

10 Tips to Elevate The Student Employment Experience

Write Clear, Purposeful Job Descriptions

A detailed, thoughtfully crafted job description is essential for guiding performance. Make sure it reflects not only the day-to-day tasks but also includes how the role contributes to a student's professional growth and skill development, such as the NACE Career Competencies (e.g., critical thinking, communication, teamwork).

Set the Stage for Success

Start with a structured onboarding process that outlines tasks, expectations, and the student's role. Get to know their career goals and interests to tailor their experience. A clear, thoughtful onboarding boosts confidence, sets the tone for their employment, and fosters a collaborative supervisor-student relationship.

Create Opportunities for Professional Development

Invest in your student employees by providing access to learning opportunities that connect to their future career goals—whether through workshops, webinars, or on-the-job experiences. Encourage them to pursue skill-building activities that align with their career goals, and help them identify opportunities for growth.

Check-in Regularly

Regular one-on-one check-ins provide support and feedback while fostering skill development and professional growth. Use these meetings to explore future goals, set meaningful objectives, and connect their role to their career aspirations. These conversations ensure progress in their growth, allows you to address challenges early, and support long-term success.

Provide Regular Feedback

Feedback is crucial for growth. Offer constructive feedback alongside praise to help student employees improve. Be specific about what's working well and what could be enhanced, and be open to their feedback as well. Continuous, meaningful feedback leads to stronger performance and development.

Encourage Skill Growth through Projects

Identify projects that stretch student employees' abilities and introduces them to new skill sets. Whether it's cross-training in a new department or leading a small project, these opportunities will help them grow and build a stronger professional foundation.

Build a Community

Foster a sense of belonging by involving student employees in staff meetings, project discussions, and social events. Encourage collaborative projects and team building activities to help them build relationships. Promote participation in campus committees to expand their network and make them feel valued and integral to the team's success.

Be a Guiding Hand

Act as a mentor, not just a supervisor. Share career advice, guide student employees through their role and future paths, and help expand their professional network by connecting them to resources and opportunities. Mentorship builds trust and enhances the student employment experience, developing valuable career connections.

Recognize and Celebrate Accomplishments

Recognition is a powerful motivator. Regularly acknowledge both small and large achievements—whether it's through verbal praise, awards, or even team shout-outs. Celebrating their contributions fosters motivation and engagement.

Use Storytelling to Highlight Impact

Help student employees articulate their journey by encouraging them to reflect on what they've learned and accomplished. Storytelling not only helps them understand the value of their experience but also equips them to effectively communicate these skills in future job interviews or resumes.