

The New Hire Onboarding Partner Program

A Guide for Managers and Onboarding Partners

Program Purpose

The New Hire Onboarding Partner Program at UVA helps new hires acclimate to the environment in their first few months and assists with building a personal connection to our environment and culture. Being a new hire can be tough. An “Onboarding Partner” can help answer questions that a new hire might have about the work environment, culture, resources and other information that might be unknown when first joining an organization.

The Manager

It is the hiring manager’s responsibility to assign each new hire an Onboarding Partner and to communicate effectively the expectations to him/her. The hiring manager should choose someone who is highly engaged and knowledgeable about the organization and the department. When meeting with a prospective Onboarding Partner for the first time, the manager/supervisor should discuss the role, potential activities and their commitment to the program should be confirmed. An Onboarding Partner should be identified soon after an offer is accepted and involved in the planning and scheduling of pre/onboarding activities and consider leveraging the New Hire Interest Profile to get to know the new hire.

Additional Onboarding Partner criteria include:

- Time to be accessible and available to the employee
- Familiar with the new hire’s role and work unit
- A solid performer
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Exemplifies UVA values
- Patience and empathy
- Well regarded and trusted by others

The Onboarding Partner

Onboarding Partners are colleagues who are willing to serve as resources for new hires and help them feel more comfortable in their transition by answering questions and providing opportunities to socialize. The relationship with a new hire should be one that is open, positive, and supportive. An Onboarding Partner should be seen as a trustworthy source that the new hire can talk with about concerns, questions, etc. Conversations should be kept confidential. An Onboarding Partner should be supportive of the University and co-workers and discourage gossip and speculation.

Within a new hire’s first month of employment, an Onboarding Partner should help create a seamless and positive pre/onboarding by completing some of the following recommendations:

- Identify needs and answer questions from the new hire
- Introduce him/her to colleagues
- Be available for support during the first year of employment
- Schedule regular check-in conversations (i.e. at least two lunches, coffees, or phone calls)
- Share insights about team norms and “rules of engagement”
- Discuss why you like working at UVA
- Provide recommendations in response to the new hire’s questions about the local community, if they are new to the area