

HOW TO ONBOARD
AND INDUCT
EMPLOYEES WHO ARE
WORKING REMOTELY

VPSC

Victorian Public Sector Commission



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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

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How to use this guide

Use this guide to adapt your organisation's processes and policies for remote onboarding and induction.

Your processes must be fair and reasonable and comply with the law.

Be flexible in how you support each new employee's needs.

If you need help

[Get in touch](#) for advice on this guide or hiring in the Victorian public sector.

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Set them up for success

To comply with government standards, you must give your new employee fair and reasonable support to succeed in their new role.

In their onboarding, play an active role and give them the support they need from before they start to the end of their probation.

Choose the right approach

Think about what approach you want to use with:

- learning and communication styles
- role requirements
- systems, tools and access needs
- team culture
- ways of working

Check your organisation's policies before you adjust

If you want to onboard or induct differently, check your changes comply with your organisation's policies and the law.

You can speak with your HR team or [get in touch](#) for advice.

Create a good experience

As non-physical onboarding may be confronting for your new employee, show them empathy and understanding.

Create a positive experience so they can perform their best from day one.

Be patient but clear with what you expect from each team member.

Make your onboarding process easy to follow and give them as much information as they need.

Embrace diversity and inclusion

Your onboarding and induction processes must be inclusive.

Ask your employee what they need at all stages of their onboarding and induction.

Embrace diversity in capabilities and backgrounds. Respect the uniqueness of each employee. Be open minded to have your lived experience challenged.

When you ask your new employee to do something, be mindful everyone has different abilities with technology. Have alternative methods ready if they need them.

Consider their home working arrangements.

For example, some employees may not have their own internet connection or workstations. Or some may have caring responsibilities or work flexible hours.

Read [create an inclusive workplace](#) and your organisation's inclusion and diversity strategy.

Support employees with disability

If your new employee has shared disability information with you, you must adjust your process and offer [reasonable adjustments](#) if they need them.

Ask them if they need specific work arrangements and what they need to perform in their role.

Read [5 ways you can support employees with disability to work remotely](#).

Checklist for all stages

- I've checked my organisation's onboarding policies and asked HR if it's okay to adjust them for my process
- I know what a [protected attribute](#) is and offered [reasonable adjustments](#) if they need them
- I've checked my approach and technology will allow them to fulfil the inherent requirements of the role
- I've embedded diversity and inclusion in my process and have asked my new employee what they need to be successful in their role

1 MONTH BEFORE THEY START

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A good onboarding process starts well before your employee's first day, even when working remotely.

Be organised so your new employee has confidence in their new organisation and can perform their best from day one.

Ask your new employee what they need

With remote working, your new employee may have to change or adjust the hours they work to meet other commitments.

If your new employee has a disability, they may need adjustments to your usual processes.

Ask your new employee what support they need for remote working. Don't put the onus on them to tell you.

Discuss communication styles and tools

Find out how your new employee likes to communicate and balance it with your own style.

Help them get comfortable with the tools your team uses for remote working.

Ask them if they need anything in a different format, like audio recordings of meetings or accessible versions of documents.

If they've never used a tool your team uses, support them on how to use it properly. Send them helpful links about your tools or internal guides about your processes. Or, ask a colleague to help them.

Make forms online

Check if all the forms your new employee needs to fill out, can be filled out online.

If there are any forms that can't be filled out online, speak with your HR team to see what you or they can do.

Your online formats must be accessible for people with disability. Speak with your communications team for advice on this.

You can email them or use cloud-based sharing tools to share files, such as [OneDrive](#) or [SharePoint](#).

Organise their equipment, technology and software

Ask your new employee what equipment, technology and software they need to fulfil the inherent requirements of the role.

Ask your organisation if they can courier what they need to their working location.

Think about what software they'll need to log into to do their work and anything your IT team needs to install on their devices.

Checklist for 1 month before they start

- I've checked how they like to communicate
- I've checked if they need information in different or accessible formats
- I've sent them information about what tools we use in the team
- I've asked them to let me know if they need any workplace adjustments
- I've spoken with HR about completing new starter forms online
- I've checked if they need any equipment and worked out how to get it to them
- I've arranged for IT to install the right software on their device and set up their logins

1 WEEK BEFORE THEY START

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Give them a call

It can be daunting to start in a new job and even more so when it's remote.

Call your new employee to see how they're feeling and make them feel welcome.

Confirm any adjustments they need and if they need any more support.

Assign them a remote buddy

Get someone who is confident with working remotely to be your new employee's buddy when they start.

They can help your new employee if they have any problems adjusting or using their technology.

Get the remote buddy to email them so they feel welcome and know they have another person to support them.

Set up meet and greets

It can be harder to foster a team environment remotely.

Put time in your new employee's diary for meet and greets with yourself and each team member. It doesn't have to be more than 15 minutes.

If they're going to work with people outside your team, set up meet and greets with them too.

Don't put the onus on your new employee to organise these. Give them one less thing to worry about on their first day.

Checklist for the week before they start

- I've given them a call and confirmed any reasonable adjustments or support they may need
- I've assigned them a remote buddy

- I've set up meet and greets with my team members and anyone else they're working with

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Adapt the physical traditions

Think about how you can adapt traditions like handshakes, mornings teas and staff stand ups, such as:

- email a welcome to your new employee and cc'ing in their team members and other relevant people
- announce their arrival on Slack or Microsoft Teams
- hold a video morning tea to welcome them

Check everything works

There's nothing worse than starting the first day and nothing works.

Check with your new employee first thing that they can log in and everything works.

Help them learn and use new software or equipment. Or put time in their diary for you or their remote buddy to help them with this.

Give helpful advice

Give your new employee helpful advice for working remotely, such as:

- information about your organisation's culture, values and functions
- policies and guidelines relevant to their role and working remotely
- key contacts in the organisation
- how to contact your IT department or Cenitex

Don't overload them

Let your employee adapt to remote working and don't overload them with information.

This is their first day on a long journey, so give them space.

Checklist for their first day

- I've made a list of things to do to welcome them on their first day
- I've made a list of helpful advice to send them and read through
- I've set aside time to help them set up and check everything works
- I've let them have space so I don't overload them with information

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Set clear expectations

Your new employee can't perform if they don't know what they're expected to do.

With remote work, you need to clearly write out what you want them to achieve in their first week, month and by the end of probation.

Highlight the importance of their wellbeing and a good work-life balance including hours of work in-line with your organisation's policies.

Raise OHS and the employee assistance program (EAP)

Get your new employee to do an OHS self-assessment of their remote workstation. Or if your organisation offers it, a virtual assessment.

Act on anything you need to do right away.

Give them the contact details for EAP and what support they can access, such as in areas of mental health and family violence.

Confirm they understand the public sector values

We need to live by the [Victorian public sector values](#) even when we're working remotely.

By the end of your new employee's first week, confirm they've read and understood what the values are and mean.

Confirm they've read the code of conduct

We all need to abide by the [relevant code of conduct](#) for their role even when we're working remotely.

Confirm with your new employee they've read and understand how the [code of conduct](#) is relevant to their role.

Find out their learning and development needs

Starting a new role will require your new employee to take on new information, learn new tasks and understand different policies and procedures.

Without traditional face-to-face learning, it is important to consider how you can support the learning required for your new employee to perform their role.

Think about things like:

- 1-on-1 learning with a peer
- online induction modules
- training they can book into

Set up a regular check-in

As you can't casually check in with your new employee at their desk, schedule in a regular time to see how they're going.

Check with your new employee how frequent they want them.

Show them the big picture

It may be hard for your new employee to connect with your organisation's strategy if they work remotely.

Send them the strategic plan and any other important documents.

Set up a time to explain how their role and team's role work towards achieving the strategy.

Talk with them about any projects they may have coming up that are part of the big picture.

Introduce them to the organisation

Remote work means your new employee may not feel like they're part of the organisation right away.

Think of the ways you can introduce them to the organisation and teach them what each area does, such as:

- induction sessions
- internal e-news
- virtual team tour of each area of your organisation

Checklist for the end of their first week

- I've set clear expectations around their work, hours and work-life balance
- I've discussed probation and set up formal meetings to discuss performance
- I've assessed their OHS and told them about the EAP
- I've confirmed they've read and understood the public sector values and code of conduct
- I've discussed their learning and development need and have set up a regular check-in with them
- I've introduced them to the whole organisation and what each area does
- I've sent them my organisation's strategic plan and set up a time to talk them through how their work relates to it
- I've booked them into my organisation's induction program
- I've checked with my HR team my induction process complies with the enterprise agreement

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Set up check-ins on probation progress

As your new employee settles into their new role, set up times to give them feedback to support them through their probation.

Set these up at 4, 8 and 12 weeks, or in line with your organisation's policies. Generally, probation can't go past 12 weeks.

Remote working means a person's usual performance may change as they adapt. If you've got concerns with how they're doing, discuss them early and often so you can both work out how to support them to succeed.

Find out more about probation by speaking with your HR team.

If you work in the Victorian Public Service, read the [common policy on probation \(PDF, 120KB\)](#).

Develop their Performance Development Plan (PDP)

Introduce your new employee to your organisation's PDP process and help them commence their plan.

Complete and sign this off by the end of their first month.

Find out more about how to do [PDPs when remote working](#).

Checklist for probation

- I've set up regular catchups with them during their probation to give them the support they need to succeed
- I've helped them develop and sign off their PDP

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We used the Victorian public sector [employment principles and standards](#).

We also used the [Fair Work Act 2009](#) and [Victorian Equal Opportunity Act 2010](#).

Coronavirus advice

We amend this guide in response to the latest coronavirus (COVID-19) advice at:

- [Department of Health coronavirus advice](#)
- [Department of Health and Human Services coronavirus advice](#)
- [Victorian Government employee conditions COVID-19 advice](#)

Further reading

Learn more in the [Public Administration Act 2004](#).

If you work in the Victorian Public Service, learn more in the:

- [VPS Enterprise Agreement 2016](#)
- [VPS Enterprise Agreement Common Policies](#)
- [VPS COVID-19 policy and operational guidance](#)