Guide to Inductions

The way in which a new employee is received and introduced to their new job, colleagues and the organisation can have a direct effect on the long-term success of the appointment. The induction process is vital in helping the newcomer settle in quickly and feel part of the organisation. It is an opportunity to assess and start providing the employee with the training they need to carry out their job well and safely. A good quality induction also addresses some of the anxieties that any person starting a new job has.

This guide covers the following aspects of inductions.

- What are my legal obligations in relation to inductions?
- How can the HR department help?
- What should the induction aim to cover?
- What format should the induction take?
- Who should be involved in the induction process?
- What should I cover first?
- What job-related information does the employee need to know?
- What training should I arrange for the employee?
- Induction checklist.

What are my legal obligations in relation to inductions?

While there is no legal obligation to carry out an induction for new starters or those who change jobs, the organisation has a “duty of care” towards all its employees. This includes making sure they:

- are competent to carry out the job for which they were recruited
- understand the health and safety implications of the job — the rules, their responsibilities and the risks.

It is also important to make employees aware of the organisation's rules, policies and procedures, particularly those relating to equal opportunities, conduct, discipline and grievance. The induction is a useful opportunity to ensure employees understands their rights and obligations in relation to these from the start of their employment.

How can the Human Resources (HR) department help?

The HR department will support managers by:

- providing advice on what to include in the induction process
- helping them to plan the induction programme
- meeting with new recruits when they start their employment
- helping to arrange training for new recruits
- liaising with the learning and development team to ensure that the training is in line with the induction and induction pack provided.

What should the induction aim to cover?

An induction should contain more than just the basic information new employees require to function effectively in the organisation. They also need to understand the norms, value systems and priorities of its culture, so the induction process should include elements that expose them to these intangible aspects.

The induction should be designed to be:

- a flow of information to make sure the newly-appointed person knows about:
    - the organisation — its mission, priorities and context
    - the job — how it fits in, its purpose and key objectives
    - the workplace.
- a gateway to becoming included as a fully-fledged member of the organisation
- a programme of initial training to make sure the new person:
    - acquires the knowledge needed about the content of the new job (for example rules and routines to be followed)
    - develops any specific skills which need to be developed (for example how to use a piece of equipment or computer programme)
    - follows laid-down procedures and complies with house style (for example, "this is how we respond to our customers")
    - fills any gaps identified during the selection process.

- an explanation of standards so the individual appreciates fully what can and can not be done and what will and will not be tolerated.

What format should the induction take?

Anyone starting a new job will be given a large quantity of information, more often than not, verbally. They will be expected to assimilate, process and start using it in a very short space of time.

To ensure effective learning, therefore, there needs to be ample verbal explanation, with practical demonstrations and the opportunity to practice, and to have the opportunity to ask questions and receive reinforcement through feedback.

Supplement the verbal information they receive with written information such as copies of rules, telephone numbers, a sketch map of the work site. The employee should also be told where they can access a copy of the staff handbook.

An induction checklist is a useful aid to make sure that nothing is forgotten.

New employees need to be made welcome in their new careers, so make sure you have thought about the induction process before the individual starts work. The offer letter, or subsequent discussions, should have set out when and where the employee should arrive and who to ask for when they arrive on their first day.

Disabled employees

You may need to make special arrangements for the induction of a new employee who is disabled. Depending on the nature of the employee's disability, you may wish, for example, to:

- offer one-to-one coaching during the early stages of employment
- allow the person longer than normal to learn the new job
- offer personally tailored training, for example in operating specially-adapted equipment.

Discuss these issues directly with the employee to ensure that all reasonable and practicable steps are being taken to ensure a smooth and effective induction.

Who should be involved in the induction process?

Ultimately, as the new employee's line manager it is your responsibility to ensure that a proper induction takes place. However, a number of other people will generally be involved, eg HR and Payroll. Part of the process is also an introduction to the organisation, so consider asking senior managers, eg the finance director, to give overviews of the part of the organisation for which they are responsible.

It can be useful to ask another member of the department to act as a mentor for the first month or so of employment. The point of the relationship is more to provide moral support than formal induction, eg to let the newcomer know the customs of the workplace and be available to answer the type of question they might not want to ask their manager, eg "when do we get a salary review?".

Ideally, the new starter should also be involved in designing their own induction phase, so that areas of concern to them can be addressed. When devising the initial training programme, ask the individual what they think they need to help them become fully productive quickly. A participatory approach also provides you both with an opportunity to work through the job description again and check the employee's understanding of what is expected of them.

You should make sure that you have asked those who will be involved in the process and those who need to make preparations for the new employee's arrival, eg IT staff, well in advance so they have a chance to prepare.

What should I cover first?

The bulk of the first day will be given to making sure the new person has the information they need to start work in the organisation.

During this part of the induction process, you should:

- check that there are no outstanding matters left over from the recruitment process
- ensure that the employee has a copy of their terms and conditions of employment and that any particular queries are dealt with
- check that all necessary documentation for the HR and payroll departments has been dealt with
- let the employee know what the pay arrangements are
- go through basic health and safety requirements. Make sure they know how to evacuate the building if there is a fire alert, and any risks that they might be exposed to and the precautions the organisation takes and the actions they should take to neutralise these
- ensure the newcomer knows where to find the basic amenities, eg toilets, lockers, tea/coffee machines or arrangements for meal breaks and the like.

What job-related information does the employee need to know?

Once the basic housekeeping routines are completed, the new member of staff will need to be introduced to their job and the rest of their department.

The problem for many newcomers is that they are so bombarded with information and new faces that the first day is bewildering rather than exciting. You should work out a programme beforehand and involve in that programme those who will have most contact with the new person.

What the employee needs to know at this early stage is:

- where work is carried out, eg their desk, work bench, where personal possessions such as handbags and clothes may be safely stored
- who their neighbours are and how their work impacts on them
- how the job fits into the department, who the important work contacts are and how they can be found both physically, and on the telephone or through email, etc
- how to access the tools to do the job, eg computers, word processors, telephone systems, photocopiers, stationery
- training to do the job; this may either be fundamental, eg training in an unfamiliar work processing package, or procedural, eg how the organisation carries out tasks with which the newcomer is already familiar, such as payroll processing
- any other information that is essential if the person is to make an early contribution.

This phase of the induction process is also useful for you to re-emphasise points that may already have come up during the recruitment process, for example the organisation's attitude to casual absenteeism or the existence of an "open-door" policy.

Once the job basics have been covered, the employee will need to know their job in more depth, including for example:

- job priorities and key targets
- how the job fits into the organisation
- the contribution the jobholder is required to make to achieving organisational objectives
- standards of performance
- who to discuss problems with.

The manager should follow up the progress of the newcomer at the end of the first day, first week and first month.

What training should I arrange for the employee?

As well as providing the information the organisation wants to give its new employees, the induction should also cover the needs of each individual.

No matter how closely the person whom you appointed matched the recruitment criteria, inevitably there will some areas where initial training is needed. The induction process should therefore be designed to address early training and development needs.

These may have been identified during the recruitment process or by the individual. Even though it is likely that the person appointed will possess the basic competencies needed to perform the job, you should make further checks in the early days of the appointment to verify skill levels and the extent of the individual's knowledge. Any gaps will need to be addressed quickly.

Job and organisation specific training

The job and organisation specific training can be identified from the job description and the person specification.

No job description does, or should, stay static. However, it and the person specification should act as the foundation from which training and development can be planned. They also provide the platform for discussions about the inevitable changes brought by learning and altered business priorities.

Most staff will be comfortable with this approach as it enables them to see where they are going within the organisation and can help them plan their longer term career within, and possibly without, the organisation.

The training needs identified can include the:

- tskills needed for the performance of specific areas of work where the individual has been assessed as having potential but has not had any previous experience
- specific qualifications needed to carry out the job, eg to satisfy legal requirements
- use of a computer or a specialist piece of equipment or machinery
- patterns of behaviour needed to follow a routine, eg how to obtain the information needed to fill in a form or respond to certain types of customer enquiries.

Health and safety training needs

To ensure that new recruits or those who transfer from within the organisation are properly inducted into the health and safety aspects of the job, you should:

- identify the risks in the post and the action that management has taken to nullify those risks, especially the risks for a pregnant woman, a woman who has recently given birth and who is breast-feeding, and young workers
- look at the equipment and machinery which is used and identify best operating practice
- look at the context in which the job takes place and identify the risks inherent in it
- review the previous experience of the new recruit
- draw up a specific training programme designed to match experience and needs

- ensure that no-one is left to operate equipment or machinery until they have demonstrated that they are competent and safe in its use.

To review and undertake a Display Screen Equipment (DSE) Workstation Assessment

It is the employer's duty as outlined in the Health and Safety (Display Screen Equipment) Regulations as amended by the Health and Safety (Miscellaneous Amendments) Regulations 2002, to identify if employees would be classed as DSE users and assess their needs appropriately.

Returning to the workplace

Not everyone comes through the door new to the world of work — most recruits have experience. But, it is likely to be a poor and high-risk decision to hold no induction for them whatsoever, or to try and force all employees to go through a rigid and identical induction. Employees might be starting anew or returning from a break in employment, or needing or wanting a change from their last working arrangement — and their needs will differ. Common situations could include the following.

- *Change in childcare responsibilities*. A new recruit or transferring employee might find the job is more suited to a changing childcare situation — which could mean they have more, less or different childcare responsibilities.

- *Change in caring responsibilities*. A new recruit or transferring employee might find the job is more suited to their responsibilities as a carer — this could mean more, less or different carer responsibilities.

- *Return from maternity, adoption or shared parental leave*. Where a considerable break of up to a year has taken place, it is highly likely that induction will support and reassure a returning employee. It is also important to avoid making assumptions that the employee is returning to the same working pattern and duties, or that they will be up to date or remember everything from before their leave. Remember that some new employees may also be starting work a year after their child's birth or being matched for adoption.

- *Return from long-term illness or surgery*. It is highly likely that induction will support and reassure a returning employee, especially if it takes into account any phased returns or other adjustments, for example switching to a job-share or going part time. It must also take into account any disability-related "reasonable adjustments". It is also important to avoid making assumptions that the employee is returning to the same working pattern and duties, or that they will be up to date or remember everything from before their absence or leave. Remember that some new employees may have recently recovered from long-term illness or surgery, too.

- *Career break or sabbatical*. These can be breaks where an employee returns to the same job they left, where they return to a different job with the same employer, or where they have taken an intentional period of unemployment. The reasons vary from needing to spend more time with the family, developing new skills and volunteering, through to travelling round the world. Induction needs will vary depending on the duration and nature of the break.

- *Return from secondment or temporary promotion*. The scale of induction here will vary according to the amount of time the returning employee has been away, and the nature of the work they have been performing while away. But, in most cases, attention should be paid to ensuring the employee feels engaged and motivated about their return.

- *Further study*. A new recruit or transferring employee may be changing roles because they wish to apply some recent learning they have completed, or because the job they are moving to accommodates or otherwise complements a new course or qualification they are undertaking. Induction needs will vary, but the induction should be designed to be flexible, and take advantage of new skills and knowledge.

- *Redundancy*. A new recruit or transferring employee may be moving into a role after being made redundant from their last job. An induction should identify and take advantage of the often considerable skills and experience such employees bring with them, and attention should be paid to ensuring they feel engaged and motivated in their new role.

- *New job, new career and new challenges*. Sometimes a new or transferring employee will be looking for a new challenge or to develop their skills and career. Being clear about development opportunities will be an important element of a successful induction here.

- *Change of address*. A new or transferring employee may be starting the job because they have moved to a new area where they could not continue in their previous job. Individual induction needs will vary considerably here, but, in most cases, focusing on getting to know colleagues and feeling settled as quickly as possible is likely to help.

The most important thing for an employer to be mindful of is that there will be different general considerations for each situation, and different specific considerations for each individual.

Rather than try to make assumptions, employers should talk to the employees and ask them what, if anything, ought to be taken into account when planning an induction.

Inducting a diverse workforce

There is a strong business case for employing a diverse workforce that is representative of the areas an organisation recruits from and also of the customers it serves.

It is important to ensure that awareness of equality and diversity is part of an induction. In addition, new recruits and transferring employees may have certain needs and requests that should be taken into account. Some needs, like “reasonable adjustments” to accommodate disabilities, are legal necessities. Others, such as a request for a space and/or time to pray, should also be accommodated as far as practicable.

Other considerations

School, college and university leavers

This may be their first job, or the first time they are seeking a certain type of job, or employment in a specific industry. They are likely to be excited, slightly apprehensive and possibly unsure what to expect in the workplace. It will help if the induction makes it clear:

- What is expected of new employees at work.
- Where they fit into the organisation.
- Where there are opportunities to train and develop their skills.
- That the employer understands new recruits may be nervous and that it will work with them to allay any worries.

What happens after the induction?

The induction should now have been completed. However, the new employee will still want and need the employer's ongoing support.

Their full annual appraisal should include working out how the new employee can be further developed to both benefit the organisation and so they don't look to progress their career elsewhere. An employer should keep in mind that it is its brightest talent who are most likely to leave and be able to leave.

It is therefore important for the new employee to feel that:

- there will be job development opportunities to fulfil their potential within the organisation
- they can perform at their best — this requires a working environment with the necessary resources, where colleagues pull together and managers are supportive
- they are encouraged to suggest ideas
- their contribution is recognised and fairly rewarded.

Reviewing whether induction was effective

An employer should look back on a regular basis at how new employees have settled in. It should identify where they excel, struggle or lose interest and where improvements could be made.

Indicators of an induction's effectiveness can include the following.

- The employer asking the employee for feedback at the end of their induction — it will also help to establish if the employee is keen to stay.
- At the three-month and six-month stages, whether the new employee is positive about their work and the organisation, and whether the volume and quantity of their work meets targets.
- At 12 months, and their first full performance review/ appraisal, whether the new employee is producing the results expected of them at that stage
- Whether a significant proportion of new employees are leaving within a couple of years of joining the organisation. If so, an employer should find out why. For example, it could ask them at exit interviews.

Induction checklist

The information given to the employee can be provided over a period of days or weeks. Too much information at one time is counter-productive as it is difficult to take in.

The following list should help you prepare an introduction to the organisation for new employees. The list should be tailored to each individual employee. For each employee, a record should be kept of their start date, the date each part of the induction process is completed and the person who undertook the induction.

Reception

- New employee received
- Personnel documentation completed
- PAYE slip taken
- NI number recorded
- Introduction to departmental manager and other staff in the department
- Security pass issued

Local layout of company, section or department

- Tour of premises
- Cloakroom and toilet facilities
- First-aid room
- Lockers
- Entrances and exits
- Canteen

- Notice boards
- Telephone facilities
- Smoking shelter/facilities

The department

- Departmental function and how this relates to the rest of the organisation
- New entrant's own job
- Supervision
- Colleagues
- Standard of work expected

Conditions of employment explained

- Contract, eg hours, breaks, notice, written statement of terms
- Reporting/clocking/flexible working procedures
- Wage/salary calculation and method of payment
- Job evaluation and grading
- PAYE, NI and other deductions
- Holidays
- Reporting sick, sick pay and self-certificates
- Other absence reporting arrangements
- Pension scheme
- Other benefits, if any
- Expense claims procedure

Education, training and promotion

- The organisation's training scheme
- Content and duration
- Records and progress
- Further education/training sheets(including the introduction of a training agreement)
- Policy on day release

- Assistance with course fees and books
- Performance appraisal
- Means of promotion/advancement

Safety and first aid

- Safety hazards — general and particular
- Safety rules, eg no smoking
- Protective clothing
- Dangers of loose clothing, long hair, earrings, etc
- Housekeeping, eg clear gangways
- Behaviour, eg horseplay, practical jokes
- Fires — causes and prevention
- Location of fire-fighting equipment
- Fire drill and fire alarm
- Location of exits
- Use of fire extinguisher
- Health risks — dangerous substances and processes
- First-aid procedures for minor problems
- First-aid boxes
- Accident reports
- Safety representatives

Company rules and procedures

- Organisation rules, eg dress codes, etc
- IT and electronic communications policy
- Misconduct — examples
- Disciplinary procedure
- Involvement of employee representatives
- Grievance procedures

- Appeals

Employee involvement and communication

- Trade union recognition
- Collective agreements and disputes procedures
- Collective arrangements
- Corporate communications
- Elected employee representatives
- Communication and briefing groups
- Works council

Welfare and employee benefits/facilities

- Protective clothing/laundry arrangements
- Safety footwear
- Medical services
- Suggestions scheme
- Sports/social facilities
- Savings schemes
- Cycle to work scheme
- Childcare contribution scheme
- Share schemes
- Transport arrangements

The organisation

- Mission statement and priorities
- Vision and values
- Product and services
- Markets (incl. competitors)
- Customers/clients
- Organisation structure

- Future developments
- Brief history

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