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EMPLOYER FEEDBACK CHANNEL

Quick Connect

Establishing Productivity Milestones

When a new hire joins your team, employers can treat early productivity as a ramp-up, not an immediate comparison with experienced employees.

Establishing Milestones

By setting role-specific milestones that combine learning, quality work, independence, and output, and reviewing them at different check-in times, employers can help new hires progress gradually and confidently without adding pressure that might hinder productivity. Here are a few examples of general milestones to assess new hire progress:

LEARNING 1

- Have they completed all required training modules?
- Can they clearly explain standard procedures, quality benchmarks, problem solving strategies, and proper escalation routes?

QUALITY & SAFETY 2

- Do they consistently follow SOPs and use the correct PPE?
- Are they hitting all defined quality checks, and do they know exactly when to pause or ask for help?

INDEPENDENCE 3

- Are they successfully transitioning from coached work to solo execution?
- Can they complete routine tasks with only limited review of work and check-ins?

OUTPUT 4

- Are they gradually approaching the usual role standard for output?
- Have they firmly established their learning, safety, and independence to meet work quality standards before focusing on speed or volume?

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Making Milestones Newcomer-Inclusive

Do not lower the essential standard for safety, ethics, quality, or respectful conduct.

Do remove avoidable barriers to understanding and achieving it.

- Write each milestone in plain language and show what good performance looks like through demonstrations, photos, checklists, sample outputs, or a supervised practice run.
- Specify the language level genuinely required for each task rather than using fluency as a proxy for competence. Canada's employer guidance advises focusing on skills and experience and where basic language skills are sufficient when the job does not require high proficiency.
- Explain unwritten norms explicitly: why it's important to ask questions and how to ask them, who can authorize exceptions, how breaks work, what "urgent" means, how feedback is given, when and how to approach the supervisor for questions and support, and when an employee should stop work for safety or quality concerns.
- For safety-critical work, use demonstrations and teach-back. Ask the employee to show or explain the procedure in their own words. Language barriers can affect workplace safety, making supervisor communication and onboarding practices especially important.
- Avoid using acronyms or colloquial terminology that newcomers might not be aware of.

Sources: www.shrm.org/topics-tools/news/managing-smart/6-tips-setting-expectations-employees | www.canada.ca/en/immigration-refugees-citizenship/corporate/publications-manuals/employer-roadmap-hiring-retaining-internationally-trained-workers.html | www.iwh.on.ca/tools-and-guides/immigrant-workers-and-language-diversity-at-work-what-can-employers-do-to-keep-workers-safe

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Funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, immigrant employment councils across Canada are engaging with employers to remove bottlenecks to recruiting and hiring immigrant talent. We also thank the Government of Alberta for funding our regional hub.

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