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# Plan an induction program

## Overview

Positive performance outcomes are the purpose of an induction program. So you need to design induction programs that will help new employees assimilate quickly, understand their tasks and the standard of work expected. Choose cost-effective methods and tools, make sure it's planned and conducted in cooperation with line managers, and be sure to include a plan for follow up and evaluation.

This learning resource will help you plan an induction program for staff new to your organisation.



## Key terms

### **Induction**

The process of receiving and orienting employees when they first join an organisation

## What is induction?

Induction is the process by which new employees are familiarised with the organisation and their jobs.

During the induction process they become familiar with the organisation, its business and principal functions, and its structure. Induction gives new employees their first taste of the culture of the organisation, as they meet the key personnel, their leaders, and their fellow workers for the first time. They start to acquire and use their knowledge, skills, attitudes, and attributes as a means for survival and success in their new environment.

In some organisations, there is a tendency to make induction a process that receives little or no employer commitment. Once selection has taken place there seems to be a dollar-driven urgency to put people to work without further ado.

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# Why induct employees?

An organisation focused on meeting strategic objectives will have no problem identifying the importance of inducting new employees. The benefits will outweigh the costs in the long run. Induction has been proven to reduce staff turnover and absenteeism, to increase productivity (despite a loss of productive time in the first instance), facilitate learning and development, reduce accidents, incidents and disputes, and increase job satisfaction.

Consider this scenario:

Greta has just been taken to the local hospital after having been sprayed in the face with blood. It was her first day at work as a laboratory assistant in the School of Anatomy at the University. She was not wearing protective glasses, as she had not yet attended her induction orientation scheduled for that afternoon.

This highlights the value of timely compliance with occupational health and safety legislation.



Think

**What are the essential things that an induction program in your organisation must cover?**

## Who is involved?

The induction process is best carried out as a cooperative effort between HR, line management and line staff. The people who know the jobs best, particularly in terms of socialisation, are the workers in the work area.

For this reason, your induction process needs to take a dual direction — one where management or HR involvement will provide orientation for new employees to the wider organisation and its functions, including pay details, occupational health and safety regulations, and conditions of employment. The other direction will be an orientation to the work area, including the requirements of the job, and developing workplace relationships with fellow workers and team leaders.



## Tip

**Always consult line managers and relevant staff about the content and methodology of the induction program. Their agreement is essential for a positive outcome.**

# Planning an induction program

## 1. Create a checklist of content

When you are preparing your induction plan outline, decide what you want to include in your program, and when each item needs to be done. Your induction plan could include the following:

- information about the organisation — mission statement, goals objectives, an organisational chart, site layout, products or services
- terms of employment — leave provisions, Award cover, union membership, probationary period, contract conditions
- pay details — when and how paid
- amenities — eating facilities, toilets, showers, car parks, lockers
- tasks and responsibilities of individual jobs, position descriptions
- working conditions — dress code, uniforms, policies and procedures
- occupational health and safety regulations
- introduction to other staff and team leader, supervisor or manager
- introduction to work area
- introduction to the job.

## 2. Organise a schedule and venues

Rate each item in your induction checklist as high, medium, or low in terms of urgency. This will indicate what needs to be done immediately before new employees start work, what can be done preferably before or as soon as they start work, and what can be done over a period of days or weeks. This will guide you as to where induction takes place, and who does it. It may be information given by a manager in a training room, or explained in areas such as the pay office, or with a supervisor in a work area, or a combination of all of these.

From this information, you can see that the induction program probably needs to take place around the organisation, in a room, and in the work area. You can see that some parts of this program will need to be done immediately, such as occupational health and safety regulations, pay and contract details, and introduction to the work area and other workers. While some of this will require time off the job, other parts can be provided in an

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information pack, or undertaken with a workplace mentor over a number of days.

### 3. Document the induction plan

Once you have your plan outlined, you can draw up your induction program. Here is an example of one tool you could use:

Table 1: Induction plan template (5 cols)

<i>Date/Time</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Method</i>	<i>Instructor</i>
(when)	(what)	(where)	(how)	(who)

Large organisations may have regular induction programs with each group intake. This is not so practical when new employees enter the organisation irregularly, and in individual or small numbers. And it might not be practical for induction to take place immediately on entering the workplace.

Distribute copies of your induction plan to key people involved in the program, both inside and outside the organisation, as well as to line managers or team leaders receiving new workers, and to new employees participating in the program.



#### Tip

**Give the new employees a checklist or a feedback sheet, this will help to confirm that everything required is covered with each new employee.**

### Plan for individual needs

If performance gaps have been identified with a new employee during the selection process, then you must discuss this with the person at this early stage. It may be something such as a failure to receive or understand certain information you gave out during the recruitment stages, in which case induction may close the gap.

Or there may be gaps in knowledge and skills required for job performance. These will need to be addressed with training or coaching after the initial

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induction period, but the new employee must be made aware of your intentions to address this at a later stage.

**It doesn't end with induction. Prepare to manage the ongoing performance of new employees, particularly during the probationary period of employment.**

## Implementation tips

In terms of program methodology it's more effective, even though it takes more planning, to conduct induction in incremental stages. This allows for short intakes of information rather than providing an intensive single period crammed with new information. This way, the new employee will be able to remember more information.

Another way to improve the effectiveness of learning is to allow the new employee to learn about their new environment in an interactive, participative way. For example, consider if new employees would benefit from having a site map with key features identified for them to tick off on their tour of the organisation. Likewise, determine if there is any benefit for new employees to have a key-point checklist to find and read the policy manual once they are on the job, or to find out information themselves by interviewing key staff according to a checklist.

Make a checklist of essential items to be covered by inductees. Have both the new employee and the person accompanying them tick the checklist when each item is done. When the checklist is completed, have a copy sent to the employee's file in HR.



## Research

**Is HRMIS or web technology used for induction in your organisation?  
If not, how could it be?**

Parts of this worksheet are adapted from Open Learning Institute (2003)  
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