

# Tips for Training Student Employees

For some students, student employment at UIU might be their first work experience so it's important to emphasize that this is a real job that can give them many skills, connections, recommendations, and opportunities toward their future employment options and career goals.

The immediate supervisor should set up an orientation or training session. This training session normally will occur on the student's first day of work and may even go beyond their first day depending on the department and expectations. If you have more than one student worker, group training sessions might be needed. The supervisor and the student worker should review the student's responsibilities and the student should be introduced to people and other areas they might be working with. The supervisor should not assume that the student knows what is to be done in all aspects of the job and should go through the work procedures and explain everything in detail to the new worker. Even with returning student workers, responsibilities and processes may have changed.

Some additional things to cover may include, but are not limited to:

- Make introductions to key staff and provide a tour of your department to familiarize students with other offices and areas in your building
- Office and university dress code (may vary by department)
- How to clock in and out and the respective pay periods
- Performance standards and the supervisor's expectations
- Having confidentiality when/if dealing with student, staff, and faculty records and information
- Alternate supervisor if the main supervisor is not available and who to address problems, questions, or concerns to
- Give the individual a good general breakdown of their position, their role and responsibilities, and point out why their job is important to your area.
- Encourage the student to ask questions and provide input on projects and tasks they are assigned. It will help make them feel like they are an integral part of your team.

Please do not assume all student employment paperwork has been turned in. Contact Human Resources to ensure all paperwork is in order prior to students starting their work.

Students who feel more confident and trained in their job and the tasks they are assigned will feel like they are making a difference in our departments. The investment spent in training student employees will pay off with career-ready UIU students entering the workforce.

## How can I keep student workers motivated?

Keeping students motivated if they are doing the same tasks daily can sometimes be difficult. It's important for students to know they are a valued member of your team by helping them with goal-setting, individualized rewards, and recognition of a job well done. Invite them to occasional departmental meetings, lunches and fun events, and encouraging them to be part of team-building opportunities. When you can provide regular feedback and coaching that focuses on goals and their job performance that can help them feel valuable and

help them look forward to other ways they can be involved in your department or other areas on campus. In turn this can help them develop further leadership and communication skills while further networking throughout UIU.

### **What if my student worker is not performing to the expectations that were set for them?**

Sometimes a student worker is not the right fit for the role or your department and it might not be discovered until after they have started working for your area. Get to know your student workers and how they might work best in your area. As soon as you are aware that this might not be the right fit, connect with the student on what is expected of them and what might not be working. Identify what appropriate performance or outcome is expected in order to allow the student to be successful in this role. If behavior or performance outcomes still do not meet the expectation that is set after your conversation with them, it might be time to discuss if this is really the right role for them and the possibility of terminating their student worker position with your area. Make them aware that Career Development can assist in connecting them with other student employment opportunities.

### **Strategies for Helping Supervisors Succeed with Student Employees**

*(Adapted from the University of Colorado Boulder)*

- **Set the tone** – By modeling strong work habits, the goal is that students will pick up on that and start to model the same behaviors.
- **Be flexible** – Understanding that they are students first and employees second. While we should have high standards for our student workers, it is important for supervisors to be flexible and accommodate their academic and athletic obligations.
- **Communicate expectations** – By communicating job and supervisor expectations up front, student workers will not have to assume what is expected of them.
- **Give constructive feedback and recognition** – Provide regular feedback to student employees that will help in their daily or weekly tasks but also feedback they can take to the real world with them. If you see students going the extra mile, acknowledging that shows them they are being noticed and can help improve performance of them and others.
- **Train and advise** – Taking time to train students and advise them on job duties will help set them up for further success but also connecting with them on other possible strengths as well. Such as tips for continued leadership development, handling critical conversations in the workplace, time management techniques, career and self-development opportunities along with allowing them the opportunity to seek out this information and build on it.

As always, the student's main priority should be their academics so allowing them to have a flexible work schedule when appropriate will be important.