“What is the Difference Between Employee Orientation and Onboarding?”

“The difference between employee orientation and onboarding is the amount of time spent connecting the new employee to the job, to the team and to an organization’s mission and values. The payoff is better retention and a more fully engaged employee.”
— The Society of Human Resource Management

UW–Madison’s onboarding policy is designed to help employees have a successful and positive transition to their workplace at the University.

‘Onboarding’—bringing ‘on board’ a new employee—helps new UW–Madison employees acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and socialization to become effective team members.

A well-designed and executed onboarding program:
- Reinforces the new employee’s job choice.
- Enhances job satisfaction and engagement for the new employee.
- Shortens the time from hire to full productivity by ensuring each new employee receives the support, tools and resources they need, including a welcoming environment and clear expectations from their supervisor.

All campus divisions must have an onboarding program for new employees by July 2015

22% of staff turnover occurs in the first 45 days of employment.
Source: The Wynhurst Group, 2014

UW-Madison HR Design
Better stewardship. Stronger workforce.
The draft UW–Madison onboarding policy and resources are available at hrdesign.wisc.edu

The Framework

- Each college, school or division develops, monitors and maintains a documented onboarding program for its new employees.
- Each college, school or division establishes an onboarding coordinator for its onboarding programs.
- Each onboarding program begins with the acceptance of the job offer and spans the first year of the new hire’s employment.
- Before they start, each new employee receives an onboarding contact to answer any questions.
- All new employees receive an orientation to their work unit. Orientation is a short-term activity that introduces and welcomes a new employee.
- All new employees meet with their supervisors on the first day of employment.
- Each new employee is assigned a peer partner to answer questions and provide support.
- All new employees have the opportunity to provide feedback about their onboarding experience.

Resources

Find the following at hrdesign.wisc.edu:

- Onboarding tools, templates, and reference materials.
- Registration information for onboarding training workshops.
- The new onboarding policy and a brief video overview of its key details.