



Buddy scheme for new international colleagues: guidelines

Contents

1. Introduction
2. What is buddying?
3. Benefits of buddying for new members of staff
4. The role of a buddy
5. Is being a buddy right for me?
6. How the relationship works

Date of implementation: November 2018

Document owner: Lucy Omidiran, HR Officer: International

1. Introduction

The University wants to enhance the support offered to international colleagues as they arrive in Leeds to take up new positions at the University. Ensuring that international colleagues are well supported helps to ensure a good staff experience, promotes the reputation of the University, both in the UK and overseas, and, through the sharing of international experience, knowledge and skills, enhances partnership and collaboration.

Alongside other measures designed to support international colleagues, buddying is identified as a key integration opportunity the University will make available to new colleagues as part of the orientation process. Buddying functions as a supportive mechanism to aid new colleagues assimilate smoothly during their first months here at the University and assist in the transition into a new academic and/or cultural environment. The main feature of the buddy scheme is its informality and mutuality. Buddies can be of any nationality but we will try and match colleagues by faculty and other common factors.

2. What is buddying?

A buddy relationship is:

- A confidential relationship
- Between two people, preferably sharing similar experiences
- There to facilitate the speed at which new colleagues settle into a role and familiarise themselves with the department and organisation
- Focussed on networking and building relationships with fellow colleagues
- A safe space to ask and answer questions regarding the formal or informal culture at the University

Buddying does not include:

- Line management
- Counselling
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Monitoring performance
- Assessing professional development
- Answering contractual information
- Providing financial assistance
- A requirement to socialise 'out of hours'

3. Benefits of buddying for new members of staff

Buddying offers a range of benefits to new colleagues; some of these benefits include:

- A source of confidential and reliable support throughout the induction process
- Reducing the initial confusion and uncertainty faced by new starters
- Comfortable assimilation into a new environment
- An opportunity to learn from an existing member of colleagues
- Increased familiarity in work and the social environment

-
- Increased networking
 - Increased understanding of the way the University operates

4. The role of a buddy

- A supportive colleague
- Introduce new employee to colleagues, facilitate networking, add to informal contact lists, etc.
- Take new employee on campus tour and familiarise them with the environment
- Provide and signpost relevant knowledge and information
- Help understand unwritten 'rules'
- Be a friendly and familiar face

5. Is being a buddy right for me?

There are many skills, qualities and behaviours that make a 'good' buddy. In general, it is hoped that potential buddies will possess the following qualities:

- Has time to devote to the relationship
- Is empathetic and non-judgemental with good listening skills
- Has good communication skills and is trustworthy, open and honest
- Adapts to the specific needs of the new employee
- Has a wide range of University knowledge
- Is committed to, and proud of, the University and respects its values
- Has a genuine interest in helping the new employee assimilate smoothly

Are you prepared to be:

- A contact?
- Willing to share experience?
- Encouraging?
- Willing to check-up on the new employee?
- Respectful of confidentiality?

6. How the relationship works

Initial meeting

The buddy should take responsibility for setting up the first meeting. The main feature of this scheme is its informality, so arranging a meeting over tea/coffee is recommended. It is during this meeting that the new member of staff can outline the things s/he would appreciate most from the partnership.

Time thereafter

The meetings to follow will largely depend on the needs of the new employee. They may range from anywhere between quick catch ups, to longer meetings that discuss certain aspects of the workplace. As the new employee begins to settle in, the frequency of these meetings may begin to reduce.

A time limited relationship

It is up to the buddy and new employee to decide the frequency and remit of their meetings. There is no time limit on the relationship, as it will depend on the needs of the new employee and availability of the buddy volunteer.

Confidentiality

The buddy relationship is confidential between the buddy and new employee. Issues discussed within the buddy relationship should not be shared with the new employee's line manager or anyone else. In exceptional circumstances these may be shared with a member of staff responsible for the buddy scheme. Any passing of information between the buddy and the new employee's line manager should go through the new employee. It is up to the new employee what they share with their line manager.

If you have any queries about the buddying scheme or anything in these guidelines, please contact internationalhr@leeds.ac.uk.