Peer Ambassador (PA) Program

What Is a Peer Ambassador?

A Peer Ambassador (PA) is an experienced and engaged team member who has a good understanding of the work environment. They are willing to provide time, be accessible and partner/support the new employee during their first three (3) months on the job. He/she provides insight into the day-to-day activities of the University and is there to help the new employee fit in more quickly. A PA would make themselves available to show the new hire around the office, go over procedures and policies, and generally help the new hire become familiar with the University’s inner workings and culture. The ideal PA is a resource who is friendly, interpersonally effective, demonstrates patience, and is a positive role model with good communication skills.

Who Can Be a Peer Ambassador?

Departmental staff with at least one year or more of service with the President’s Office can volunteer to participate in the program and will be assigned to the new employee by their immediate supervisor/manager. The supervisor/manager is expected to review the program guidelines with the volunteering employee prior to them meeting the new hire. This will include a discussion on the program goals and expectations of them in their role prior to meeting with the new employee.

Goals of the Peer Ambassador Program

1. To assist in helping the new employee feel welcomed and connected during their first day, first week and throughout their first 3 months on the job
2. To help the new employee adjust to the UMass culture and their new work environment

Manager’s Responsibilities Pertaining to the Peer Ambassador

1. Refer positive role models as PA’s
2. Ensure that participation in the program is strictly voluntary
3. Ensure that the PA will have time to be accessible to the new employee
4. Check in with the PA and new employee regularly to assess if the “PA Role” is helpful

Role of the Peer Ambassador

1. Teaching/or tutoring, such as explaining unfamiliar tasks
2. Explaining how to use office equipment, obtain office supplies, make travel arrangements, and the like
3. Socializing the new employee on University’s guidelines, norms, and culture
4. Sharing insights on how things are done at the University
5. Involving the new employee in social or informal activities, such as lunch, coffee, and such
6. To always remain professional
7. To refer the new employee to their supervisor/manager for job specific questions

A PA Does Not

1. Replace the supervisor/managers role or take on any supervisory or lead duties
2. Act as the “go-to” person re: assignments, business decisions, etc.
3. Provide training and or assess performance
4. Act as a career mentor or job coach

Tips for the PA

If you are asked to be a PA, here are some tips that can help you to make the most of the experience:

1. You are not expected to be an expert on everything, so don't worry about living up to this ideal
2. Focus attention on the new employee and what he or she needs to be comfortable and productive in their new role
3. Remain patient—relationships take time to develop
4. Don't try to cover everything right away. Remember, the new employee more than likely feels overwhelmed during the first couple of weeks in a new job and will need time to digest all the information they are taking in
5. Stay positive, new employees will grow into their roles in time with appropriate support
6. Don't try to force a relationship. Be available, but give the new employee time to adjust to you and feel comfortable with using you as a trusted source
7. Try to identify the new employee's personality and communication style and adapt accordingly
8. Keep an open mind and don't be too judgmental. The new hire is relying on you to be a safe place to get answers to their many questions
9. Maintain a positive, teaching attitude