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

When supervising student staff, effective onboarding and supervision processes are important for both the student and the supervisor. 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.

Before First Day of Work	Date Completed
Send a warm introductory email with point-of-contact and first-day plan, being sure to acknowledge COVID-19	
Provide general info about your organization, office, policies, and regulations; include information about COVID-19 response safety procedures and protocol in the office (if applicable)	
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 safe pick-up (if applicable)	
Develop an in person or remote training plan and schedule for first few weeks;(modify existing onboarding and training procedures to make them remote, if applicable)	
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 video, allow time for questions, 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/remotely/hybrid and them if they have worked remotely/hybrid before and what strategies they have used that they have found 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.	
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 phone, personal calls, social media and personal computing	
Computer and tech orientation (log-ins, password, networks, email, voicemail)	
Allow the student the opportunity to share any responsibilities they have outside of work due to COVID-19 (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	

Recommend that the student register for EL WrapAround workshops webinar with the EL Hub, they can register via [MyCareer](#)	

During First Two Weeks	**Date Completed**
Consider checking in with your student at the beginning and end of each work day 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 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 fill in part 1 of the EL WrapAround Reflection Form to set learning goals, meet with them to discuss it, and encourage them to register for the corresponding workshop on [MyCareer](#)	
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 (e.g., this 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	
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	
Start the day off with quick morning team meetings including the student to set the tone for the day	
Schedule 1:1 meetings on an ongoing basis to provide ongoing and 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 in 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 and schedule regular communication	
Reinforce team culture, set a positive emotional tone as a leader, foster connection between the student and team members (e.g., lunches or coffee breaks, sharing something along a theme at staff meetings)	
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 identifying your concerns, asking about their well-being, and reinforcing expectations	
Manage issues and conflict with extra attention to articulating clear expectations, 1-on-1 check-ins, using two-way communication (if remote, ideally with video and more than usual), and considering COVID circumstances	
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)	
Review their final report or deliverables early and provide feedback	
Ask the student to fill in part 2 of the EL WrapAround Reflection Form to reflect on their goals and skills learned and meet with them to discuss it, encourage them to register for the corresponding workshop on MyCareer	
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	

Sources

- Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario. 2016. *A Practical Guide for Work-Integrated Learning.* Queen's Printer for Ontario.
- Cooper, L., Orrell, J. and Bowden, M. 2010. *Work Integrated Learning: A Guide to Effective Practice.* NY, NY: Routledge.
- McClellan, G.S., Creager, K. and Savoca, M. (2018) A Good Job: Campus Employment as a High-Impact Practice. Sterling, Virginia: Stylus Publishing.
- Tipsheets for onboarding remotely and supervising remotely from CEWIL Canada

Additional Resources

- Queen's University Safe Return to Campus
- Queen's ITS Guide on Connecting, Collaborating, and Teaching Remotely
- Queen's Records Management and Privacy Office Working Remotely Fact Sheet
- Queen's EL Hub's Experiential Learning WrapAround