

The Buddy Program

A Guide for Managers/Supervisors and Buddies

The Buddy System at UVA Medical Center helps new team members acclimate to the environment in their first few months and assists with building a personal connection to our environment and culture.

Being a new team member can be tough. A “Buddy” can help answer questions that a new team member might have about the work environment, culture, resources and other information that might be unknown when first joining an organization.

It is the hiring manager’s responsibility to assign each new team member a Buddy and to effectively communicate the expectations to him/her. Choose someone who is highly engaged and knowledgeable about the organization and your department.

When meeting with a prospective Buddy for the first time, please discuss potential activities and gain their commitment to the program.

What is a Buddy?

Buddies are colleagues who are willing to serve as resources for newly hired team members and who will help these new team members feel more comfortable in their transition through answering questions and providing opportunities to socialize. Please note that the assigned Buddy should not be a team member’s preceptor, as this is a different program.

Within a team member’s first month of employment, a Buddy should help with onboarding by completing the some of the following:

- Identifying needs and answering questions from the new team member
- Introducing him/her to colleagues
- Being available for support during a new team member’s first year of employment
- Scheduling regular check-in conversations (i.e. - lunch, coffee, phone calls)
- Sharing insights about “how things are done around here”
- Discussing why you like working at UVA Health System

Expectations for Buddies

Within the first two weeks of the new team member's employment, an introductory meeting should be scheduled as an opportunity for you to provide a tour of the department, introduce him/her to colleagues, and explain the operation of any equipment or systems needed, if applicable.

Explain the difference between a mentor, preceptor, and manager and clear any ground-rules regarding contact outside of working hours. Ask the new team member if he/she has any initial questions and assist with providing answers or directing the new team member to someone who can assist.

Frequency and Timing of Meetings:

You should plan to meet with the new team member at least 30 minutes within his/her first two weeks of employment. This initial meeting should be used to discuss any non-urgent issues that he/she may be experiencing.

During the workday, it may be reasonable to expect daily questions from a new team member during the first couple of weeks of employment. All new team members are different and acclimate to their new roles at different speeds, but if you are receiving a high volume of "urgent" inquiries from the new team member after the first month of employment, please notify your manager.

It is expected that you meet with the new team member during work hours, and your manager should be understanding of the time commitment necessary when a new team member starts. Your manager should notify you if you are spending too much time answering questions or meeting with the new team member. Some buddies and new team members agree to meet on a social basis, outside of working hours. This is not expected of Buddies and is at your discretion. It is also up to you, as the Buddy, to notify the new team member of your expectations regarding being contacted about work-related issues outside of working hours. There is no expectation from the Medical Center regarding this communication outside of work.

Relationship Expectations:

Your relationship with the new team member should be one that is open, positive, and supportive. Please remember that you should be seen as a trustworthy source that the new team member can talk with about concerns, questions, etc. Your conversations should be kept confidential! As a Buddy, you should be supportive of the Medical Center and your co-workers and discourage gossip and speculation.

Termination of the Relationship:

The Buddy relationship can be terminated at any time at the request of either the Buddy or the new team member. In this case, the new team member will be assigned another Buddy, and you will be assigned as the Buddy for another new team member. Please contact your manager if you wish to trigger this process.