out with them as a part of introducing them to their office environment and job duties.

During the student's first month:

- Set up regular check-in meetings with the student to ensure they feel comfortable with their new job duties, environment, and coworkers. Let the student know they are encouraged to ask as many questions as needed so they can learn their responsibilities and succeed in their new position.
- Address any issues that arise promptly. It is easier to take corrective action for a behavior or misunderstanding sooner rather than later.

Ongoing throughout the student's employment:



- ❑ Set up periodic check-ins with the student to ensure their continued comfort and success with their position. Give feedback on student's job performance and suggest areas for improvement.
- ❑ Whenever appropriate, include the student on things like staff discussions, meetings, and decision making to help the student feel like a part of the team.
- ❑ Keep open lines of communication regarding student's scheduling needs, including time off or reduced hours during school breaks or exam times. Remember, student employees are students first.