



Welcoming
and Orienting
**A NEW
TEAM MEMBER**
to Cornell:
A Manager's Guide

Working at Cornell
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Welcoming and Orienting A NEW TEAM MEMBER to Cornell: A Manager's Guide

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Diversity and Inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage. We are a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities. We also recognize a lawful preference in employment practices for Native Americans living on or near Indian reservations.

Cornell University embraces diversity and seeks candidates who will contribute to a climate that supports students, faculty, and staff of all identities and backgrounds. We strongly encourage individuals from underrepresented and/or marginalized identities to apply.

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What is Onboarding?

Whether a new hire or a new transfer is working onsite, remotely, or in a hybrid position, onboarding is the process of welcoming new team members to the University and their work unit and team. The keys to this process include helping the new team member understand job expectations and how their position aligns with the University's mission, guiding them in navigating Cornell's culture, and quickly equipping them with the knowledge, skills and key relationships to be successful in their new job. At Cornell, the onboarding process begins during recruitment and continues through the first year of employment. Successful onboarding requires a well-coordinated partnership between the hiring manager, local and central human resources, and other support such as IT. **This guide focuses specifically on the manager's role during the first 90 days of employment for new team members. The manager plays a vital role in the new team member's overall experience.**

The Importance of Onboarding Each New Team Member

Onboarding:

- Helps establish a strong sense of **belonging, connection, and engagement**
- Enables a new team member to get up to speed and **fully contribute more quickly**;
- Improves overall **job satisfaction**;
- Builds a more **cohesive** team and raises team **productivity**;
- Supports an increase in **employee retention**
- Reduces high **turnover costs**; and
- Maximizes the **long-term savings** gained by hiring and retaining new talent.

The Manager's Role in the Onboarding Experience

Best practices and survey data demonstrate managers play a critical role in a **new team member's** experience and success. **As a manager, your role is to facilitate the process from start to finish.** Included in this document, you will find tools and best practices to help you:

- **Prepare and plan** for the first 90 days of your new team member's experience at Cornell.
- Bring your new team members **up to speed** with the policies, processes, culture, key relationships, expectations, and day-to-day responsibilities of their position and your department/unit.
- Ensure new team members feel **welcomed and engaged**; reinforce their decision to join your department/unit and Cornell University.

Onboarding Your New Team Member At-A-Glance

When	Objective	Summary of Activities
Pre-Hire	<p>Create a strong first impression.</p> <p>Ensure the new team member has all the tools necessary to perform their job on day one and all administrative requirements are completed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Support the set-up of their workspace (remote or on-campus), especially computing equipment needed to connect on their first day <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate the arrival of the new team member <input type="checkbox"/> Plan welcome events (virtually or in-person) <input type="checkbox"/> Develop Onboarding Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule trainings (virtually or in-person)
First Day	<p>Welcome the new team member and complete administrative tasks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Introduce to colleagues <input type="checkbox"/> Meet to review expectations and Onboarding Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure employee is set up to access all systems and collaboration tools <input type="checkbox"/> Provide a tour of the home base on campus (virtually or in-person) <input type="checkbox"/> Share mission and organization of University and Unit <input type="checkbox"/> Plan for new team member's welcome event like a lunch, coffee break, or meet & greet (virtually and/or in-person)
First Few Weeks	<p>Assist the new team member with learning about their job, their work group, department/unit, and the University.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Share policies, practices, and procedures <input type="checkbox"/> Communicate unwritten policies and practices of the department/unit <input type="checkbox"/> Share network or resources <input type="checkbox"/> Provide trainings (virtually and/or in-person) <input type="checkbox"/> Begin introduction meetings with key partners and stakeholders
First 90 days	<p>Establish regular communication channels and communicate expectations and requirements.</p> <p>Help the new team member feel like a part of the unit/college and University.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule regular one on one meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Provide feedback on performance and progress <input type="checkbox"/> Check-in on Onboarding Plan and how the new team member is doing <input type="checkbox"/> Continue introductions of partners and stakeholders

The Case for Great Onboarding at Cornell ...

A 2014 study of Cornell new hires found a strong correlation between employees who reported people in their workgroup "helped bring them up to speed in their job" and "helped to navigate how to get things done at Cornell" and feelings of "belonging at Cornell," willingness to "recommend Cornell to a friend," and "seeing themselves still at Cornell two years from now."

Eighteen months later, those who had reported they had an effective department orientation were significantly more likely to have been promoted and those who had reported they did not "see themselves at Cornell two years from now" were significantly more likely to have left Cornell.

A Note About Onboarding a New Remote Team Member ...

Hiring and onboarding new employees completely virtually is a new concept for most employers. The number one thing to remember is that you're building a foundation for the new hire to have new relationships in the workplace and helping them to have a voice, which is even more important when they are remote.

- Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM)

You'll see enhanced tips for onboarding your remote team members marked with an ^R.

Tips for Successful Onboarding of a New Team Member

You have spent a lot of time and money to recruit your top candidate, but you are not done yet. The recruitment process continues well into their first few months on the job. In fact, studies have shown that new employees (87% of them, according to a study by the Aberdeen Group) are not fully committed to the new job for the first six months. So while your new team member is still evaluating whether they made the right decision, be sure to follow these tips for success.

Let Them Know We're Glad They're Here.

- Mail them a special rate welcome package from the Cornell Store to show them gratitude for accepting the role. It also builds a sense of connection to the University - [Cornellstore.com/Employee Welcome](https://cornellstore.com/Employee>Welcome)
- Send a notice out before the new team member starts to inform co-workers and other key people of the new team member and their job responsibilities. Be sure to include their preferred pronouns. (See the Appendix for sample letters to send out.)
- Send a note to the new team member through the Appreciation Portal to help promote Cornell's culture of appreciation.

Get Them Ready for Work.

- Ensure the new team member has all needed supplies/tools/equipment (i.e., computer, phone, software, access to required systems, etc.) ready and working BEFORE the first day. For remote team members, ship in advance of their start date. **R**
- Discuss the new team member's workspace needs. Set up a remote and/or on-campus ergonomic appointment through the Cornell [Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention Program \(MIPP\)](#). For on-campus or hybrid team members - have an assigned work area ready for them and a place for them to put their personal belongings. For a remote new team member - Provide them with information to order a work chair and/or desk if needed. **R**
- Arrange for training on how to use preferred communication methods, file-sharing, systems, collaboration tools, and cybersecurity programs. Provide manuals and a contact to help with setting up software.
- Schedule role-specific and mandatory university trainings for the new team member. Allocate time for them to fully participate in the programs.
- Review information about the University and the unit/department with the team member. Discuss the university and department's mission and values and how their role aligns with them. Explain how their projects support the department's goals.
- Be clear about expectations. To avoid any misunderstandings with new team members, be sure to communicate Cornell's policies and your department's expectations from the start. For new remote team members, be clear about when they must be online or available. Be mindful of time zones. **R**

Be There.

- Schedule your new team member to start work on a day/week you know you will be available (i.e., not on vacation, traveling on business, back-to-back meetings).
- Schedule regular check-ins to review projects and concerns the new team member may have. With a remote team member, use the video feature as much as possible since there are fewer face-to-face interactions. Remember the new remote team member is navigating their new environment without the benefit of face-to-face meetings. **R**
- Create a space for your new team member to ask how things are done. Don't leave new team members to guess about these issues; doing so can create ambiguity and stress. Talk about what is typical and atypical across various departments and programs. Spend more time with a remote team member to make up for advice that may be shared in passing in a face-to-face environment. **R**
- Teach them about Cornell culture. Provide clear guidance around norms that are often taken for granted — the University's culture and level of formality, dress code, virtual etiquette on videoconferences, and messaging norms.
- Schedule time following meetings and activities to debrief the new team member on the experience. Share observations and provide context for exchanges occurring during the meeting.

Build Connections & Collaborations.

Connections and collaborations are important for ALL New Team Members, especially our remote team members.

- Hold frequent, short team meetings (i.e., daily, weekly, or bi-weekly) to connect the new employee with their on-campus and remote co-workers. Focus some of the meetings on building social connections by scheduling “getting to know you” activities. When possible, keep cameras on. Prior to the first meeting, give the new team member background about the team, its purpose, accomplishments. **R**
- Utilize MS Teams to build a team space for remote, hybrid, and on-campus team members. Get into the habit of providing virtual options for all meetings, programs, and other opportunities. **R**
- Conduct short meet and greets virtually or in-person with people from different departments to familiarize your new team member with key stakeholders and educate them on the inner workings of the University. Consider providing a list of stakeholders. **R**
- Assign a colleague to serve as a buddy (virtually or in-person) for your new team member. Choose a positive, engaged person who is willing to regularly check-in to share cultural norms, connect them to Cornell resources, and be a safe sounding board. Ensure the person is committed and has the focused time to spend on the team member. **R**
- Begin sharing the learning resources available (eCornell, public lectures, etc.). Encourage new team members, especially those who are remote, to attend the broad range of virtual programs available to them. **R**
- New team members, especially those who are remote, tend to feel anxious about their level of contribution to their new team. Identify a few quick projects aligned with your new team member’s strengths to help them feel confident and valued as a team member. **R**
- Identify opportunities for the new team member to work with others outside their immediate workgroup through either committee or project work. **R**



New Team Member Success Plan

Whether they are a new hire or transfer, located on-campus, remote or hybrid - documenting and sharing pre-established goals and success points for the first 90 days will create a foundation for success for your new team member.

Name _____ Today's Date _____

Position _____ Start Date _____

TOP 4 POSITION-SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE/SKILLS:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Use additional pages if there are more than 4 of these to focus on in the first 90 days.

FIRST 30 DAYS

Success looks like... (What will the new team member have learned or done?)

Others or I will help our new team member achieve success by...

FIRST 60 DAYS

Success looks like... (What will the new team member have learned or done?)

Others or I will help our new team member achieve success by...

FIRST 90 DAYS

Success looks like... (What will the new team member have learned or done?)

Others or I will help our new team member achieve success by...

ADDITIONAL GOALS AND TRAINING

Other goals for the new team member include...

Others or I will help our new team member achieve success with these goals by...

Specific training needs or action plans to achieve the goals are...



Pre-hire Checklist for A New Team Member

The checklist below will guide you through key tasks to complete **prior to the new team member's first day**. This is a valuable list to review in partnership with others such as your HR representative, IT support, and your department administrative manager.

Administrative:

- Create a transition plan** for the new team member and those currently handling the tasks of the position. Define a timeline for how each task will transition to the new team member, what resources are needed to complete the tasks on-campus or remotely, who will be responsible for training, and who will communicate the plan to departments and colleagues across campus.
- Add the new team member** to Outlook Calendars in the work group as needed.
- Update internal communications**, distribution lists, and email lists with the new team member's contact info, (include the location, and time zone for remote team members). ^R

Tech:

- Telephone software** request and long distance capability if required.
- Personal computer set-up**. Best to order computer as soon as the position is posted. For remote employees, provide CIT with the shipping address once the remote employee is confirmed. ^R
- Establish computer system and security accounts** needed to perform the job.
- Arrange for a Tech Support Consult** for the morning of the new employee's first day (and earlier for a new remote team member). Make sure they can successfully connect to all your team collaboration tools and other systems and resources such as the VPN if applicable. ^R

Workspace:

- Order keys and security codes** if relevant
- Order name plate** for office area
- Prepare workspace**: set-up, clean, and organized
- Order uniforms** if applicable
- Set-up an ergonomics appointment** [Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention Program \(MIPP\)](#)
- Review security of the remote location**. Do others have access to the area? Set expectations. ^R

Supplies:

- Request procurement card and Travel and Meal Card** if relevant
- Order nametag, and/or business cards** if appropriate.
- Accommodations**: If the employee has requested workplace accommodations, arrange for them in advance.

Work Assignments:

- Plan initial assignments**: As the manager, be sure the new team member has the tools and information to complete their first assignment successfully; this will set the tone for productive manager-employee interactions to come.

Staffing:

- Identify "buddy"**- someone in the college/unit to serve as an orientation guide to answer questions and inform the person virtually or in-person.

**Pre-hire Checklist for A New Team Member
(continued)**

Welcome Plan:

- Plan a welcoming introduction** for your workgroup virtually or in-person (i.e. coffee break, meet and greet).
- Plan the new team member's virtual welcome lunch**, who will participate (just the workgroup and/or other guests), what icebreakers can be planned. For the remote employee, learn what food delivery options are available. **R**
- Plan your schedule** so you can spend time with them at the beginning and the end of their first day (virtually or in-person).

Communications:

- Call the new team member** a day or two before their start date to answer immediate questions and invite them to call with new questions.
- Send out an announcement** to welcome the new team member into the organization, briefly describe their role in the organization (see appendix for sample).
- Other:**



First Day Checklist

Whether they are on campus, working remotely, or a hybrid – a new team member or an internal transfer, the following checklist contains key tasks to help with your new team member’s first day acclimation. You may want to ask others on your team to help with some of these responsibilities.

Introductions

- Greet the new team member.** For the on-campus team member, show them their workspace and where to put personal belongings. For the remote team member, do so after their IT support consult via ZOOM. ^R
- Introduce them to others** in the department/work area, including their assigned in-person or virtual “buddy.”
- Welcome Lunch:** If a welcome lunch is planned, dine with scheduled participants in-person or virtually; if the welcome is happening later, make sure the new team member knows what others generally do over lunchtime.

Workplace Orientation

- Confirm their workspace is ready:** Whether they are on-campus or remote, ensure they have all the equipment and tools needed to do their job.
- Give a tour of the office and building,** point out key locations (your office location, copier, mailroom, fax machine, office supplies, restrooms, break areas, emergency exits, fire extinguishers, vending machines, Human Resources office, etc.). For remote team members,
- Give a virtual tour of the office and building,** share images or give a virtual tour to point out key locations (the main building, main office space, Human Resources office, etc.). ^R
- Provide on-campus or hybrid team members with facility information** such as keys and security codes.
- Review phones & copiers:** phone system and usage, fax, scanning, and copying procedures.
- Provide an orientation to computer systems;** include log-on, email, email signatures, security, and calendaring.
- Review phone system:** phone system and usage, voicemail usage, away messages, scanning procedures.
- Review office procedures** and guidelines (time away from work reporting requirements, personal emails, lunch breaks, office coverage, etc.).
- If there is a dress code,** review it with all new team members.

Administrative Onboarding

- University Onboarding:** Ensure they have an appointment scheduled if they have not already attended in advance of their first day.
- Complete additional forms** specific to the department or position (i.e., confidentiality agreements.)
- Required training:** Schedule any Right-to-Know or other required training as needed.
- End of day debrief:** Check-in at the end of the day to see how their first day went and if they have any questions or need anything else to be successful.

Other:

Once these items are completed, move on to the next set of recommended activities for the first weeks and first 90 days.



First Few Weeks Checklist

WORK-RELATED INFORMATION:

Functions

- Supplies:** Provide instructions on how to secure office supplies and equipment.
- Safety:** Provide cybersafety, campus safety, and emergency information and share how to report security concerns.
- Finances:** Provide budget, finance, purchasing procedures if needed, including policies and rules for use and information on training.
- Meetings & Events:** Provide information about meetings and other events on the team member's calendar (purpose, attendees, what to expect, the remote employee's role); debrief often to answer questions and provide additional information.

Culture

- Share unwritten rules, nuances, and traditions** such as how to address faculty/students, casual days, birthday celebrations, etc.
- Values:** Discuss your management style and the organization's culture.
- Consider developing a glossary** of terms and acronyms as a reference guide. Also, consider providing a list of stakeholders.

Role

- Set up for success:** Assign the new team member something they can accomplish relatively quickly and easily to help build an initial sense of contribution and success.
- Set priorities.** Discuss what is important to overall objectives. This will help the new team member prioritize tasks since they are new to the organization.
- Introduce the new team member to partners** external to the college/unit who will work with them on projects or tasks.

Other:

- _____

Policies

- Review Policy 6.9, Time Away from Work,** share the unit process for requesting time off and expectations of availability during work hours.
- Explain confidentiality** in the workplace, what can and can't be shared, and how confidential documents are stored, especially in a remote workspace.
- HR Policies:** Provide information and time for the new team member to review HR policies, HR philosophy, Campus Code of Conduct, Computer Rights and Responsibilities, Statement on Diversity and Inclusion, Respect at Cornell.
- University Policies:** Review University policies such as Policy 4.14, Conflict of Interest and Commitment, Policy 4.6, Standards of Ethical Conduct, Data Stewardship and Custodianship, Policy 6.4, Prohibited Bias. Show where policy info is located and answer questions.

CAREER-RELATED INFORMATION:

Career Development

- Expectations:** Determine mutual performance standards by reviewing position responsibilities, setting performance expectations, success measures, and make sure new team member understands expectations about availability. Review Skills for Success and share the poster.
- Training:** Identify training resources and opportunities for the new team member and set a realistic plan of action.
- Professional Development:** Introduce the new team member to resources such as professional development workshops, Career Navigator in Workday, and educational benefits.

Connect With the Big Picture

- Organization and university mission:** Review your organizational chart and explain how the new team member's work connects to Cornell's mission of education, research and outreach. The broader pictures will help link their efforts to larger goals.



First 90 Days Checklist

- Provide regular feedback** during the first 90 days and beyond. Use the [Engagement & Retention Conversation Toolkit](#) to conduct a thorough check-in on how the new team member feels about working at Cornell so far.
- Non-Exempt & Bargaining Unit Staff:** Provide formal feedback for new non-exempt and bargaining unit team members at the end of their 90-day probationary period.
- Training:** Review and direct the new team member to training opportunities.
- Flex Options:** If applicable to the position and department's needs, provide guidance on identifying appropriate flexible work options to assist the new team member's effectiveness and efficiency.
- Foster Belonging:** Check if the new team member is fully engaged and sees themselves as a valued contributor. See questions below for prompts to help facilitate this conversation.

Questions to Ask During New Team Member's Check-in Meetings

- How is your job going?
- Is it what you expected when hired?
- Any surprises? If yes, what...
- Has the training been helpful?
- What training would you add?
- Has your buddy been helpful?
- Are there any changes you would suggest for your remote work arrangement? ^R
- Do you have all the work tools/resources you need?
- Is your remote workspace sufficient? Is it private? ^R
- Do you know where you stand in terms of your progress since you started work?
- How are your relationships with your co-workers?
- Is there room for improvement in the department?
- Are you making connections with the University at large?
- Are you aware of the resources available to enhance your employee experience and/or support your family's needs? (refer to Cornell Employee Experience team)
- Do you feel you have been able to manage your work/life needs since starting this job?
- Was your Onboarding appointment helpful? Is everything OK with your benefits and pay?
- Any questions/anything unclear?

Appendix

SAMPLE DEPARTMENT INTRODUCTION EMAIL FOR NEW *ON-CAMPUS* TEAM MEMBER

Hi Everyone -

I am very pleased to share with you that (name), (preferred pronouns) has accepted the position of (title) in (department), filling the position previously held by (incumbent name). We are very excited that (first name)'s firstday working with us will be on (date).

Provide brief background including where they are currently working, title, a bit of background on the type of work they are currently doing and information about educational background. Provide information on any unique knowledge, skills, or experience the person will be bringing to the team.

Please join me in welcoming (first name) to (department name)!

Thank you,

(Manager Name)

SAMPLE DEPARTMENT INTRODUCTION EMAIL FOR NEW *REMOTE* TEAM MEMBER

Hi Everyone -

I am very pleased to share that (name), (preferred pronouns) has accepted the position of (title) in (department), filling the position previously held by (incumbent name). We are very excited that (first name)'s firstday working with us will be on (date). (Name) will be working remotely from (location) in the (time zone).

Provide brief background including where they are currently working, title, a bit of background on the type of work they are currently doing and information about their professional/educational background. Provide information on any unique knowledge, skills, or experience the person will be bringing to the team.

Please join me in welcoming (first name) to (department name)!

Thank you,

(Manager Name)

Additional Resources for Managing Remote Employees

TOOLS

[Cornell IT Tools for Working Remotely](#)

We want you to be successful in conducting your work from your home locations. This article summarizes how university IT services can help with working remotely.

[Resources to Work Remotely](#)

This page provides various resources and tools for remote working. It includes policies, tip sheets, and testing guidance for campus visits.

[The Virtual Manager Group on LinkedIn](#)

This is a national LinkedIn Group founded with the expressed purpose of sharing best practices as they relate to effectively managing virtual employees and the Best Practices of working remotely. If you are a remote employee or remote manager, we encourage you to join the group.

[When a Sense of Belonging Is Essential to the Wellbeing of People Who Work Remotely](#)

Lead from the Heart Podcast Episode: Guest Jon Levy, behavioral scientist, and author of *"You're Invited: The Art and Science of Cultivating Relationships"* speaks with Mark C. Crowle about building and sustaining relationships remotely.

ARTICLES

[14 Effective Tips For Onboarding Remote Employees](#)

[How to Set Up a Remote Employee for Success on Day One](#)

[How Hybrid/Remote Work Improves Diversity & Inclusion](#)

[Onboarding Remote Employees](#)

[Remote Work Tips for Managers of New Team Members](#)