

A CJC BUDDY FOR YOUR NEW HIRE

Providing a buddy is the first step for building relationships between your new hire, their new peers, and the university at large.

Introduction

CJC has implemented a buddy system to help new hires connect to their work, their new team and to create a sense of inclusion while providing them with support and guidance as they learn their new job. The ideal buddy is a resource who is friendly, interpersonally effective, demonstrates patience, and is a positive role model. The buddy should make the new employee feel welcomed, answer questions and help navigate CJC's culture.

What is a buddy?

A buddy is someone in the new hire's department or unit who partners with that person for their first 90 days of employment. The buddy is responsible for offering advice and guidance regarding the day-to-day aspects of working in the department. They should offer encouragement and feedback while introducing the new hire to the department's culture. They are willing to provide time, be accessible and partner/support the new employee during their first 90 days on the job. For faculty, a buddy can be assigned for a full semester.

Why have a buddy:

The purpose of new employees being assigned a buddy is to welcome them and reaffirm their decision to be part of the Gator Nation. A buddy program ensures new employees have a reliable, motivated, single point-of-contact for their basic questions regarding their work experience at CJC. A buddy can convey information that helps new hires get set-up for success. The buddy can cover items that new hires need to know but may not necessarily need to know on day one, i.e., where is the nearest restroom? What do people usually do for lunch? How do I get to the UF libraries? I can't get the printer to work – what should I do? How often does the department meet?

How is the buddy selected?

Supervisors select the buddy for the program. Assigning the appropriate staff member to act as a buddy is important. A good buddy is:

- Someone who is familiar with the culture, values and vision of the unit or department.
- A person who maintains consistency between words and actions while setting standards for the department.
- A co-worker from the department who will be a **positive** role model.



- An employee who is familiar with the new hire's role.
- An employee who has been in his/her role for at least one year.
- A good communicator with strong interpersonal skills and a strong sense of discretion.
- Ideally someone who similar work as the new hire so the buddy can also provide job-specific feedback.
- An employee who has the ability to make time for the new hire and will be accessible to them (don't pick someone who sits halfway across campus).
- An employee who is also trusted by their peers and understands that if they become aware of any serious concerns, they will be expected to report the concerns to the appropriate office (more on this topic below).
- An employee who may be interested in professional development and growth opportunity. This may be a way for you to start thinking about who your rising stars are, who has leadership potential, and who wants to be a more visible member of the team. You will learn a lot about an existing employee by how they manage serving as a buddy for a new hire. Win-win!

Training for the Buddy

Selected buddies will meet with the CJC-HR team and their supervisor for a 30-minute orientation to acclimate them to the CJC buddy program. This will allow both the buddy and supervisor an opportunity to review individual roles and responsibilities.



Functions of the Buddy

The buddy will:

- Meet formally once a month for at least 30 minutes
- Conduct weekly check-ins that are 5-15 minutes in length to answer questions and build a relationship
- Serve as a resource for the new employee on expectations, assignment clarification (if they are familiar with the job-specific duties), policies, procedures and workplace norms
- Create a comfortable informal environment where the new employee feels safe bringing up concerns and asking questions
- Be a point of contact for the new employee
- Make introductions to colleagues and customers
- Provide feedback and encouragement for the new hire
- Realize the new hire's success is connected to the team's success
- Follow through on commitments
- Reliably maintain confidential and sensitive information
- Build trust

- Be a role model for the new hire and department

IMPORTANT: As the direct supervisor, be sure to regularly check in with both the new hire and the buddy to ensure that everything is working well for the new hire and the buddy. It is also important to give the buddy some ability to shape the buddy relationship in such a way that it helps (not overwhelms) the new hire.

Guidelines for Providing Feedback

The purpose of feedback is to help others be successful in their roles. Creating a feedback culture where employees and co-workers regularly provide feedback in all directions leads to a more efficient, trusting and supportive team culture. Induct new employees into your culture of feedback early on by providing them with a buddy and/or peer feedback partner.



What should the buddy do if sensitive issues arise?

- **What if the new hire reports they are having an issue with a co-worker?**
 - This is the type of issue that the buddy should report to the direct supervisor right away. New hires often determine within 30 days of starting a new job whether they want to stay or leave. If a new hire has a problem with a co-worker right away and it is not addressed, you could easily lose the new hire.
 - It is not appropriate to force the new hire (or the buddy) to address the issue. This is a situation where a member of the leadership team needs to find out what is going on and promptly address it. You never want to be in a situation where existing employees who are low performers drive away new employees who are high potential.
 - Supervisor should contact the CJC-Human Resources office if the issue is not resolved or if the issue is of significance to include misconduct or inappropriate behavior.
- **What if the new hire reports an issue with their direct supervisor?**
 - A buddy can certainly share his or her insight about the direct supervisor (such as, how to effectively communicate with them or their pet peeves). They can suggest having the new hire talk to CJC-Human Resources or the person to whom the supervisor reports. This, too, is the type of issue that needs to be addressed and resolved quickly, or you risk losing the new hire.
- **What if the new hire shares that they are dissatisfied with their position?**
 - New jobs can be hard. The buddy can start by listening. Ask what is it that they are struggling with—it could be the people (not feeling welcomed), the physical location (no parking and a cramped cubicle), the hardware (a slow computer and no printer nearby), etc. It may not be the actual job duties.
 - Suggest that the new employee discuss the issues with their supervisor. If the buddy feels comfortable, and they are not violating confidentiality, they should also discuss the topic with the direct supervisor. Existing employees may be immune to things a new hire will pick up on right away. Part of the value of incorporating new people into the team is to learn from their fresh perspective. While negative news is not always easy to hear, it is important to process. It probably has some value.

- **What if the new hire shares that they feel they are being mistreated (e.g., targeted by a bully or the victim of discrimination or harassment based on their age, sex, race, etc.)?**
 - Any type of employee misconduct (directed against or perpetrated by the new hire) must be immediately reported by the buddy. ***This will not be easy, but it is absolutely necessary.***
 - Reports can be made to the CJC-HR department and/or UFHR – Employee Relations. The buddy should either help the new hire (who may be reluctant, if they are the victim) or share the information him or herself. It is not okay for such concerns to be ignored or go unreported.

Beyond the Buddy. New hires should be fully aware that they have various resources for posing questions or seeking clarification. Their buddy may end up being their go-to for questions, but the new hire should never feel like that is their only option.

As the direct supervisor, you should regularly reinforce with the new hire that *your door* is always open. The new hire should also be aware that they can reach out to your department's HR rep or UFHR Employee Relations for additional support and direction.

EXAMPLE EMAIL TO THE BUDDY:

Dear **BUDDY'S NAME**,

Congratulations! You have been selected as a buddy for (New Employees Name), Title, Start Date. Please see the outlined process below. I will send an email to NEW EMPLOYEE on their first day and copy you.

- Meet formally once a month for at least 30 minutes in length
- Conduct weekly check-ins of 5-15 minutes in length to answer questions and build a relationship
- Serve as a resource for the new employee on expectations, assignment clarification (if they are familiar with the job-specific duties), policies, procedures and workplace norms
- Create a comfortable informal environment where the new employee feels safe bringing up concerns and asking questions
- Be a friendly point of contact for the new employee
- Make introductions to colleagues and customers
- Provide feedback and encouragement for the new employee

Be sure to review the guidelines for providing feedback prior to meeting with the new hire.

Thank you for accepting serving as a buddy for (NEW EMPLOYEE'S NAME).

If you have any questions about your role or expectations, please contact...

EXAMPLE EMAIL TO THE NEW EMPLOYEE:

Dear NEW EMPLOYEE,

As we discussed during your onboarding, BUDDY'S NAME AND TITLE, has been identified as your "buddy".

What does this mean for you? You have been assigned a trusted and motivated person who will offer advice, resources, and guidance regarding the day-to-day aspects of working in your current department. Assigning a buddy is like assigning an "official friend." The idea is that you will have someone who is available to guide you through basic questions about life at UF, politically sensitive questions, organizational dynamics, and organizational structure.

Your **buddy (BUDDY'S NAME)** has been asked to check in with you regularly to see if you have any questions or concerns within your first 90 days of employment...and beyond. Your **buddy** may ask you to share a lunch break or two if you would like. Our hope is to provide you with a resource to accompany me as your supervisor, other work associates and department leaders. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

BUDDY PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

BY SIGNING BELOW, I CONFIRM MY VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION IN MY DEPARTMENT'S BUDDY PROGRAM DESIGNED TO HELP NEW EMPLOYEES ACCLIMATE TO THEIR NEW JOB, MY DEPARTMENT, AND THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA. I UNDERSTAND THAT SERVING AS A BUDDY IS AN IMPORTANT RESPONSIBILITY, ESPECIALLY IN THE FIRST MONTHS AND YEAR OF A NEW EMPLOYEE'S CAREER, I AGREE TO:

1. ACT AS THE ASSIGNED BUDDY FOR A NEW EMPLOYEE DURING THE FIRST 90 DAYS OF THEIR EMPLOYMENT IN MY DEPARTMENT. SPECIFICALLY:
 - a. TO FORMALLY MEET EVERY MONTH FOR AT LEAST 30 MINUTES.
 - b. TO CONDUCT REGULAR CHECK-INS FOR 5-15 MINUTES.
2. SERVE AS A POSITIVE AND WELCOMING RESOURCE FOR THE NEW EMPLOYEE. THIS WILL HELP THE NEW EMPLOYEE SUCCESSFULLY ADJUST TO THEIR NEW POSITION AND ENSURE THAT THEY HAVE A PEER TO FACILITATE CREATING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS ACROSS THE DEPARTMENT WITH BUSINESS STAKEHOLDERS AND, AS NEEDED, ACROSS CAMPUS.
3. PROVIDE THE NEW EMPLOYEE WITH FEEDBACK AND ENCOURAGEMENT. THE FEEDBACK WILL HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THE DEPARTMENT'S CULTURE AND WORK EXPECTATIONS SO THAT THEY CAN BE SUCCESSFUL AND ENGAGED IN THEIR NEW JOB AND WITH THEIR NEW CO-WORKERS.
4. CREATE A COMFORTABLE INFORMAL ENVIRONMENT WHERE THE NEW EMPLOYEE FEELS SAFE BRINGING UP CONCERNS AND ASKING QUESTIONS.
5. THROUGH MY CONDUCT AND WORDS, SET A POSITIVE EXAMPLE, WHICH MEANS MODELING BEST PRACTICES ATTITUDE, PERFORMANCE, AND ATTENDANCE.
6. SHARE MY INSIGHT, EXPERIENCES, AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT MY DEPARTMENT, UF, AND, WHEN APPROPRIATE, GAINESVILLE, TO HELP THE NEW EMPLOYEE EFFECTIVELY LEARN FROM MY SUCCESSES, FAILURES, AND OBSERVATIONS.

7. PROMPTLY CONSULT WITH MY DIRECT SUPERVISOR OR HR REP WHEN THE NEW EMPLOYEE HAS QUESTIONS I CANNOT ANSWER.
8. UNDERSTANDING THAT BUILDING A TRUSTING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NEW HIRE IS IMPORTANT, I STILL AGREE TO:
 - a. PROMPTLY CONSULT WITH MY DIRECT SUPERVISOR OR HR REP IF I HAVE CONCERNS ABOUT HOW MY RELATIONSHIP, AS A BUDDY, IS DEVELOPING WITH THE NEW HIRE.
 - b. *IMMEDIATELY REPORT TO MY DIRECT SUPERVISOR* ANY REPORTS OF SERIOUS MISCONDUCT PERPETRATED BY OR AGAINST THE NEW EMPLOYEE (E.G., BULLYING, SEXUAL HARASSMENT, DISCRIMINATION BASED ON PROTECTED CLASS—SUCH AS RACE, AGE, DISABILITY, FRAUD OR THEFT, ETC.).

BUDDY NAME AND TITLE

DATE

BUDDY SIGNATURE

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE
