



Welcome to the University of Minnesota!

A Conversation Guide for New Employees

Welcome to the University of Minnesota! We're glad that you're part of the University of Minnesota and want to make sure that during your first year here you're able to connect with the University as a great place to work and a place to make a long lasting contribution to the state of Minnesota through our mission.

The items in this guide will help to guide discussions with your supervisor, peers, and others as you learn about your role at the University of Minnesota. This guide is divided into phases of onboarding. Every job is different though, so use these questions whenever you find them relevant.

Also note that your supervisor will have an onboarding plan that may also include items in this document. If you have questions or would like to participate in any of the recommended activities, make sure to check with your supervisor.

Before Your First Day

Congratulations on your new job! To help prepare for your first day, take some time for planning and reflection. Think of yourself as an anthropologist studying a new civilization. Research your environment (e.g., glassdoor.com, YouTube videos about your college/administrative unit, LinkedIn, college or unit website). What are you most excited about as you start your career at the University?

Recommended To Dos

- Prepare for your first day:
 - Will you be working remotely or on campus? If on campus, how will you get to work?
 - Where will you park if necessary? Check out [Parking and Transportation Services](#) for tips and [maps](#).
 - Are there office hours? What time do people typically begin and end working?
- Review your department website and be sure to note its mission, vision, and goals.
- Review your job description.
- Send your supervisor an email to express your excitement for your first day.
- Create a list of strengths you will bring to the position and unit and identify opportunities for growth.

Your First Day/Week

It's your first day! Welcome to the University of Minnesota. As you begin your employment, you'll be given a lot of information, you'll meet a lot of new people, and have to learn a new culture. Give yourself time to learn about your job and your department or unit. On average it takes a new employee about eight months to feel productive. To help you on your first day and first week think about the questions below.

Ask yourself:

- Do I feel welcomed and excited? Why or why not?
- What skills, knowledge, or experiences do I bring to this position that will support my unit's strategic objectives?
- What are my personal goals for my first month at the University?
- Who did I connect with the most and how can that connection help me as I learn more about my role at the University?
- What is my level of commitment and dedication to the University? How can I improve it?
- Is the work environment effective for me?
- Do I understand my role and how work gets done?

Ask your supervisor:

- About any questions you had after reading the welcome email from the Office of Human Resources.
- If I am absent (sick or vacation) how do I notify you and the team?
- What training(s) should I complete?
- What are my responsibilities this first week?
- What is my role within the team?
- How often will we meet?
- What is the governance structure/approval process/decision-making authority of our area?

Ask a peer:

- What should I know about the work style of the team?
- What is some of the lingo (including acronyms) I should be aware of?
- What do the people we serve say about our work?

Recommended To Dos

- Register for required training in [Training Hub](#).
- Review your goals for the first month and create an action plan.
- If you're on campus, use the [campus map](#) and take a campus tour.

During Your First Month

A new job can be an exciting time of new experiences, meeting new people, and learning and personal growth. It can also be a time of confusion, insecurity, and frustration. Have patience while you learn and reach out to those around you for support. Consider using the questions below to start conversations.

Ask yourself:

- Am I connecting with my supervisor regularly?
- Do I feel like a part of my team? What things can I adjust for a better fit?
- How do I feel about my new role? What have I enjoyed the most so far? Why?
- What do I find confusing? Who can I ask for clarification?
- What are my goals for the first three months of my job?
- What additional training or resources do I need?
- Which part of the University community do I want to explore more (e.g., athletics, cultural events, virtual events)?

Ask your supervisor:

- What are the biggest priorities for me, our department, the University? Clarify goals and expectations.
- What has been the biggest change over the past year?
- What are the other methods of communication, task management, and project tracking (e.g., Google calendar, Asana, Slack, Trello)?
- When can I expect feedback/review/evaluation?
- Do you prefer casual or formal conversations?
- What are people's roles? Review the unit, college, or University org chart.
- If I have a suggestion for change, what is the best way to communicate it?

Ask a peer:

- What has kept you working here this long?
- What are the informal ways our colleagues make decisions?
- How would you describe our team dynamics?
- Whom should I meet and connect with early on?
- Do meetings begin on time? What are meeting expectations?

Recommended To Dos

- Incorporate tools, such as Google Docs, into your three month goals and work plan.
- Participate actively in team meetings.
- Connect with a client or stakeholder over coffee.
- Complete required trainings.
- Become familiar with the [governing rules](#) for your employment type.

30 to 60 Days

During the first 60 days, most employees are performing their new functions somewhat independently and there are also still a lot of new experiences, depending on the job. Many people are still in the process of understanding the broader context of the University. Use this period to continue to meet people, especially those in other units that might be impacted by the work of your unit. Build your network and understand how you can contribute to your college's strategic goals or those of the University. Consider the questions below as you continue to learn.

Ask yourself:

- Am I participating in meetings and being heard?
- Am I thriving in this environment? What is working and what is not?
- What experiences have energized me so far?
- What am I most interested in? What is holding me back?
- Who are my customers? Who is impacted by my work? Set up meetings with anyone you haven't met yet.

Ask your supervisor:

- How can I thrive here?
- Do we prefer a formal process for idea sharing or is brainstorming welcomed?
- Do colleagues feel comfortable with a new hire bringing up new ideas?
- What is working well and what is not?
- What additional training do I need?
- What are University-wide groups for people doing similar work?

Ask a peer:

- What are the group's best and worst working relationships within our organization?
- Am I fitting in with the team? What can I change for a better fit?
- How is conflict handled?
- How are our teammates recognized for good work?

Recommended To Dos

- Attend a virtual town hall, campus conversation, or Board of Regents [meeting](#) to hear about issues important to the University.
- Find a group or committee that is important to your role and attend a virtual meeting.
- Review and adjust goals and action plans with your supervisor.

60 TO 90 DAYS

The third month of a new job is a time to clarify expectations with your supervisor and set goals for the rest of the year. It's also a good time to consider having a mini-review to discuss how your knowledge, skills, and abilities are fitting into the unit and what you can do to make an impact on the strategic goals. It's also a good time to determine additional training and professional development that might be useful. Consider the questions below as a guide to these conversations.

Ask yourself:

- Do I feel overwhelmed? If yes, talk with your supervisor and get help prioritizing.
- Do I understand and can I articulate my unit's vision, goals, and strategy? How can I support the vision and my leader?
- What impact did I make this quarter? How did this contribute to my department's or the University's vision or mission?
- When do I feel most confident?
- What is my goal for the next three months for mastering the position and contributing to the unit's strategy? What support or resources do I need to achieve my goals?

Ask your supervisor:

- Ask for a mini performance review or check in on the tasks accomplished so far:
- Did my work meet your expectations? If not, what is the gap and how can I close it?
- Am I meeting the unit's needs? Have I been making an impact?
- Are there other projects or ways that I can get involved that will help me understand how my position supports the unit's and University's mission and goals?
- What additional training should I take?
- Who else might it be useful for me to connect with to understand my role better?

Ask a peer:

- How is my performance so far? Has my work supported the unit? What are the gaps and how can I improve?
- What are some things I still need to learn?
- Who else would be useful for me to connect with to understand my role better?

Recommended To Dos

- Clarify expectations and set goals for the remainder of the year.
- Identify areas of the University to explore in the next six months. Have fun with it.
- Actively identify ways the unit can meet its objectives more efficiently.
- Identify and take a webinar to support your continued learning.
- Identify a potential mentor(s) and invite that person(s) to have a conversation.

90 DAYS TO 1 YEAR

Congratulations! You are now past the first three months of your new job. This is a time when many employees are flying solo on the job. You might find your supervisor is sending you to meetings alone, assigning tasks, and establishing a regular routine of check-ins and feedback. This is when you will probably start to feel like you know the scope of your job and can accomplish routine work with little supervision. During this time period, think about long term contributions to the unit and connect it with the University's mission.

Ask yourself:

- When did I stop feeling new?
- What tasks still make me feel new and do I know who to contact for support?
- How can I become more involved in the University as an employee?
- Do I have a good relationship with my supervisor and my peers? How can I improve it?
- What do I want to accomplish before the end of the year? How can I do that?
- What efficiencies or changes might make my job better? Have I discussed these with my supervisor?
- Am I contributing the conversations at team meetings? Am I making suggestions that are relevant and impactful?
- How am I representing the unit to other people at the University? What can I do to improve that?

Ask your supervisor:

- What are our unit's challenges and how can I help?
- Agree on goals for the rest of the year and what you want to accomplish.

Ask your peers:

- How can I better support our team?
- What is one thing that you would like to change about our work?
- Which part of our work gives you pride?

Recommended To Dos

- Review your job description and make sure you are engaging in all of the responsibilities. Seek clarification if needed.
- Identify three ways you can be more efficient or support your team better. Add them to your work plan.
- Subscribe to the governing committee minutes (like Faculty Senate, Civil Service Committee, etc.) to stay informed of current issues for the University.
- Look for opportunities to mentor, help, or support new members of your team/unit.