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***GUIDELINES FOR EMPLOYEE  
ONBOARDING and ORIENTATION:  
'The Key to Unlocking Public Service Excellence  
Consistently'***

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# Guidelines for Onboarding Employees

## Introduction

Greatness, it is said, is not merely achieving excellence, but in achieving excellence *consistently*.

Ask any HR professional and they'll tell you that consistency is the key to cultivating great workplace cultures and developing the employee skills needed to help an organisation achieve its own greatness. There must be consistency in communicating values, consistency in providing training, consistency in setting expectations and consistency in managing performance in order to achieve *excellence consistently* !

The Public Service of Barbados is committed to attracting and keeping the best candidates by being an employer of choice. It is therefore important to ensure that new entrants are introduced to the Public Service and that **all** public officers are transitioned in a positive and organised way that makes each officer feel welcomed and valued during and after the recruitment, selection and placement processes.

'Employee onboarding' is the name most commonly given to the process of welcoming a new hire and getting them up to speed on their role in and the organisation. Employee onboarding is the first opportunity an organisation has to build foundational knowledge with their new hires — everything from functional questions like how to use internal systems and accessing benefits to matters of greater importance such as organisational values, standards of performance, and what defines success.

Onboarding is a series of events (including orientation) that helps employees understand how to be successful in their day-to-day job and how their work contributes to the overall business. Altogether, it's the information every member of a work team needs in order to do the *best* work.

Within the Public Service of Barbados, onboarding processes will be collaborative efforts with shared responsibilities between the Ministry of the Public Service, the respective Ministry/Department and the new public officer. Onboarding in the Public Service must occur where:

- individuals who have applied for jobs and are successful in gaining a first appointment;
- individuals who have applied for jobs and are successful in gaining a temporary appointment;
- temporary employees or public officers who are promoted;
- public officers are appointed to act in new positions;
- public officers and temporary employees who are assigned to new job roles

In all instances, onboarding must begin as soon as the candidate is identified and or selected.

Ministries/Departments are encouraged to be consistent and creative in delivering onboarding processes. Efforts should be made to involve as many persons in this process, create blogs, videos and use other creative media to allow new employees to view and gain perspectives of the *excellence* that the Ministry is seeking. It is only through this that employees are able to know what the Public Service and each Ministry are working towards. It is through this process that the Ministry is able to define at the outset its work agenda, the performance standards required and to describe the **excellence** expected from each employee.

New entrants to the Public Service and **all** public officers are encouraged to become very familiar with the Vision and Mission of the Government of Barbados as well as the strategic mandates of their Ministries/Departments. It is equally the responsibility of the employee to enquire about their onboarding process as it is the Ministry's/department's responsibility to provide all employees with this experience.

To ensure consistency of practice and in support of efforts to acquire and retain the best talent, this **Onboarding Guide** and the templates contained herein are to be used by Ministries/Departments in onboarding employees.

The remainder of this document sets out the steps for onboarding employees and role of each entity in the onboarding and orientation processes.

# The Onboarding Process

## Step 1. Confirming the Offer

Once the successful candidate has been identified and approved by the relevant appointing authority, the **People Resourcing and Compliance (PRC) Directorate, Ministry of the Public Service** shall:

- i. contact the Permanent Secretary (PS) / Head of Department (HOD) of the respective Ministry/Department to confirm the selection of the new employee and the start date of the assignment/appointment;
- ii. contact the new employee to make an offer, confirm his/her acceptance of the offer, inform of the start date; and invite the employee to an 'onboarding' meeting with the PRC Directorate which should be scheduled no less than one (1) week prior to the employee's assumption of duty. Exceptions to this will apply where a post has to be filled as a result of emergencies such as sickness or other extenuating circumstances.
- iii. prepare the '*welcome package*' which will be given to the new employee at the onboarding meeting. The 'welcome package' will consist of:
  - a. letter of authority – includes, Ministry assigned, post, salary, termination clause;
  - b. welcome and or congratulatory letter;
  - c. employment fact sheet;
  - d. Charter of Employee Rights and Responsibilities.

All employees shall be required to take the requisite Oath.

The PRC Directorate during the onboarding meeting will also provide the new officer with:

- i. the Vision and Mission of the Public Service of Barbados,
- ii. an overview of the rules and regulations of the Public Service,
- iii. Public Service policies and practices, and

- iv. the role of the Ministry of the Public Service in looking after the human resources needs of public officers.

## **Step 2. Establishing Contact**

It is important that communication between the new employee and the Ministry/Department is established between the time the offer is confirmed and the start date. A personal call by the PS / HOD, or the officer responsible for personnel matters if one is assigned in the Ministry/Department, is a great way to welcome the new employee and let them know that the organisation is happy to have them on board.

## **Step 3: Have an Organised Orientation Programme- Ministry/Department**

Every new employee to a Ministry/Department should be given an organised introduction to the business of the Ministry/Department, its vision, mission, business processes, departmental procedures and regulations, goals, objectives policies, practices and physical location. This information, should be given by the Permanent Secretary/ Head of Department or a suitably delegated officer, preferably with responsibility for HR matters, early in the onboarding process and preferably on the new employee's first day of work.

This will go a long way in enabling the employee to better adjust to the organisation and to address how the organisation identifies and executes “**Excellence**” in the pursuit of its mandate.

The Permanent Secretary should ensure that:

- i. all job related processes such as authorisation for building and system(s) access are initiated to make the employee's integration as smooth as possible;
- ii. the new employee is introduced to important policies, procedures;
- iii. the Ministry's core values and that the achievement of excellence are defined;

- iv. access badges or IDs are assigned if possible;
- v. arrangements are made for the payment of the new employee's salary and salary deductions and that this is done in a timely manner;
- vi. documentation required is provided and properly completed; and
- vii. an officer who is very knowledgeable on the organisation and its practices and who can ably discuss the performance standards required and expected of the new entrant is assigned to the new employee;

#### **Step 4: Have an Organised Orientation - Section / Unit level.**

It is important that the new employee is comfortable with their immediate surroundings. Important activities at this stage includes covering important work processes, objectives, timelines, roles and responsibilities, introducing co-workers and key work relationships and assigning a mentor.

The Section Supervisor /Line Manager to whom the new employee is assigned will be expected to schedule time with the new employee, during the first day of the first week and continuing thereafter, to discuss:

- i. the job and the tasks to be assigned to the new employee;
- ii. the tools and skills required to get the job done;
- iii. the performance standards required and expected;
- iv. what good / excellent performance looks like
- v. how his/her performance will be assessed

The Supervisor will also be expected to:

- i. show the employee around the office environs;
- ii. create a comfortable work station for the new employee;

- iii. ensure that all supplies and services (e.g. telephone, computers) are ordered and ready for day one;
- iv. ensure important documents (strategic plan, organisational chart, procedural manual, job description, relevant legislation) are available to the employee;
- v. introduce the new employee to the Performance Review and Development System;
- vi. introduce the new employee to co-workers as well as key stakeholders in the organisation who may have an impact on the employee's job; and
- vii. introduce the new employee to his/her mentor, if one is assigned;

The Supervisor should also use this time to let the new employee know what the process will be for further on the job training over the next few months. It is also considered good onboarding practice to allow dedicated time for the new employee to read all the documents provided and to provide clarification on any question which may arise.

Supervisors are encouraged to discuss the employee's progress on the job. This can be done by scheduling a planned meeting or by simply walking the floor and initiating discussion. It will assist in identifying the strengths of the employee, the challenges and opportunities for growth. Having regular discussions will:

- i. increase the employee's productivity by providing feedback on how well the employee is doing, what needs to be done better and provides a roadmap for what is to come;
- ii. provide an opportunity to develop open and honest communication; and
- iii. build opportunities for feedback therein creating a culture where new employees are encouraged to share new ideas and give honest feedback.

### **Step 5: Investing in Training and Development.**

Whether it be structured training or on the job, it is important to maintain a programme to develop the employee until the employee is competent in the duties of the job. The Ministry is expected to have a plan for the continued development of the employee and to share this plan with the new employee.

The plan should include all elements of the job that will impact the successful transition to the job as well as the steps for achieving competence and excellence in the new officer's job performance.

The **Learning and Development Directorate, Ministry of the Public Service** will be responsible for ensuring that the new employee receives:

- induction training – this training will be offered to the new entrant within the first month of service and will provide him/her with information regarding the role, purpose and structure of the Public Service, the role of Public Officers; the terms and conditions of Public Service employees, the Code of Conduct and Ethics and the provisions of the Public Service Act and the General Orders;
- performance management training - new employees will be able to access information on the PRDS system through L&DD's virtual classroom in a course entitled '*PRDS and You*'. This asynchronous course will provide the new entrant with an understanding on how the performance management system works, his role in the process and how excellence in terms of outstanding performance is realized and measured. Public Officers who are promoted and or assigned to supervisory positions will be required to undertake the training in *PRDS for Middle Managers*.
- job orientation training - job orientation training occurs across the spectrum of the General Service career stream and is structured to provide officers with a definition of the job, their role, related knowledge and skills of occupational functions relating to:
  - Accounts,
  - Administration
  - Human Resources Management
  - Supervisory Management and Leadership;
  - Registry and Records Management,
  - Secretarial Development
  - General Housekeeping and
  - Driver-Messenger Development

# The Employee's Role and Responsibility in the Onboarding Process

The new employee is:

- i. responsible for their own career development and must take initiative to assimilate into the environment of the new Ministry/Department;
- ii. encouraged to review the onboarding checklist and ensure that all items are addressed; and
- iii. responsible for attending and actively participating in all scheduled onboarding or training activities.

## Contact us:

### **The Ministry of the Public Service**

E. Humphrey Walcott Building,  
Cnr Culloden Road & Collymore Rock, St. Michael  
Main Office - (246) 535-4400 - Director General - (246) 535-4423  
Secretary to the Director General - (246) 535-4424 - Fax - (246) 228-0093  
Email: [DG@mps.gov.bb](mailto:DG@mps.gov.bb)  
Website - [www.pad.gov.bb](http://www.pad.gov.bb)

### **Human Resource Policy and Staffing Directorate**

E Humphrey Walcott Building,  
Cnr. Culloden Road & Collymore Rock, St Michael, Barbados  
Main Office - (246) 535-4400  
Director, HR Policy and Staffing - (246) 535-4426  
Fax - (246) 228-0093  
Email - [HRPS@mps.gov.bb](mailto:HRPS@mps.gov.bb)

### **Policy Resource and Compliance Directorate**

E Humphrey Walcott Building,  
Cnr Culloden Road & Collymore Rock, St. Michael  
Main Office - (246) 535-4500  
Director, People Resourcing and Compliance - (246) 535-4564  
Fax - (246) 429-5169  
Email - [PRC@mps.gov.bb](mailto:PRC@mps.gov.bb)

### **Learning and Development Directorate**

Level 5, Warrens Towers II, Warrens, St Michael, Barbados  
Main Office - (246) 535-6700  
Director, Learning and Development - (246) 535-6726  
Fax – (246) 535-6728  
Email - [LD@mps.gov.bb](mailto:LD@mps.gov.bb)  
Website - [www.training.gov.bb](http://www.training.gov.bb)

