



Successfully **Onboarding** New Employees at the University of Bremen

Practical Guidelines for Areas Hiring New Staff



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Onboarding and Induction of New Employees

Our objective is to provide new employees with a warm welcome to the university and offer them a thorough introduction. But what does onboarding entail, and what do we want to achieve with it? Onboarding involves the social and professional integration of new employees, as well as reviewing and adapting the work area's structures and routines to accommodate a diverse workforce.



Social Integration

Social integration involves welcoming the employee into the team and familiarizing them with the university structure to foster a sense of belonging. This includes introducing new employees to the team, informal meetings, and welcome seminars.

Professional Integration

Professional integration involves familiarizing new employees with their specific tasks and responsibilities to ensure they have all the background information they need. This includes training sessions, induction plans, and follow-up meetings.

Effective onboarding is essential for employee satisfaction, reducing staff turnover, and improving work performance. The onboarding process begins after the job offer has been accepted and comprises three phases.

Not all employees enter the workforce on an equal footing. Structural barriers can systematically exclude or disadvantage individuals. Diversity-conscious onboarding ensures that all new employees have equal access to information, networks, and development opportunities. Protection against

discrimination is an essential part of the university's duty of care as an employer. Providing supportive onboarding is therefore an integral part of an inclusive university culture (see [University of Bremen Mission Statement](#)).

Who Is Responsible?

Integrating new employees into the team requires a concerted effort. Although supervisors bear the main responsibility, it is important to involve the rest of the team in onboarding tasks in order to promote acceptance and support.

This guide is therefore intended for anyone responsible for hiring and onboarding new employees. This typically applies to supervisors or staff assigned this task.

The [Welcome Center's Welcome Guide](#) provides important information that is helpful even before employment begins, especially for international arrivals and people relocating to Bremen from within Germany. It offers valuable support to overcome hurdles such as language barriers, residence permits, finding accommodations, and opening a bank account.



Phase 1

Phase 2

Phase 3

Before the First Day of Work

After the job interviews have concluded and your department has selected a suitable candidate for the position, the first phase of the onboarding process begins. The following measures will ensure a smooth start:

1. Communication and planning:

Contact the new employee about the outcome of the selection process as soon as the selection committee has made a decision. Establishing contact with employees at an early stage is an effective strategy for retaining talent. Please note that at this stage, no commitments should be made regarding employment, start date, pay grade, or similar matters. Deadlines for appeal procedures for the other applicants who were not selected must be observed. Next, the supervisor prepares and the prospective employee fills out the [Application for Employment](#) (including the forms “[Scale Allocation for New Employees](#)” and “[Declaration of Previous Employment](#)”). The documents must be submitted to Administrative Department 2 for further processing. It is important to let the prospective employee know who their designated contact person is in Administrative Department 2. Once all the application documents have been submitted, a formal job offer (cc. supervisor) can be sent. Administrative Department 2 will provide the prospective employee with a digital information folder along with an invitation to sign their work contract.

2. Signing the work contract:

The employee must sign the employment contract and other relevant documents before beginning work (in consultation with Administrative Department 2).

3. Preparing the workplace:

Whenever possible, the workplace is to be fully furnished and set up with all necessary work equipment in advance, taking into account aspects of accessibility and inclusion (e.g., room allocation, IT equipment and access, see checklists below).

4. Informing the team:

Supervisors should inform the existing team about the new employee(s)' arrival and prepare team members to offer support, such as clarifying responsibilities, providing mentorship, and promoting non-discriminatory communication.

Checklist:

Before the First Day of Work

6 weeks before		
Task	Assigned to	Completed?
<p>Submit an application for a telephone to Administrative Department 8 → https://www.uni-bremen.de/dezernat8/arbeitsplaetze/telefonantrag</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Hardware procurement (if not still available from predecessor)</p> <p>Centralized: Hardware (notebook, monitor, docking station, keyboard, mouse, and headset) should be requested via email from Administrative Department 8 at servicedesk@uni-bremen.de. → Application/form</p> <p>Faculties: Hardware is obtained via technical or administrative staff. Standard hardware and Apple hardware can also be acquired using the form mentioned above, sending it to servicedesk@uni-bremen.de. The procurement of non-standard hardware is carried out independently by the individual faculties.</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Software / special software procurement from Department 8 servicedesk@uni-bremen.de → Application/form</p> <p>SAP sap-hotline@uni-bremen.de → Application/form</p> <p>FlexNow for individuals with teaching responsibilities → Application/form</p> <p>IT systems specific to controlling (including Goldesel) → Application/form</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>

2 to 6 weeks before

Task	Assigned to	Completed?
Submit a room allocation application to room management and plan the office furnishing (taking accessibility into account, if necessary): Infos → here		<input type="radio"/>

As soon as the position / possibly also relocation to Bremen is confirmed

Task	Assigned to	Completed?
Information about → Welcome Guide and → Welcome Center		<input type="radio"/>

As early as possible, differs depending on building and key type

Task	Assigned to	Completed?
Obtain/order keys from facility management → Contact details		<input type="radio"/>

Professional and Social Integration

Task	Assigned to	Completed?
<p>Inform your team about the new colleague and, if necessary, discuss any specific needs</p> <p>If necessary, reflect on and adapt structures and routines with regard to full building accessibility and communication routines</p>		<input type="radio"/>
<p>Formulate a professional integration and induction plan (see Appendix 1)</p>		<input type="radio"/>
<p>Clarify support from mentors</p>		<input type="radio"/>
<p>Maintain contact with the new employee, including regarding any specific needs (from the selection notification until the start of work)</p>		<input type="radio"/>
<p>Prepare a welcoming workplace</p>		<input type="radio"/>
<p>Set up pigeonhole</p>		<input type="radio"/>
<p>Update office nameplate use corporate design template: → Tips & Templates – University of Bremen</p>		<input type="radio"/>
<p>Set up printer</p>		<input type="radio"/>
<p>Add employee’s contact details to your team’s website</p> <p>Data protection notice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Contact details may only be published online if the person’s job requires them to be contactable from outside the organization. – Photos may only be posted on the website with the prior consent of the person depicted. <p>→ https://www.uni-bremen.de/intern/komma</p>		<input type="radio"/>





Phase 1

Phase 2

Phase 3

The First Days of Work

In the second phase of the onboarding process, which takes place during the first days at work, plan various activities to ensure that new employees get off to a successful start.

→ **Official welcome:**

The supervisor or a designated representative formally welcomes the new employee.

→ **Introducing the team:**

The supervisor or a representative then introduces the new employee to their direct team as well as other important colleagues and contact persons.

→ **Introducing the workplace:**

The new employee is introduced to their workplace, including technical equipment, safety guidelines, work equipment, and other relevant resources.

→ **Onboarding and induction plan:**

The structured Onboarding and Induction Plan is outlined, detailing the new employee's orientation during the initial weeks and months (see Appendix 1).

→ **Clarifying any questions:**

The new employee is explicitly invited to ask any questions they may have and to clarify any uncertainties.

Checklist:

The First Days of Work

Task	Assigned to	Completed?
Welcome the new employee and accompany them to their workplace		<input type="radio"/>
Introduce the working environment/set up their workplace		<input type="radio"/>
Account management/IT service desk (GW2 B2860) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - set up ZfN account (main IT account) - apply for a vw email address (only for areas connected to the vw network) → an ID card and proof of university affiliation are required - access rights to central drives (B: and U:), other access rights, hardware procurement → contact person for IT services:		<input type="radio"/>
Hand over keys (if necessary, collect the keys from facilities management beforehand)		<input type="radio"/>
Welcome meeting: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present the Onboarding and Induction Plan (Appendix 1)/explain assigned tasks - Introduce university structures, faculties and departments, and responsibilities within the team - Team introduction, tour of the premises, if applicable, building and campus tour (taking into account accessible entrances) 		<input type="radio"/>
Inform the new employee about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recording of time worked - Regular working hours - Taking sick leave - Submitting vacation requests, requesting time off in lieu - Mobile office / working from home - Compass of values 		<input type="radio"/>
Introduce central contact points & services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human resource development and further training - Health management services and programs on offer - Corporate addiction prevention - Mental health - Staff council & Council of the College of Academic Employees - Central Women's Representative - Women's representative for the service sector (LGG) - Equal Opportunities Office and Diversity Office (Ref 04) - ADE, Administrative Unit – Equal Opportunities/Antidiscrimination - In-House social counseling service - International Office, Welcome Center and Staff Mobility - Bremen Early Career Researcher Development (BYRD) - Family Care Office - Higher Education Didactics 		<input type="radio"/>



Phase 1

Phase 2

Phase 3

Induction/Probationary Period

In Phase 3 – induction and probationary period – the focus is on integrating new employees into their new area of work, both socially and professionally.

This crucial phase is shaped by various elements designed to ensure successful integration. These include, among other things:

- role-specific induction and training,
- integration into the existing team, and
- participation in targeted training sessions

Targeted measures in these areas not only expand new employees' knowledge and skills, but also create a strong foundation for successful collaboration.

Checklist:

Induction/Probationary Period

Task	Assigned to	Completed?
Final set-up of the workplace		<input type="radio"/>
Introductions to other colleagues/key contacts		<input type="radio"/>
Participation in a welcome event (twice a year)	Invitation via supervisor	<input type="radio"/>
Role-specific induction/training , including onboarding that considers specific needs, structural barriers, experiences with marginalization, potential areas of conflict		<input type="radio"/>
Data protection awareness: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – introductory texts on data protection, – interactive eLearning basic training (“Basic Course on Data Protection”), – data protection information sheet for employees in the internal download area, and – services and support: Data protection team and Information on reporting data protection incidents → Data protection info portal of the university		<input type="radio"/>
Participation in training sessions: IT security Contact: datenschutz@uni-bremen.de or tel. +49 (0)421 218 – 60217		
<u>Training courses on occupational health and safety and environmental protection.</u> → Administrative Unit 02 / first aid course, fire safety, etc.		<input type="radio"/>
Other training sessions, if needed → Typo3 (only if employee’s tasks include university website editing) → SAP access and training		<input type="radio"/>
Follow-up meetings after 5 – 6 weeks (Appendix 2)		<input type="radio"/>
Decision on successful completion of probationary period (process, document early on)		<input type="radio"/>
Follow-up meeting after the end of the probationary period		<input type="radio"/>
Team integration measures (e.g., joint lunches, mentorship)		<input type="radio"/>
→ Information on status group networking / inclusion in relevant mailing lists (e.g., mid-level sector via Stud.IP “Office_Netzwerk”)		<input type="radio"/>

→ **Please note:** Some of the information mentioned in the checklist is available in the Onboarding and Induction Plan (Appendix 1)

Appendix 1

Onboarding and Induction Plan

New employee:

Beginning of employment:

Supervisor:

Mentor:

Job-related tasks

Important contact persons

Task	Assigned to	Completed?
Introduction to the university as an employer, university structure (website, internatl area), and benefits..., and benefits (university sports, EGYM Wellpass, etc.)		<input type="radio"/>
Introduction to job-related tasks		<input type="radio"/>
Data protection training datenschutz@uni-bremen.de → Website		<input type="radio"/>
Information security training security@uni-bremen.de		<input type="radio"/>
→ Safety briefing (based on role and area)		<input type="radio"/>
Participation in Uni Bremen's central Welcome Meeting Invitation will be sent as an infomail and via supervisor Takes place twice each year		<input type="radio"/>
University Communication & Marketing (KOMMA) → Corporate Design		<input type="radio"/>
Internal training – Typo3 (only when needed) – university-teaching training – Anti-discrimination / diversity competency		<input type="radio"/>
External training , such as → AFZ-Fortbildungsprogramm (civil servant training center program – in German only)		<input type="radio"/>
Work shadowing in team, if applicable		<input type="radio"/>
Follow-up meeting after 5 – 6 weeks		<input type="radio"/>
Follow-up meeting after the end of the probationary period		<input type="radio"/>

Appendix 2

Follow-up Meetings²

1. Meeting, after the first few months (approximately 5 to 6 weeks) in the new work area

- How well have you settled into your new job?
- How happy are you with your work, work environment, and the structures in place?
- What are things that have either helped or hindered you in completing your tasks?
- How would you rate the training for your work and task areas? Do you have any feedback or suggestions for improvement?
- How do you experience working with me as a supervisor? What aspects are particularly important to you?
- How would you rate working with the team and your colleagues? What is going well and what can be improved?
- What support would you like to have in your work to help you continue to familiarize yourself with the university and Bremen?
- What can we do to ensure that our work relationship remains positive and successful beyond the probationary period?

2. Follow-up meeting, towards the end of the probationary period (after approximately 5 months)

- How would you rate the onboarding process in your new work area? What has gone well, and what could be improved?
- What challenges have you faced during your probationary period? What has helped you overcome them?
- How do you view your role in our university? What are your strengths and how can we help you to reach your goals?
- Do you enjoy your tasks and responsibilities? Why (not)?
- Did we meet the expectations you had for this position based on the job posting, the job interview, and the job description? In what areas did your expectations not match reality?
- How would you rate the teamwork within your team, your area, and the university at large?
- Do you see a need for additional training and support in order to continue to perform your job well?
- Where do you see yourself in your work area in the upcoming six to twelve months?
- Since you have a fresh outside perspective, what have you noticed about the structures, processes, and communication paths? When have you wondered why we do things a certain way and not differently? Do you have concrete suggestions for changes?
- Can we do anything else to ensure that you continue to work here happily and confidently?

²Based on U Hohenheim

Meeting Structure Template

Welcome and introduction

- Explain the purpose of the meeting
- Create a positive and confidential atmosphere

Review of probationary period

- Reflect on work goals and tasks
- Discuss goals reached

Performance rating

- Provide objective and respectful feedback
- Demonstrate positive aspects and areas for improvement with examples
- Was this feedback helpful?

Ask employee for feedback

- Obtain their perspective on the probationary period
- Encourage open feedback about training and work conditions by being transparent about how feedback will be used (maintaining confidentiality and implementing feedback)
- Obtain feedback on issues of diversity/discrimination/conflicts (point out that anti-discrimination regulations require you to report concrete discriminatory situations)

Developmental areas and further procedures

- Identify developmental areas
- Mention self-reflection about structural points regarding the work area and make these transparent
- Discuss measures or further training options, possibly for the entire team
- Clarify the future work relationship (e.g., permanent contract)

Conclusion

- Summarize important points
- Clarify open questions
- Appreciation and outlook

Post-processing

- Document conversation
- Plan follow-up action

Appendix 3

Problems During the Probationary Period

Problem	Problem definition	Approach/Solution
Insufficient performance/expertise	Did not meet expectations	Timely feedback, training, setting clear goals, additional training
Difficulty adapting	Difficulties with integrating into the team or the work processes	Regular conversations, open communication, look at and change structural/institutional/individual factors hindering team integration
Communication problems	Misunderstandings or insufficient communication	Clear rules for communication, regular meetings, encourage a culture of feedback
Lacking motivation	Little engagement or interest	Analyze reasons, adapt tasks, recognition
Time management and organizational skills	Difficulty prioritizing tasks and making deadlines	Support in time management, set clear priorities, use organizational tools
Personal or health-related problems	Limitations in work performance due to personal circumstances, sometimes connected to specific needs (standing desk, breaks, poor acoustics in team room, ...)	Compassionate conversations, flexible work hours, offer assistance, (help to) remove barriers
Lack of belonging	Conflict, experienced discrimination, lacking integration, position itself is structurally isolated	Openly address and look for unified solutions early on, encourage connection with team, and involve staff representatives or support centers as needed



When an Employee's Suitability is in Question

- Take timely measures if there are prolonged and substantial concerns regarding an employee's suitability (Note: not for singular or isolated concerns).
- Proactively seek communication with the employee to give feedback and discuss potential solutions together.
- Make the employee aware that they can ask a staff representative (e.g., staff council, gender equality or equal opportunities representative, representative for disabled employees) to participate in such conversations.
- Document the content of conversations regularly and objectively to create a transparent basis for continued collaboration. Keep minutes that are understandable for both parties.
- In the event that further substantial concerns remain, involve the HR department in a timely manner to terminate a contract during the probationary period. Committee deadlines as well as potentially those of the disability authorities need to be considered.
- Take deadlines for termination and those of participating oversight committees (e.g., staff council, gender equality or equal opportunities representative, representative for disabled employees) into consideration and plan accordingly.

