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A HANDBOOK FOR  
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY DEPARTMENTS

# Student-Employee Welcome and Orientation Guide



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RUTGERS UNIVERSITY

# **Student-Employee Welcome and Orientation Guide**

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**Developed by  
Student-Employee Orientation and Training Team**

**Updated by  
The Center for Organizational Development and Leadership**

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# About This Guide

## Introduction




*An overview of this handbook template and suggestions for tailoring it to suit your department's needs*

**H**ello, and welcome to the Student-Employee Welcome and Orientation Guide! This handbook is designed to assist and enhance the university's efforts in educating students about their roles and responsibilities as Rutgers student-employees.

Ordinarily, students are thought of primarily as beneficiaries of higher education services. However, many students serve as employees in various positions throughout the university. Many have direct contact with other students, visitors, and guests while serving in their employee roles, and as such, play an important role as ambassadors for the university; and in creating the "face" of the university. At the same time, these positions offer unique opportunities for students to acquire and apply a variety of skills that will be helpful to them in future employment.

Rutgers University recognizes the importance of providing quality service (service excellence) in meeting the needs of our stakeholders. This handbook has been designed, in part, to help departments develop programs that introduce and reinforce concepts of service excellence, underscore the important role students play in making Rutgers University a preferred place to learn and work, and provide an orientation to basic organizational and service skills and competencies.

*Student-employee* refers to those individuals who are employed by a Rutgers University department and are also pursuing academic study at Rutgers. Regardless of the source of funding (i.e. work study students vs. non-work study), these individuals have arrived at your department ready to contribute and learn. Like other staff, they too can benefit from personal attention, training, and respectful, professional treatment. This guide is designed to provide you with a template for making them a vital part of your department.

KEY ELEMENTS	
	Orientation
	Rutgers Overview
A+	Service Excellence
	Recognition and Evaluation

## Who designed this guide?

This guide was created by a cross-functional team whose objective was to provide departments with a consistent and comprehensive template for welcoming, orienting, and training student-employees. The team consisted of student advocates and representatives from several departments, including: the Rutgers Learning Centers, the Rutgers College and Busch Campus Centers, University Human Resources, and several undergraduate students.

The original guide has been updated by the Center for Organizational Development and Leadership based on feedback from university departments.

## What the research told us

The team conducted qualitative and quantitative research with students and departments to assess their needs and identify possible improvement opportunities. Two focus groups were conducted and 152 surveys were administered and analyzed. Key points that emerged from the studies included:

### Students

- Approximately 1 in 4 students reported receiving either inadequate training or no training at all in relation to their on-campus jobs.
- When asked the level of importance of 14 training components as they relate to employment at Rutgers, the following were identified as most important to students:
  1. Communication/interpersonal skills
  2. Client service
  3. Relations with co-workers and supervisors
  4. Job-specific skills
- When asked for their preferred training methods, the following were ranked as top choices:
  1. Group training
  2. One-on-one training

3. Handbook format

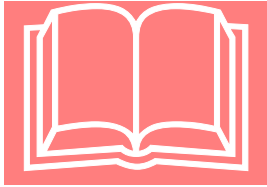
## Departments

Of the 637 e-mail surveys distributed to departments in New Brunswick, 119 were completed and returned. Over half the departments surveyed had no formal training program for students.

- When asked in what areas their student-employees were trained, responses, in rank order, were:
  1. Job-specific Skills
  2. Client Service
  3. Communication/Interpersonal Skills
- One-on-one training was noted as the method most frequently used.
- When asked for the areas where training is needed, the following areas were ranked most important:
  1. Client Service
  2. Job-specific Skills
  3. Communications/Interpersonal Skills
- When asked which training program service components were most important, the following areas were identified:
  1. Appropriate Attitude Toward Visitors and Parents
  2. Telephone Skills
- A majority of respondents said they were interested in participating in using a model for training/development.

Departments may benefit from the research findings reported here by tailoring orientation and training programs to address these needs and preferences. The team recognized that orientation and training methods and content may vary greatly, depending on department size, mission and focus, and that an individual student's role and responsibilities within a department will also greatly determine both the content and delivery of orientation and training programs.

## How should I use this guide?



The guidebook is just that—a *guide* that departments may use as the basis for or enhancement of existing student-employee welcome, orientation, and training programs. It is intended to provide detailed information and resources related to basic training components, and to provide examples of what some departments at Rutgers are doing in each of these areas.

This handbook is best used as a resource in conjunction with additional interactive orientation and training activities. There are many ways to deliver the information covered in this handbook; something best left to each department.

Remember, student-employees surveyed said they most preferred group or one-on-one training and information provided in a handbook format.

Additional suggestions for making the most of training events include:

- Ice-breakers
- Interactive seminars, presenting specific topics and general information and engaging student-employees in the process
- Group and/or one-on-one training sessions for more in-depth training on a specific topic
- Videos
- Games and other light-hearted, memorable activities
- Ropes Course, an experiential learning program for students
- Role-playing – creating “what-if” scenarios to assist student-employees in preparing for unusual or difficult workplace situations
- On-going training or in-service workshops to continuously improve or enhance an employee’s knowledge, skills and service

## Acknowledgements

This guidebook is a product of nearly two years of planning, research and collaboration. The Phase I and Phase II Team members noted below deserve the utmost recognition and praise for their hard work and dedication to this project:

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The Center for Organizational Development and Leadership (ODL) at Rutgers University also deserves many thanks for their role in making the vision of a university-wide welcome, orientation, and training template for student-employees a reality.

## Welcoming Your Student Employee

*A positive and warm welcome sets the tone for future interactions*

**M**aking your new student-employee's first days with your department positive and warm ones will set the tone for all future interactions. Regardless of the day-to-day pressures of deadlines and projects, taking time to welcome and introduce student-employees to the department will help ensure they feel they are valued members of your staff.



In addition to making your student-employee feel welcome, establishing clear expectations is also an important initial step and will go a long way to creating an environment that will benefit both the student-employee and the department.

The following ideas are small, yet important ways you can welcome student-employees to your team.

### Welcome letter

One of the many tools used to welcome new employees is a welcome letter. Ideally, the letter should serve to encourage and excite the student about his/her department, give a brief description of the department and the student's role within it, and establish an environment in which open communication and collaboration are key elements.

### A Brief history of Rutgers

Brief historical information, facts and figures about the university in which students work, study and live.

An awareness of the history and mission of Rutgers University may be helpful to student-employees for several reasons. Knowing something about Rutgers' history will help students develop a sense of pride about the university. Tying your own department's mission to that of the university will also provide a better understanding of how the work of the department supports the larger goals of the university.



Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, with over 48,000 students on three regional campuses in Camden, Newark and New Brunswick, is one of the major state university systems in the nation. The university comprises twenty-nine degree granting divisions: twelve undergraduate colleges, twelve graduate schools, and five schools offering both undergraduate and graduate degrees. Five are located in Camden, eight in Newark, and sixteen in New Brunswick.

Rutgers has a unique history as a colonial college, a land-grant institution, and a state university. Founded by the Dutch Reformed Church, Rutgers was chartered in 1766 as Queens College, the eighth institution of higher learning to be founded in the colonies. The school opened its doors in New Brunswick in 1771 with one instructor, one sophomore, and a handful of first-year students. The Charter was granted to the governor of New Jersey, William Franklin, who also happened to be the son of Benjamin Franklin. Without a building to meet in, the instructor met with the students (20) in the Red Lion Tavern.

During this early period, the college was developed as a classical liberal arts institution. In 1825, the name of the college was changed to Rutgers to honor a former trustee, revolutionary war veteran, and a member of the Reformed Church, Colonel Henry Rutgers. Colonel Rutgers donated \$5,000 and a bell to the institution. The material donation may not have been that much, but his influence attracted other contributors.

Rutgers College became the land-grant college of New Jersey on 1864, resulting in the establishment of the Rutgers Scientific School with departments of agriculture, engineering, and chemistry. Further expansion in the sciences came with the founding of the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station in 1880, the College of Engineering in 1914, and the College of Agriculture (now Cook College) in 1921. The precursors to several other Rutgers divisions were also founded during this period: the College of Pharmacy in 1892, the New Jersey College for Women (now Douglass College) in 1918, and the School of Education (now a Graduate School) in 1924.

Rutgers College assumed university status in 1924, and legislative acts in 1945 and 1946 designated all its divisions as The State University of New Jersey. During these years, the university expanded significantly with the founding of an evening division, University College, in 1934, and addition of the University of Newark in 1946 and the College of South Jersey at Camden in 1950.

Since the 1950's, Rutgers has continued to expand, especially in the area of graduate education. The Graduate School-New Brunswick, Graduate School-Newark and Graduate School-Camden serve their respective campuses. In addition, several professional schools have been established in such fields as management, social work, criminal justice, planning and public policy, applied and professional psychology, the fine arts, and communication, information and library studies. A number of these schools offer undergraduate programs as well. Livingston College was founded in 1969 to provide a diverse community of students with the opportunity to pursue undergraduate degrees in liberal arts and professions.

Today, Rutgers continues to grow both in its facilities and in the variety and depth of its educational and research programs. The university continues to provide the highest quality undergraduate and graduate education, along with increased support for outstanding research to meet the needs of society and fulfill Rutgers' role as The State University of New Jersey.

## **A message from the president**

Richard L. McCormick became the 19th president of Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, on December 1, 2002. In his inaugural address, *Affirming Our Values – Serving Our State*, President McCormick described the *values* that will guide his administration of Rutgers and the *goals* that will advance the university's academic agenda.

### **values**

#### **1. Transparency and openness.**

“My administrative colleagues and I will continue to communicate broadly, often via email and websites, so that all members of the Rutgers community can obtain information about the most important issues we are facing. Openness and communication are especially important in times of financial constraint when everyone who wants to do so should be able to learn the facts about the budget.”

#### **2. Service.**

“An orientation toward efficient, cost-effective service will be a hallmark of my administration.”

#### **3. Devolution of authority**

“Devolution of authority from Old Queen's to the university's campuses and units, whenever and wherever local decision-making can improve the quality of our work.”

#### 4. **Teamwork and collaboration.**

“My administration will model the collegiality and cooperation that I hope will permeate every part of the university.”

#### 5. **Clarity of responsibilities and functions.**

“My administration will place a high value on clarity of responsibilities and functions.”

### **goals**

1. “Our most important goal is to move Rutgers to the top tier of America’s public research universities.”
2. “Connect our university much more deeply to the needs and aspirations of the people of New Jersey and persuade them to invest in what we do. Make the relationship between Rutgers and New Jersey far deeper and more extensive than it is today, and we at Rutgers must bear the largest share of responsibility for making it so.”
3. “Rely ever more heavily on other sources of support than the state—tuition, federal and corporate research support, self-supporting educational programs, technology transfer, private gifts and grants.”
4. “Maintain the hard-won diversity of Rutgers.”
5. “Maintain the civility of our campuses and encourage dialogue with dignity among divergent groups.”
6. “Make Rutgers *your* state university.”

For additional information on the university’s history and future plans, direct student-employees to [www.rutgers.edu](http://www.rutgers.edu).

## **The Rutgers vision**

Rutgers, New Jersey’s preeminent public university, is one of a small number of comprehensive research universities that is both prepared and committed to exercise national leadership for higher education. We are dedicated to a standard of quality that makes Rutgers a preferred choice for students, a first-rate intellectual environment for faculty, and an outstanding place to work for staff.

We are committed to:

- Creating knowledge and ideas for the improvement of the human condition
- Preparing students to meet the needs of a changing society and encouraging their personal and professional growth
- Advancing the well-being of our communities, state, and nation

Rutgers seeks nothing less than to become one of America's very best universities.

## **Our commitment to excellence**

To realize our Vision, Rutgers will:

- Sustain the highest standards in learning, discovery and engagement with our constituents.
- Serve our communities, our state, our nation, and the international community.
- Advance scholarship and intellectual vitality in our academic disciplines.
- Attract, welcome, develop and retain outstanding students, faculty and staff.
- Encourage the open and civil exchange of ideas and perspectives.
- Provide superior curricular and co-curricular opportunities for students at all levels.
- Educate exceptional leaders and citizens for future generations.
- Foster a supportive and collaborative social environment, and a community dedicated to respecting and valuing diversity.
- Maintain a safe, clean and attractive physical environment.
- Maintain accessible, responsive and cost-effective programs and services.
- Dedicate our learning community to ongoing self-assessment and unceasing improvement of all that we do.

## **Workplace priorities**

Achieving the university's "*Vision*" and realizing its "*Commitment to Excellence*" requires a personal commitment by each member of the university to:

### **Leadership**

- Lead projects and develop ideas that advance Rutgers' interests.
- Set an example by improving communication with colleagues and fellow workers – within departments and campuses and across the university.

- Sustain energy and enthusiasm for the work, aspirations and commitments of Rutgers and its campuses and departments.
- Serve as a role model and mentor for colleagues and fellow workers.
- Create an environment where teamwork and continuous improvement are the norm.

### **Interpersonal Relations**

- Be positive, collaborative, and supportive in every contact with students, faculty, staff, alumni and visitors.
- Work collaboratively with others to build community within each department and campus and across the University.
- Through exemplary conduct and with pride in Rutgers, serve as an ambassador for the university community and its departments and campuses.

### **Disciplinary and Technical Excellence**

- Apply and enhance technical, professional and/or disciplinary knowledge and skills appropriate to each job and individual's responsibilities.
- Seek out and develop new ideas and approaches that can improve the effectiveness and efficiency of all work.
- Always seek to do and be the very best.

## **Introduction to the department**

An introduction to the department and the role it plays within the larger university is a crucial component of orienting the student-employee to his/her new work environment. Some elements of this introduction might include:

- An overview of the programs and/or services provided by the department; its mission.
- The department's guiding vision, values, goals and performance measures (what the department uses to measure its success).
- A brief history: the evolution of the department, such as changes in service or structure over the years.
- The important role the student-employee plays in the department's success.

## **Welcome reception**

A welcome reception for new student-employees can be as elaborate as a full-day retreat or as simple as sharing coffee and donuts in the office – what's most important

is that the student feels he/she is a valued new member of your team. The number of student-employees in your department and the level of responsibility assigned to them will also dictate the type of welcome activity you plan. Any reception should involve other members of your staff. The reception can be used to encourage staff and the new student-employee to get to know one another, to socialize, and to alleviate first-day jitters. This welcome reception could also serve as the first segment of your larger orientation and training program.

## Establishing expectations

Establishing mutual expectations – what you can expect from the student-employee, and what the student-employee can expect from you and *others in the department* – is critical to the satisfaction of the student-employee and department alike.

### —What you can expect from student-employees—

The following are examples of some general behavioral expectations found in most organizations. You may wish to share them with your student-employee upon his/her arrival in your department. Of course, you will also want to convey any department-specific expectations regarding confidentiality of information, privacy, etc. that may apply to the work of your department. A sample is noted below:

You have been hired as a student-employee in (name of department) because of your enthusiasm, dedication and professionalism. As a student-employee, you represent Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey and \_\_\_\_\_(the department) in the interactions with our many clients. As ambassadors for the university, student-employees, like other staff, are expected to model the behaviors and actions outlined below.

**Be courteous** – Handle all requests for services and information in a prompt, efficient, and friendly manner.

**Be ethical** – Be honest and demonstrate integrity in all transactions and interactions.

**Be responsible** – Fully and carefully monitor the activities within your area of responsibility. Always complete assignments by the deadlines assigned.

**Be knowledgeable** – Demonstrate a working knowledge of the (department name) philosophy. Know general and specific policies and procedures, and/or where to find them.

**Be accurate** – Make providing complete information your goal. Check with others if you are unsure of the information you are providing.

**Be punctual** – Report to work on time. Punctuality is a means of communicating commitment and respect to colleagues, and those who use the department's services.

**Take ownership** - Perform duties and responsibilities to the best of your ability. Strive for excellence and take pride in your accomplishments.

**Participate in training sessions** – Be actively engaged in all training programs and provide suggestions for future sessions.

**Provide feedback** – Take the initiative to share your observations and ideas for improving services.

### **What student-employees can expect from department colleagues–**

Just as you expect students to model the values of the department, you should be the models of the same enthusiasm, dedication and professionalism. Student-employees should expect that everyone in (name of your organization) will:

**Provide a welcoming environment** – We want you to feel welcome – a part of our team, and to feel comfortable asking questions and sharing your ideas.

**Be prepared** – Our organization reflects our commitment to those for whom we provide programs and services and each other, and that includes you. We know that your success depends a great deal on our giving you what you need to do a good job.

**Be supportive** – We are here to provide guidance and answer questions and to give positive feedback regarding your work. The more supportive we are, the more successful you will be.

**Be a role model** – Along with professionalism and enthusiasm, we will model our commitment to learning and continuous improvement. For you to be the best, we need to be the best.

An example from the Campus Information Services Staff Philosophy

- WE ARE COMMITTED to a genuine respect for the dignity and diversity of each individual and a recognition of the contributions each individual can make to the organization.
- WE ARE COMMITTED to fostering cooperation, empathy and caring with open and honest, constructive communication and feedback.
- WE ARE COMMITTED to professionalism from all staff, and strive for a productive and collaborative work environment that is both rewarding and enjoyable.
- WE ARE COMMITTED to empowering all staff with the autonomy to make decisions within the scope of their responsibilities.

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- WE ARE COMMITTED to ensuring that staff have a clear understanding of their mission and role, and to the highest level of service.
- WE ARE COMMITTED to providing all staff with the appropriate and necessary tools and resources to accomplish our mission and goals.

## Key Skills and Important Information

### 1. Employee Orientation

*Basic guidelines, information and tips for a successful employee orientation.*

All students should be given an orientation before they begin working at Rutgers University. Orientation and training are vital to a successful employee experience. It may be the first time the new employee is exposed to the work setting. It is also where the student-employee will gain most of his/her knowledge about the job.

There are many ways an orientation can be conducted (i.e., formal, informal, small group, large group). Regardless of format, important basic skills and key information in any student-employee orientation program should include:

- A. Introduction to the job
- B. Introduction to other staff members
- C. Department policies
- D. Student rights and responsibilities
- E. Emergency and safety information
- F. Ongoing learning
- G. Support and guidance
- H. Co-worker relations
- I. Job-specific skills

The remainder of this chapter provides key points to consider when orienting your student-employee about each of the above categories. Specific information and formats may vary depending on the nature of their job and your department's role within Rutgers.

**Presenting a unified culture that responds to the needs of those we serve.**

## A. Introduction to the job

Like all employees, student-employees need to have a clear sense of the job for which they have been hired. As noted earlier, clear expectations can go a long way to ensure this occurs. Along with job-specific responsibilities they provide the student-employee with the information needed to succeed. During orientation student-employees and supervisors should discuss exactly what the job entails and does not entail. This may include background or history of the position, anticipated changes to the job (if any), and any other details that give the student-employee a sense of the position. Providing the student-employee with a written job description and copy of the department's organizational chart is a good idea.

A sample from Rutgers College Recreational Services can be found below.

Position Title: Front Desk Attendant  
Reports To: Building Manager, Facility Coordinator  
Supervises: N/A  
Job Summary: Responsible for customer service and enforcing user policy  
Pay Range: Range 2  
Qualifications: No specific experience required  
Principle Duties and Responsibilities: The Front Desk Attendant is expected to:

1. Help insure accessibility to the building for the bonafide members of the Rutgers community by enforcing all user policies such as checking identification card, admitting guests, and signing in participants of special programs.
2. Assist the supervisor in responding to emergencies, opening and closing the facility, and when house crew is not available, preparing and breaking down setups for special events.
3. Assist the client in reserving court space, borrowing equipment, and giving information regarding the daily facility schedule, user policies, reservation policies, intramural events, instructional classes, special events, new programs and trips. Help clients solve problems.
4. Perform clerical tasks such as logging and tabulating the number and status of users on the daily report, stapling, folding and collating.
5. Perform receptionist tasks such as answering the phone, taking messages and transferring calls.
6. Maintain the appearance of the front lobby.
7. Maintain the refreshment stand and its inventory. Maintain accurate balance of register with sales.
8. Report problems and make suggestions to Facility Coordinator.

Some departments find it appropriate to ask a student-employee to sign a contract/agreement that can serve to emphasize the formal responsibility they have within the department.

## **B. Introduction to other staff members**

It's important for the student-employee to know those individuals with whom he/she will work directly as well as those with whom he/she will come in contact, including faculty, staff and students in other departments with whom you work closely. Having a general knowledge of co-worker responsibilities is a must.

### **—Introduction to members of the department—**

A personal introduction is vital to make your student-employee feel part of the team, and to begin to form personal relationships with other people in the department. Knowing who they are will also help the student know where to go for help. This part of the orientation may take only a few minutes, but it will make a big difference to the new employee.

One fun way to get to know others in the department is by making the introduction process into a game. Here are a couple ways to do this: 1) a scavenger hunt – a board containing pictures of department employees is placed on a table. The student-employee's task is to go around to those individuals, find out whom they are and what they do. 2) Another less time-consuming option is to introduce the student to the department staff first and then show him/her the board of pictures. Test the student's memory on who the coworkers are and what they do. Give the student a small, funny prize at the end.

### **—Tour of the facilities—**

Student-employees should be given a tour of the department and surrounding facilities as part of a welcoming orientation.

### **—Staff directory—**

Student-employees should be given contact information for other people in the department, including other student-employees, and a university directory.

## **C. Department policies**

It is important that student-employees understand department policies and procedures.

### **—Salary—**

A student-employee's salary or hourly pay rate should be explained up front, as well as any opportunities or requirements for salary increases.

### **—Recording work hours—**

Students should be shown how to record their hours to ensure correct payment. Students should also be shown where time sheets are kept, how to fill them out, and where to put them at the end of the day/week, etc.

### **—Payroll—**

Payroll policies should be communicated. Student-employees should know when their time sheets are due, who collects them, when their paychecks will be available, and where to pick them up. They should also know who in your department to contact regarding payroll questions or problems. An example taken from the Rutgers Learning Center Information Assistant Handbook:



**Check Distribution:** Checks are distributed biweekly on Fridays, which is the week after time sheets are collected, except when holidays occur. Note: Only the student-employee can pick up his/her check; friends or fellow employees may not pick up checks for RLC employees. Dates for collection of time sheets and picking up checks are listed on the BIWEEKLY PAYROLL SCHEDULE FOR STUDENTS.

### **—Scheduling—**

Be clear about student hours, when and if work can be done from home, etc. If the student-employee's schedule is set at the beginning of the semester, provide a written copy at orientation and review it verbally. If the schedule will vary during the semester, make sure the process to be used for setting and communicating the schedule is understood and agreed upon.

### **—Sick days—**

Explain your department policy, including how to make up days and how to find replacements for that day, if that is required/desirable. Student-employees should also be informed of any departmental policies regarding a limit on unexcused absences and sick days, and how it may impact their status as an employee.

### **—Vacation days—**

The process for asking for time off should be fully explained, including how to make up a day and/or the need to find a substitute.

### **—Unexcused absences—**

Explain the consequences for missing work without prior permission or without contacting the department.

**—Studying on the job—**

Some departments allow studying while working; others do not. Either way, it is important to set the standard early for what is acceptable while working in your department.

**—Personal presentation—**

Appropriate clothing and behavior is an important part of most jobs. Share detailed information about your department's guidelines with your student-employee during the orientation. Here is an example of what one department has determined as appropriate:

Acceptable dress for work is jeans, casual pants, and walking shorts that are knee length, skirts, dresses etc. Sweat pants are not permitted. Suggestive or distasteful clothing is not permitted. Occasionally, you may be asked to dress up for special activities. You will be notified in advance of these occasions. Gum chewing, smoking, eating, drinking and reading while at work is not permitted. No radios or headphones will be allowed in any work area.

## **D. Student rights and responsibilities**

Rutgers University policies on sexual harassment, discrimination, verbal assault, and violence in the workplace apply to every employee group within the university. Student-employees should be made aware of these policies, and should understand their right to work in a bias- and harassment-free environment. You should provide your student-employees with copies of these policies as well as the Rutgers websites where they can be found. Student-employees should be encouraged to discuss any problems or concerns with appropriate persons in your department. However, they should also be provided with the names and phone numbers of persons designated by the university to deal with complaints and provide information about these issues.

## **E. Emergency and safety information**

Students should be aware of all emergency and safety procedures related to their own personal safety and the safety of others. Department emergency and safety drills and plans should be reviewed thoroughly.

**—Personal safety—**

Supervisors and student-employees should discuss personal safety rules and habits, e.g., what to do if you observe a suspicious person walking around department building. Student-employees should know where fire extinguishers and first aid kits are located as well as how to use them. Discuss what cases require police assistance and how to contact them. For student-employees in departments where fire drills are a major activity, such as campus centers, role playing or practice may ensure proper action when and if the situation becomes real.

Rutgers distributes a newsletter entitled *Safety Matters* that includes information on recent campus crime statistics, and precautions students and staff can take to avoid becoming victims. Provide a current copy during orientation and let students know where they can obtain future copies.

## **F. Ongoing learning**

The student-employee orientation may be the first in a series of learning opportunities. Education/training should be communicated as an important part of the job, one which provides enhanced skills that will add to their personal enjoyment and success and that of the departments, and will give the student-employee additional skills that may prove useful in the future.

If there are regularly scheduled training events throughout the year, let the student-employee know of these dates as soon as they begin working. This will ensure that the student will be able to plan for and attend the meetings. It also reinforces the sense of being part of the department team.

## **G. Support and guidance**

Always support and guide your student-employee. This means providing opportunities for autonomy, growth and constructive feedback. While there will be times when you are not available, creating a supportive environment will go a long way to assure the employee that you care and are there to help. Be sure and discuss other support systems and resources available in your absence.

### **—How to contact supervisors—**

Provide student-employees with supervisors' phone numbers and email addresses.

### **—Where to go when personal help is unavailable—**

All information discussed during the orientation session should be made available to students in written form. Tell your student-employee where the information can be found. Better yet, provide him/her with a copy. An employee handbook is an excellent source of information for all employees, but especially for student-employees who may not be as familiar with the organization.

## **H. Co-worker relations**

It is the department's responsibility to create an environment that encourages and celebrates diversity. Student-employees should understand that differences and diversity of thought and perspective are departmental strengths. Respect for the

individual, integrity, a dedication to helping clients and good communication skills are basic to excellent service, teamwork, and healthy co-worker relationships. No

one person in the university works alone. All employees, students included, need to recognize this fact.

If a student-employee is having a problem with another employee, he/she should be encouraged to address the problem with that person directly. If that fails to resolve the issue, then the issue should be brought to the supervisor.

## **I. Job-specific skills**

The specific skills needed by individual student-employees are beyond the scope of this handbook. However, any job-related skills a student is required to have should be discussed during orientation, at the first training session, and as part of the day-to-day work as needed. Providing written information about required skills is useful. A good example can be found in the Campus Information Services Procedure Manual. It tells employees how to do everything from turning the computer off to answering night service questions.

## **Tips for a successful orientation**

- **Icebreakers** to introduce new employees may be helpful
- **Food** is always nice to have
- Create as many **interactions** as possible (i.e. brainstorming, games)
- **Mix up the orientation presentations** by individuals and by media if possible

## Key Skills and Important Information

### 2. We Are the Face of Rutgers

*Tips and information to help establish a service-oriented workplace environment*

A Commitment to service excellence is critical to creating a positive “Face of Rutgers.” Employees at all levels, including student-employees, shape and effect the overall impression of the university and your organization. One bad service experience may tarnish the view of the organization and will likely mean that the experience will be repeated to friends, family, and colleagues. This means that student-employees need to understand the critical role they play in creating positive experiences.

Although there will be variation among departments, each department should communicate specific practices and standards that guide the goal of providing the highest level of service possible.

Below are a number of areas that could be included in your section on service excellence as well as some examples used by various departments at the university.

#### Service mission/guiding principles

Every organization should be able to clearly describe the principles that guide the organization in fulfilling its service mission. The key is to be able to explain it in terms of the work of the department and in a way that allows the student-employee to understand how he/she can contribute to this mission. Principles noted by many departments include:

**Focus on those we serve** and find innovative ways to service their needs.

**Our stakeholders are the focus of everything we do.** Our work must be done with them in mind, providing the best possible service at all times.

**First impressions** are lasting; thus, it is our responsibility to ensure that every interaction is friendly, helpful and positive.

**Our services and programs** should enhance and increase the value of the Rutgers experience.

**The informational resources** we provide must be comprehensive, accurate and easily accessible, and we must strive to meet the needs of our diverse audiences.

**Treat every client the way you would want to be treated** – with courtesy, respect, and accurate information. Every inquiry is an opportunity to promote Rutgers and leave a favorable impression.

**Stay calm**, even when faced with an angry client, avoid a condescending tone. Rutgers is a complex place, be patient. “Let me see what we can do to work this out” shows a desire to be helpful.

**Give clients the benefit of the doubt.** Keep in mind that regardless of how they sound, their motivation is good.

**Each client should be treated as an individual**, even when giving or getting “routine” information. It’s not routine to them.

**Be an advocate for the client.** If the client is confused or getting the run-around, help them.

You might also consider adopting a Stakeholder Service Credo for your department. A credo is an excellent mechanism by which to state your department’s expectations for interacting with those you meet in person and speak with on the phone. The following credo is used by the Undergraduate Admissions Office.

#### **Students Are Our Customers<sup>1</sup>**

Customers are the most important people in any business - our customers are students.

Students are the purpose of our work - they do not interrupt our work.

Students and their families are an essential part of our business - they are not outsiders.

Students deserve the most courteous attention we can give them - they are the lifeblood of the University.

The following *Ten Service Commandments*, created by Campus Information Services encourages student-employees to go the extra mile.

**Don’t pass the buck.** If you don’t have the information, get it! Never refer to another number unless you’re sure they have the information. If you’re not sure, make the calls yourself, and then pass on the information and source to the caller.

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<sup>1</sup> Stakeholder or client is preferred over the word customer.

**Be friendly.** Talk with the caller while looking up the information. End with “thanks for calling.” Learn to view the customer<sup>2</sup> as the job, rather than an interruption of it.

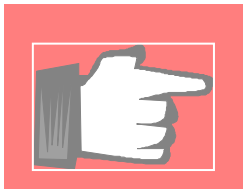
**Be creative.** Explore possibilities with the caller. Never be satisfied with a dead-end; always try to offer alternatives.

**Be an advocate for the caller.** If he/she is confused or getting the run-around, find somebody who can help.

**Keep informed.** Familiarize yourself with the information in our office, the staff and programs of other student services offices, and other available programs on campus.

## Determining stakeholder needs

Student-employees need to know that part of the success of your department depends on the services they provide. Provide them with strategies to accurately identify the needs and desires of those for whom you provide services and programs. Provide them with the answers to these questions:



- What programs service(s) do we provide?
- For whom do we provide those programs and services?
- What do they expect from us?

And an understanding of:

### —Service perceptions and expectations—

Every one has a perception, or feeling about how service should be provided. Most people assume a department or individual has all the tools necessary to meet any request, at any time. Is this true for your department? Probably not. However, it is important to realize that this is probably the perception of most people the student-employee will encounter. To help your student-employee provide the best service possible, teach them how to find out:

- If the person frequently requires services from you or your department? If so, have those experiences been positive or negative ones? Does he/she understand what services you are able to provide and which you are not? Is your department viewed as organized, professional, helpful etc. All these factors will influence what is expected.
- How the person was treated previously? Were his/her requests accommodated in a timely manner? Was correct information provided? Previous levels of service will have a great influence on current expectations.

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<sup>2</sup> Stakeholder or client is preferred over the word customer.

- If he/she is aware of the policies, regulations, processes, etc. of the department.

## Taming the telephone

Helping your student-employee develop good communication and people skills will serve the student and your department well. Providing effective, efficient service via the telephone and assisting a person who is upset or angry are two of the most valuable skills the student-employee can learn. Both require patience and both are critical to service excellence.



Remember, often times a person's only interaction with your organization is by phone.

### —Quality telephone service means—

- Providing timely service
- Recognition that the success of an organization depends on the provision of excellent telephone service
- Knowing and practicing effective telephone communication skills

### —Telephone basics—

- Answer in as few rings as possible
- Screen caller tactfully
- If you must place a caller on hold to answer another line, or to get information, ask permission first and wait for an answer
- Make sure the caller is placed on hold before discussing the caller's situation with a co worker

### —Use your best voice—

- Maintain a high voice energy level
- Speak at a normal pace, clearly and audibly

### —Answering the telephone—

- Greet the caller with respect
- Identify your organization
- Introduce yourself
- Offer help

### —Negotiating telephone service—

- Recognizing the needs of the caller
- Comparing them against your organization's ability to deliver what is required

- Reaching a satisfactory solution

**—Take messages accurately—**

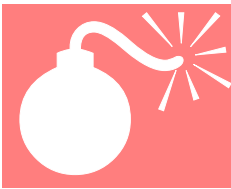
- If necessary to transfer the call, give the caller an explanation, and the number of the office to which you are transferring them
- Use technology graciously
- Never eat or drink on the phone
- Vary your tone and inflection
- Communicate a sense of receptivity and acceptance

**—Tips—**

- Ask questions to determine the full scope of the problem
- Select a course of action and be direct and specific in your statements
- Remain positive and service oriented

## **Communication 101: Assisting an Upset Client**

**Why do clients get upset or angry?** A person becomes upset or angry when he or she does not receive the level of service he or she expected, or when he/she feels he/she is being ignored or treated poorly. Dealing with an angry individual is a challenge. Student-employees need to be able to work through this situation to resolve the problem as quickly as possible. They also need to know when to seek assistance. Discussing the following points with your student-employee may help.



**Don't take it personally.** The client views you as a representative of the department in which you are working. You are the Student Center, the Dining Hall, or the Athletic Department. Complaints and anger are being directed at the department, not you.

**Maintain a positive attitude and body language.** Demonstrate a genuine desire to solve the problem.

**Smile.** This conveys a positive attitude and your desire to be helpful.

**Let the person vent.** Do not interrupt. An upset person needs to complain, needs to tell you their problem and needs to ask for help. LET THEM! Let the person finish his/her story completely. Don't assume you know the problem and interrupt with answers or suggestions. This frequently causes an increase in their anger or frustration. Never tell someone to calm down. Doing so shows the person you do not value their

opinion or understand why they are upset. Once the client has had a chance to express himself/herself, he/she is more likely to listen to ways in which you can help.

**Apologize.** An honest apology will go a long way. Do it right away. Remember that you are apologizing for the poor service the person has received. This poor service reflects on the university as a whole. It doesn't matter that the person may have received the poor service from another department.

**Demonstrate empathy not sympathy.** Empathy shows you understand the person's problem, and your desire to solve it. Sympathy only shows you feel badly. This is patronizing and does not help.

**Demonstrate understanding.** Prove that you understand the problem. Ask questions. Repeat back all the details before you try to solve the problem.

**Be a problem solver.** Ask what you can do to help. Tell the person what you intend to do so they know you are working to achieve a solution. Don't tell the person your problems. This isn't about you.

**Express appreciation for feedback.** Let the person know that their feedback is important to the department's efforts to continuously improve. Encourage them to provide feedback in the future.

## Recognition, Feedback, and Evaluation

*Recognition tells the student-employee that his/her work is valued. Feedback and evaluation provide opportunities for the student-employee to establish professional goals and receive valuable information on strengths and areas for improvement and growth.*

### Introduction

**R**ecognition and feedback are motivational forces for most of us, student-employees included. This symbolic form of rewarding a job well done lets the individual know he/she is a valued member of the department. Feedback is most helpful when provided periodically and regularly; at the end of training, upon completion of a project, of the semester, etc.

An ongoing recognition system acknowledges the student-employee. The reasons are varied. It could be for having a positive attitude, for performing a job well done, going above and beyond what is expected. Recognition should be a public matter. Whether at a departmental gathering, in the form of a plaque or letter, or a blurb in the departmental newsletter, people like their colleagues to share in their accomplishments. Recognition of and feedback to your student-employee is part of your job.

There are many creative approaches to recognizing your student-employee. One is to reward them with an end of the year celebration and titled certificates. Titles such as 'most congenial', 'best client service employee,' or 'most dedicated' are good examples. A small gift in the form of a Rutgers University bookstore gift certificate or RU/individual college-identified items could also accompany the certificates.

Feedback is designed to provide the student-employee with valuable information about his/her job performance, particular strengths, and areas for improvement and growth. It can also facilitate the establishment and effective use of future performance goals. The multi-perspective feedback approach provides an individual with information



from various perspectives – that of colleagues, stakeholders and department leadership – not just that of the student-employee's direct supervisor. This approach produces a more diverse appraisal of performance.

### **Sample Feedback/Evaluation Instrument**

This tool can (should) be used periodically during the student's employment and at the conclusion of his/her appointment. It is designed to work well with the traditional supervisor-student employee review as well as with the multi-perspective approach. You may also want to ask the student-employee to complete it for himself/herself, and use it as a starting point for discussion.

Name of Student-Employee: \_\_\_\_\_  
Person Providing Feedback: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. Student-Employee Strengths. What the employee does really well. Ways in which he/she has contributed to the department.

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2. Areas for Improvement. Skills or behaviors the employee could improve upon. What the employee could do to enhance his/her contributions to the department. What he/she needs to do to be a better employee.

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3. Other Comments:

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## Resources

### *References and sources of additional information for orientation and training*

Our team found many resources related to student-employees. Some are right here on campus, and others are available elsewhere. The Rutgers resources listed below can provide workshops, materials, and guidance as you develop your student-employee orientation and handbook. We encourage you to build upon these resources and to continuously update your orientation program.

### RU history

- ✓ Richard P. McCormick. *Rutgers, A Brief History*. Rutgers University Press, May 1984. ISBN 0813505216.
- ✓ Michael Moffat. *The Rutgers Picture Book: An Illustrated History of Student Life in the Changing College and University*. Rutgers University Press, May 1985. ISBN 0813510910.
- ✓ Rutgers University Fact Book, Office of Institutional Research & Academic Planning, Rutgers the State University of New Jersey.
- ✓ Dean of Commuter Students, Douglass College. A game-like presentation on the history of Rutgers University and Douglass College.

### RU department contacts

- Scott Borden, Career Services, College Avenue; offers professional development counseling/training, including a workshop entitled, “*Discover Your Hidden Skills*.”
- Mary Ann Cancio, Rutgers Learning Center, College Avenue; employee handbook.
- Center for Organizational Development and Leadership; *Face of Higher Education* video, workshops, materials and consultation.
- Tony Doody, Rutgers College Recreational Services; experiential learning “ropes” course.
- Kathryn Kuhnert, Rutgers College/Busch Campus Centers; student-employee handbook.

PILOT PROGRAM DRAFT  
SEND COMMENTS TO ODL  
(CENTER@ODL.RUTGERS.EDU)

- Patricia Michaels University Inn and Conference Center; training materials.
- Tricia Torok, Human Resources, Professional Development Program, and New Staff Employee Orientation; slide presentation that offers overview of depth and breadth of Rutgers.
- Matt Weismantel, Campus Information Services; student training materials.

## **Commercial education/training materials**

### **Crisp Publications**

1200 Hamilton Court  
Menlo Park, California 94025  
1-800-442-7477  
[www.crisplearning.com](http://www.crisplearning.com)

Offers series books, videos and cd's on a variety of subject areas including:

- Client Service
- Management
- Training
- Communication
- Supervision
- Personal Development
- Creativity

### **Coastal Human Resources**

3083 Brickhouse Court  
Virginia Beach, VA 23452  
1-800-285-9107  
[www.CoastalHR.com](http://www.CoastalHR.com)

Offers videos, compact disks, and handbooks on a variety of topics including:

- Client Service
- Diversity
- Ethics
- Time Management
- Meeting Management

## Video

Media Partners Corp.  
911 Western Ave  
Seattle WA 98104  
<http://www.mpcfilms.com>

- The Guest
- The Difficult Guest

## Publications/ Web Sites

Developing Leadership through Student Employment, edited by Anne Devaney.

Association of College Unions International  
One City Center, Suite 200  
120 West Seventh Street  
Bloomington, Indiana 47404-3925  
(812)855-0162  
[acui@indiana.edu](mailto:acui@indiana.edu)

National Association for Student Employment  
[www.nases.org](http://www.nases.org)

National Student Employment Association  
[www.nseastudemp.org](http://www.nseastudemp.org)

