

Supervising Student Employees: A checklist for preparing, onboarding, and supervising

When supervising student staff, effective onboarding and supervision processes are important for helping students make a successful transition into a new workplace. Effective onboarding and supervision processes increase the student's sense of belonging in a new learning environment, reduce the time it takes for them to reach desired productivity levels, and improve their overall learning and performance.

Please tailor this document to make it as useful as possible for you and your team.

	Date Completed
Before First Day of Work	
Provide general info about your organization, office, policies, and regulations.	
Send any administrative paperwork that can be completed in advance.	
Set-up email and organization accounts.	
Provide workspace expectations, prepare workspace and/or make sure students have access to required tools at home (e.g., wi-fi, bandwidth, phone) and clarify what you will or will not be providing (e.g., hardware, software, office supplies, reimbursement for wi-fi overages); arrange for delivery or pick-up (if applicable).	
Develop an in-person or remote training plan and schedule for first few weeks.	
Send email to your team announcing arrival of new student and distribute orientation plan to relevant team members.	
Ask the student if they have other questions that they would like to have covered before they start.	

During First Day of Work	Date Completed
Welcome student in person or by call or video, allowing time for questions and getting acquainted.	
Reinforce team culture, introduce student to staff making sure to identify who to go to for support on key topics.	
Consider having team members book coffee breaks with the student; ensure student is now included (as appropriate) in team activities.	
Explain your team’s overall approach to working in-person, remote, or hybrid; ask them if they have worked remotely/hybrid before and what strategies they have used that have been effective.	
Discuss health and safety hazards and resources within the onsite and/or remote workplace. You can use this home office SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) and this home office safety checklist that is specific to working remotely from home.	
Ensure student knows where to find organizational policies, including those related to occupational health and safety, harassment and discrimination (including sexual harassment), privacy and confidentiality, workplace accommodations, codes of conduct and incident or reporting procedures.	
Discuss your personal communication preferences and office communication norms, including if quick questions can be asked by chat; get to know their communication and learning style and preferences.	
Review expectations for hours of work, schedule, pay schedule, overtime policy, vacation planning, time tracking procedures.	
Discuss procedures for scheduling time off and unexpected absences.	
Review departmental policies for cell phones, personal calls, social media and personal computing.	
Computer and tech orientation (logins, password, networks, email, voicemail).	

Allow the student the opportunity to share any responsibilities they have outside of work (e.g., childcare, eldercare); review accommodation policies; discuss any required accommodations.	
Discuss organizational goals and/or priorities for Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity.	
Have the student complete any outstanding forms.	
Review employee resources and supports (e.g., employee resource groups, health and wellness services).	
Provide general organization/sector orientation materials to be reviewed and consider providing an overview yourself.	
Ask the student if there is anything that you haven't covered that they have questions about.	

During First Two Weeks	Date Completed
Consider checking in with your student at the beginning and end of each workday for the first two weeks, encouraging them to keep a running list of questions, list of what they have accomplished, and their plans for the following day.	
Schedule an introductory meeting to review job description, responsibilities, competencies and expectations, frequency and modality of future meetings, how to receive questions and how often student can expect to receive feedback.	
Ask the student to complete any initial goal setting, skills development, or mentorship activities that they will be completing as part of their work/internship/volunteer role.	
Provide the training plan and schedule, which could include a checklist for them to follow; consider opportunities for networking and ensure these are intentionally planned in lieu of organic connections.	

If remote, encourage the student to seek resources and support for working remotely (such as this CEWIL Working at Home tipsheet).	
Review requirements for performance appraisals and timelines for updates and other communications.	
Arrange for any company and/or department specific training (e.g. computer software training).	
Ensure site-specific health and safety training is complete.	
Review team meeting protocols and expectations.	
Provide a structured workplan for the student or develop one with them to ensure expectations are clear, with clear deliverables and timelines. Include several projects or tasks to ensure the student remains productive if one is delayed.	
Review expectations, processes, and policies related to the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Large Language Models (LLMs); be specific about what forms of AI assistance and/or tools are allowed, restricted, or prohibited, along with expectations for original work, when to disclose use of AI, and how to document AI assistance.	
Ask student for feedback about their first two weeks, including what strategies they have found effective for working and whether they have found any challenges that they have not yet shared with you; ask them specifically about how their relationships with the rest of the team are developing and assess whether this is progressing well or needs attention.	

On an Ongoing Basis	Date Completed
Set up a formal structure for the student to report on their progress with their tasks and projects.	
Communicate openly and often, switch to two-way (phone or video) immediately if any confusion or tension arises.	
Consider starting the day off with quick morning team meetings, including the student setting the tone for the day (especially in remote work environments).	

Schedule 1:1 meetings on an ongoing basis to provide consistent feedback, check in on work progress and their well-being, and maintain a strong connection.	
Consider ongoing training needs and opportunities for networking.	
Make yourself available throughout the day by phone, email or chat or identify who else on the team they can reach out to in your absence.	
Provide meaningful work (either training or substantive work) with increased responsibility; consider smaller, manageable deliverables rather than focusing on big projects.	
Reinforce team culture, set a positive emotional tone as a leader, foster connection between the student and team members.	
Have empathy; recognize the student might feel unsure of themselves, lack experience in a professional environment, be feeling anxious, or lack resources. Provide ongoing mentorship and support and share your own process of adapting.	
Watch for performance issue warning signs, including missing deadlines or being unavailable for meetings, ensure you respond by identifying your concerns, asking about their well-being, and reinforcing expectations.	
Address issues and conflicts promptly, ensuring clear expectations, regular 1-on-1 check-ins, and consistent two-way communication (ideally with video if remote).	
Ask student for feedback periodically, encouraging ongoing reflection, which boosts learning, productivity, and job satisfaction.	

During Final Month	Date Completed
Provide the process and expectations for exiting (e.g., work priorities, exit report and other documentation, exit interview).	
If applicable, review any final deliverables early and provide feedback.	

Ask the student to complete any final reflective components associated with goal setting, skill development, or mentorship components of the experience. Meet with them to discuss their reflections.	
Consider using standardized exit interview questions, hold an exit interview to hear about the student's experience and share final feedback with them.	
Ask for input from your team on a card or similar token; or consider hosting a thank you coffee break with your whole team or similar gathering to express gratitude.	