

Onboarding your new starter

Manager Guide & Checklist



Queensland Australia

Make it matter

Effective onboarding sets new starters up for long-term success

Onboarding is the process of **orienting and integrating new starters** into the organisation to help them become productive and engaged employees.

Onboarding typically covers **the first 90 days** of an employee's tenure. As a leader, you play a pivotal role in onboarding your new starter. This requires activities before your new starter commences, on Day 1, during week 1, and then throughout their first 3 months as required.

The key goals of onboarding are to:

1. Provide essential job-related information and training
2. Lay the foundations for strong relationships across the University
3. Familiarise employees with Griffith culture and values

This document is designed to provide guidance and supporting information to ensure that, by the end of the onboarding period, your new starter feels **welcomed, informed, and equipped** for their new role.

This document is not designed to be exhaustive, so please keep in mind the local-level onboarding activities that will also need to take place to supplement the activities outlined in this document.



Pre-commencement

Arrange the basics

Staff access card and building access

- Request a digital access card to ensure new starters can [access relevant buildings](#) - this should be done at least 1 week prior to your new starter's first day
 - Note: While the access card can be requested ahead of time, specific access can only be requested on the new starters **first day**.

Essential systems

- PeopleSoft (Request access prior to the new starter commencing as it can take multiple days to be approved)
- Canvas Learning Management System (LMS) (if required)
- Curriculum Management System (CMS) (if required)

Additional systems

- Team SharePoint sites
- Relevant MS Teams sites
- Key files, databases, or other knowledge management systems
- Concur (expense management)
- Email distribution lists (e.g. for the School / work area)

Make your new starter feel welcome before they arrive

Let the team know your new starter will be joining

- Send a [welcome and introduction email](#) to the team with relevant information about their new colleague and when they will be commencing - and invite your team to introduce themselves and help make their new colleague feel welcome.

Call your new starter

- Call your new starter 2-4 business days before they are due to start. Let them know you and the team are excited to have them on board. Answer any initial questions they may have. *The purpose is to make them feel welcome, answer any questions and re-enforce they have made the right decision to take up this offer.*
- Send a [follow-up email](#) with key details of their first day, including:
 - What time they need to arrive on Day 1
 - Where they should go when they arrive
 - What they need to bring on their first day
 - Dress code
 - [Parking information](#)
 - Anything specific to your team / work area they need to know for Day 1

Plan your new starter's first week

Populate your new starter's calendar

- Schedule some activities for your new starter in their first 1-2 weeks, for example:
 - Welcome morning tea / lunch with immediate team
 - Manager coffee catch-up on day 1
 - Meet and greets with colleagues / key stakeholders
 - Handover meetings (if required)
 - Catch ups with relevant leaders (e.g. Director, Dean, HoS)
 - Ongoing 1:1s with manager
 - Probation review meetings (i.e. 1 month – check in and expectation setting; 5 month – probation review)

Send your new starter an email with things they can do

- Email your new starter the "Ready, Set, Griffith" Onboarding Guide
- Think of some activities your new starter can do if they have spare time over the first few days. For example:
 - If your new starter is from outside the Higher Education sector, share resources for them to learn more about the sector, for example: [Universities Australia](#), [Association for Tertiary Education Management](#), [Australia Government – Higher Education System](#), [AHEIA](#)
 - Explore the [new staff](#) page and begin [getting to know Griffith](#), including reading about Griffith's [Vision and Values](#) and [Griffith's Strategic Plan 2025-2030](#)

Week 1

What to do with your new starter on Day 1

Tour of the work area / campus

- Show your new starter to their workstation / office
- Walk around and introduce your new starter to the rest of the team
- Provide a tour of the campus or local area facilities (toilets, lunch, kitchens, food outlets)
- Explain the evacuation procedure for their office (incl. nearest exit and assembly point)

Take them out for a coffee on campus and an informal chat about their new role

- Give your new starter an overview of their role, the team, the wider work area and how it fits into the University
 - What does a 'day in the life' look like? At a high level, what are the key tasks, projects, programs of work your new starter will be accountable for?
- Explain what the new starter should expect over the next few weeks (e.g. onboarding activities, introductions to key stakeholders, and day-to-day work)

Book a morning / afternoon tea or lunch with the team

- This is a great way for the new starter to build informal connections with the broader team - an alternative could be lunch with a buddy or other colleague / stakeholder

Remember to check in with your new starter at the end of their first day to see how it went!

What to do with your new starter during their first week

Set time aside to talk to your new starter about ways of working in the team / at Griffith

- **Flexible working:** What options are available to the new starter? What are the team norms?
 - If your new starter is interested in flexible working, ensure they have completed a Flexible Work Location Agreement. Find out more on the [Working from a Residential Worksite](#) webpage
- **Workplace adjustments:** Is there anything your new starter needs to be able to work at their best?
- **Communication practices:** How does the team / work area / University communicate? E.g. Microsoft Teams, email, stand-ups, check-ins, townhalls, [Vice Chancellor communications](#), [Staff News](#), Staff Portal etc.
- **My Staff Page:** Let your new starter know about the staff portal and what they would use it for (i.e. submit leave requests, access payslips, update personal details)
- **Staff benefits:** What are some of the 'perks' of being a Griffith employee? For example, Free Coffee Days for staff, access to [Fitness Membership](#), [Family Support](#), [Salary Packaging](#), [Education Discounts](#)

What to do with your new starter during their first week

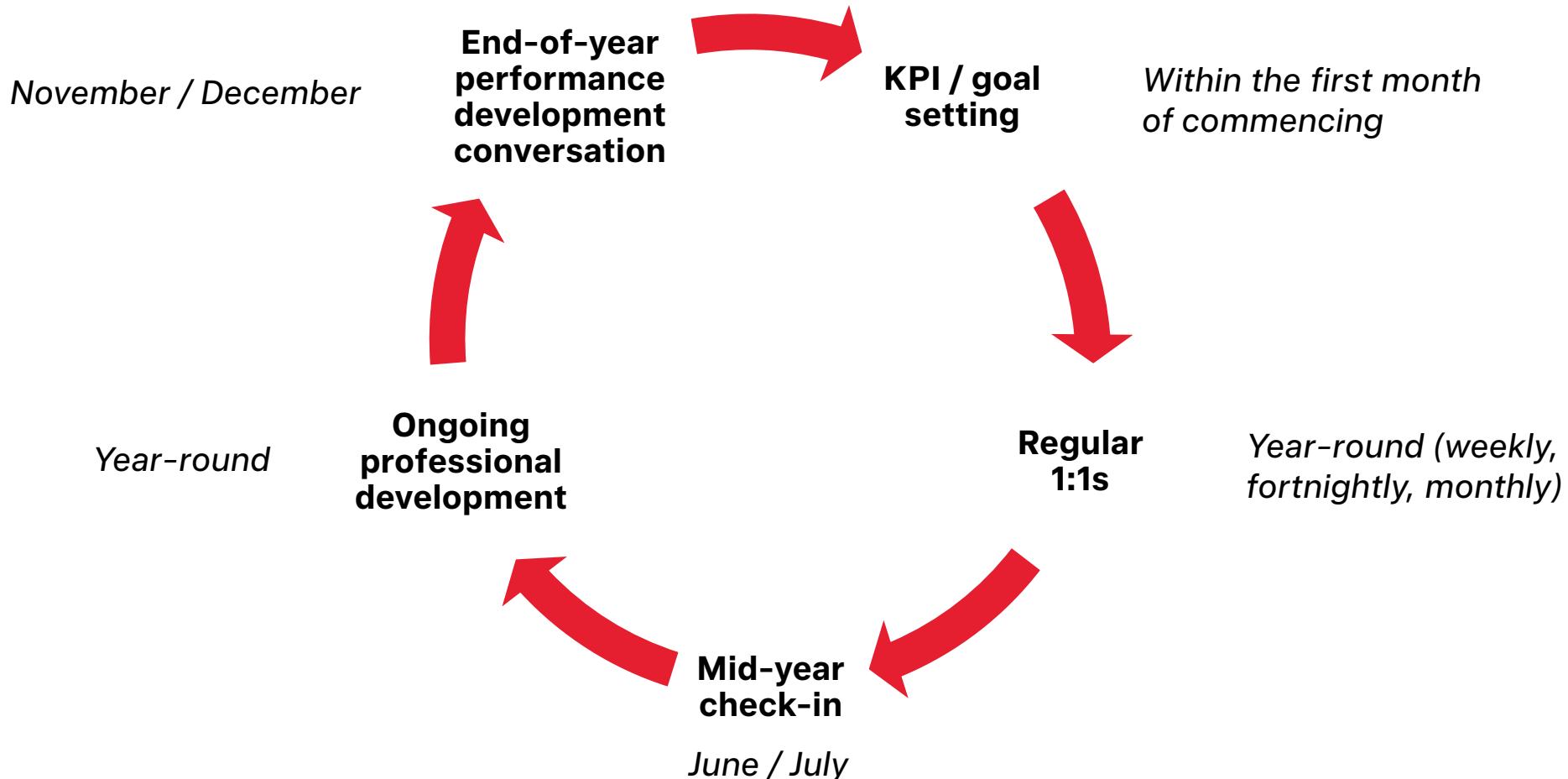
Set time aside to talk to your new starter about ways of working in the team / at Griffith

- **Health, safety and wellbeing:** Let your new starter know about the supports in place for staff health, safety and wellbeing, including the [Wellbeing and Counselling program](#), [GSafe](#) (for reporting incidents and hazards) and contact details for the [Health, Safety and Wellbeing team](#)
 - If your new starter requires assistance during an emergency evacuation, ensure they complete a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP), found on the [emergency information](#) webpage.
 - Check if your new starter has imported any chemicals and hazardous or licensable materials, including radiation sources (apparatus and radioactive substances), medicines, poisons, and biological, genetic, or biosecurity materials and any high risk equipment. If so, ensure they are assessed by the appropriate special approver and catalogued into the appropriate database.

Month 1

The Griffith employee lifecycle

Ensure your new starter understands the employee lifecycle at Griffith, and key activities related to performance and professional development.



Set expectations around probation, performance, and ongoing professional development

Probation

- ❑ What are the requirements for this person to be successful during probation? Clarify and document performance and behaviour expectations, outlining resources and support available.
 - ❑ [Professional Staff Probation and Confirmation](#) – a 30, 60, 90 day plan may also be helpful
 - ❑ [Academic Staff Probation and Confirmation](#) – including the development of the AECD plan (mandatory)

Performance

- ❑ Clarify expectations of the role and set goals and objectives for the next 3, 6, and 12 months
- ❑ Establish a regular cadence for checking in with your employee 1:1 and discussing performance / progress
 - ❑ [Professional Staff Performance Development](#)
 - ❑ [Academic Employee Career Development \(AECD\)](#)

Professional development

- ❑ Encourage your new starter to review the [Learning & Development webpage](#) to understand the development offerings available at Griffith, and get them to start thinking about development activities or experiences relevant to their role and career aspirations (Note: This page has activities and resources for both Academic and Professional Staff, including the Leadership Capability Framework and the Griffith Capability Framework)

Example probation schedule

Professional Staff

- **1st Month:** Discuss and clarify performance expectations
- **3 months and 5 months after commencing:** Probation check-ins
- **6 months after commencing:** Probation review meeting and confirmation of appointment
- **Mid-Year (Ongoing):** Performance Check In
- **End-of-Year (Ongoing):** Annual Performance Review

Academic Staff

- Head of Element appoints Academic Supervisor
- **1st Month:** Discuss expectations and commencement of Academic Employee Career Development (AECD) plan or Academic Manager Review and Plan documentation with Academic Supervisor and/or Head of Element
- **3 months and 1 month prior to probation ending:** Probation check-ins
- **End of Probation Period:** Probation review meeting and confirmation of appointment
- **Ongoing:** Review discussions (in line with the annual performance review cycle)
- **End-of-Year (Ongoing):** Annual Performance Review and career planning conversation

Email templates

Email template

Email to the team announcing the new hire

Subject line: Help us welcome [new employee name] to the team!

Hi everyone,

Please join me in welcoming [new employee name] to the [team].

[Employee name] will be joining us on [start date] as [role title], reporting to [direct supervisor]. [Employee name] will be responsible for [brief description of what they'll be doing].

[Include any relevant academic and/or professional background if available]

We are looking forward to [employee name] joining the team and *[impact they'll have, such as delivering a project project]*.

[Employee name] will be based at [campus name], *[sitting at workstation location / working off site]*, so be sure to drop by and say hello / send them a chat or email to welcome them!

Email template

Welcome email to the new starter before their first day

Subject line: We are looking forward to having you in the team!

Hi [new employee name] ,

We are thrilled you have accepted the offer of [role title] at Griffith.

As discussed, please find details below regarding your first day:

Please arrive at [time] on [day, date]. When you arrive, go to [building name, campus name] - [name of person who will be there to meet the new employee] will meet you there.

You will need to bring [items the new employee will need on their first day e.g. lunch / a laptop / a notepad and pen] – but we will have everything else here for you.

If you are arriving by car, parking information can be found [here](#).

[Add any other specifics relevant to their team / work area that they will need to know for Day, including dress code if applicable].

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me on [work email / mobile number].