



Induction process research project carried out for Manchester Metropolitan University

Executive Summary and Recommendations

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work placement from February to May 2010**

INDUCTION PROCESS RESEARCH PROJECT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Aim

The aim of this research project was to identify core information that a new member of staff at MMU will benefit from, and make recommendations about how this could be incorporated into the University induction process.

Key research objectives

The key research objectives were as follows:

1. to identify what is currently offered through the induction process at MMU;
2. to carry out a gap analysis using feedback from the different staff groups across MMU;
3. to identify best practice from the wider Higher Education community and potentially from other organisations; and
4. to make recommendations about what further information is needed and the medium that this should be delivered in.

2. Methodology

The research was carried out using questionnaires, formal semi-structured interview and documentation analysis.

3. Findings

Induction at MMU has two parts: a local induction and a one day general introduction day to the University.

One day general introduction to the University:

From the questionnaires received in September 2009 and February 2010, in relation to the one day general introduction to MMU, it was clear that the programme was well organised and expectations were met. The staff were very happy and satisfied with the general introduction training which was well planned with adequate information on event administration, the presentation skills were perceived to be very good, the content was good, exercises and activities were said to be involving and enhance good participation and contribution from the participants.

Local induction:

In September 2009, 17 inductees gave feedback on their local induction plan. 41% (7 inductees) reported fair, 29% (5 inductees) reported good, and 29% (5 inductees) reported excellent. In February 2010, 20 inductees gave feedback, 25% (5 inductees) reported poor, 20% (4 inductees) reported fair, 50% (10 inductees) reported good and 5% (1 inductee) reported excellent. While this indicates that there is a good induction in place for some staff, this is clearly not the case across the University.

This was further reiterated in the qualitative analysis where 5 people out of 10 interviewees indicated that their local induction was not well planned/was poorly planned. Comments received were as follows:

- “It was fair, I was given a list of 6 people to meet without any formal introduction. On the first day at work there was no computer, the office was not set up, there was no facilities to work with but meeting with the HOD was very useful.”
- “It was poorly planned because it was more of paperwork on pay date, request for holiday and a lot on health & safety, there was no information on what the induction will be like, no duration, and I struggled with what other departments do and this made me to miss out on information that involves my work with other departments, e.g. how finance and support dept work, and I did not know where to go for explanation on questions”.
- “I will contact my manager to ask why I have not had an induction”.
- “It was fair as I was given time to organise and meet people by myself, who I found difficult to get hold of and there was a lot of information to take in”.
- “I did not have any local induction planned, I think it was because it is a maternity cover, I’m not sure, but I shadowed the previous staff”.
- “Work environment not well ready or organised. Had a tiny bad desk and took 4 months to get a new desk. No information on how to get email, had a broken filing cabinet which took time to get a new one, office was full of junk, no pens; this made me feel awful, not really wanted and left alone to sort things”.
- “I was introduced to my team members whose names I found difficult to put faces to, and did not know what each person does which made it difficult for me to find support when needed”.
- “I was not introduced to the area and so I found it difficult to locate classrooms for teaching and also I was not able to use the teaching equipment which made me feel awful”.

Most of the interviewees confirmed that they are still not clear about the structure of things within their divisions, departments and faculties. One respondent suggested that, “A guide on the structure of various departments, faculties and divisions may be helpful”.

Health and Safety

The feedback received was as followed:

- “I was not given information on health & safety responsibilities”.
- “I had a meeting with a health & safety officer but did not get enough information as there was no information on first aid, no idea of where to go for accident reporting and health & safety assessment was slowed down as my new desk took 8 weeks to arrive and there was lateness in the arrival of other work equipment”.
- “I was not given information on health & safety responsibilities but I learnt on the job”.
- “I got robust information on health and safety but training should be given on the use of the evacuation chair for disabled people”.

Training

Responses were as follows:

- “I did not receive any information about mandatory training for my job”.
- “I expected training on the use of the teaching equipment since it was my first time in a teaching career but did not receive any. This made me feel awful”.
- “I did not receive any information on training; maybe it was not relevant because it is a maternity cover”.

Integration into the University

Feedback was as follows:

- “It was pretty difficult to integrate into MMU as I met people on the first day but since then there is no social opportunity.”
- “There was no explicit information so I had to gather information by myself, it took a while for me to fit in as people were first reluctant in giving information, and people were pursuing their own interest.”
- “I found it difficult to integrate and felt isolated for 3 to 4 months as there was no proper introduction to anyone, it was terrible, but the one day general introduction was helpful for me in getting to know other departments. I was not appointed a buddy and my line manager was not involved.”
- “It took a while for me to be integrated as enough support was not given.”
- “The largeness of MMU makes it difficult to integrate into the institution as a whole.”
- “I found it a bit difficult to integrate as there was no room for socialising with colleagues and my job does not demand working with other departments.”

Probation

From the quantitative feedback about MMU’s probationary period, a little above average received adequate explanation/information about MMU’s probationary period. Comments included:

- “I cannot recollect if I was given any information about probationary period but it can be improved upon by being made clear during induction”.
- 2 of the interviewees said “I did not receive any information on probationary period” though one of them said “Maybe it was not applicable”. 3 other interviewees said “information on the probationary period was detailed in the offer letter”.

Mentoring

The feedback for September 2009 indicated that a little above average had mentors; while February 2010 feedback indicated a majority were not assigned mentors. This was reiterated in the qualitative analysis, as 60% of the interviewees were not assigned mentors. The few that were assigned mentors indicated they had never met them, they had been given a contact name only.

Duration of Induction

Respondents identified as follows: 28% claimed their induction lasted for 0 days; 28% for 1-2days; 17% for 1-2 weeks; 11% for 2-4 weeks; and 16% for 1-2months.

When asked the ideal length of time for an induction, 37% stated an ideal induction should last for 1-2 weeks, 26% stated an induction should last for 2-4 weeks and 21% stated induction should last for 1-2months.

4. Analysis

The practice outlined in MMU's *Induction Guidance for Managers* about how new employees are to be inducted is consistent with what is recommended in the literature. However, the findings from the questionnaires and interviews were contrary in practice to what is written in policy, which can be detrimental to employees' long term commitment in the organisation. As identified by ACAS ((1994:27), "lack of attention to the induction process can undo all the good work of properly planned recruitment and selection. Furthermore, the resources spent in recruiting the right candidate for the job can be wasted if the new employee feels unwelcome and ill at ease and decides to leave after only a short time".

It is clear that adequate planning of local induction by line managers, the readiness of the work area and provision of necessary, relevant information are major issues to newcomers. Practical elements such as "a user ID for the computer, a computer, telephone, email and other work materials should be set up before the start date and somebody should be available to talk you through things, introduce you to team and show you around; opportunity for meetings for shadowing other people and not just to read about what the department does but see in process" were very important. Timeliness was also an issue, with newcomers identifying that the "introduction to team and mentor should be done more quickly and this should go beyond work level or problem".

Participants also identified the importance of pre-information "to alleviate normal anxiety on the job".

Line manager involvement was reported as minimal which is contrary to good practice. As identified by Sangale (2000), line managers are likely to be the most important person in the process of induction, and as a result line managers should spend enough time with newcomers in order to build a lasting impression about the organisation.

Conclusion

It was generally accepted by all the participants that the current induction process had considerable drawbacks and improvements could be made to all aspects but most importantly, the readiness of work area, line manager involvement, allocation of mentors, level of information and supports available to new members of staff.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Areas of improvement and recommendations to the existing induction process are drawn from the outcomes of the research.

Areas to focus for changes and improvement	Proposed actions to be taken	By who	Timing (when)	Outcomes
Preparation of work area and equipment before the start date of employment	Work areas should be made ready with all necessary equipment, e.g. computer, table, telephone, desk, printer and photocopying machine, set up and in good condition.	Line manager	Prior to start date of employment	This will help new members of staff to settle in well and early to begin work, and also promote a good image of the organisation.
Provision of general and specific information to newcomers	Adequate information regarding the organisation, one day general introduction to the University and job role should be provided at the induction period. The checklist should also be used to ensure all aspects are covered.	HR, line manager and/or assigned employee	From 1 st week of the start date of employment	This will help the new members of staff to quickly understand the organisation structure, where to go for support and how to get things done within the organisation, which will enhance smooth integration.
Provision of staff handbook to newcomers	Accessible staff handbook should be provided with bullet points to include majority of the materials discussed and covered in the induction, in order to provide a quick reference	HR Recruitment Team	Prior to the start date of employment	This will serve as a future reference source of information, which can aid smooth working process.

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	source of information as a future reference point to new members of staff.			
Provision of on the job training to newcomers	Newcomers should be provided with relevant training necessary at the start of work, for example, the use of teaching aids and equipment by the academic staff.	Line manager or assigned employee	1 st week of employment	This will enable early contribution and performance on the job.
Training workshop for line managers on the effectiveness of induction	A training workshop should be organised for line managers on the importance of effective induction, their role and the impact of induction on socialisation, integration and performance.	HR Training and Development Team	This can be incorporated into the Organisation Development Training and Diversity programme	This will enable line managers to be well involved in the induction process of the new employees, which will create the scene for future relationship that will bring about effective job performance.
Training workshop for mentors	A training workshop on mentoring should be provided to mentors, in order to be effective in their mentoring role and deliver the support that is needed by new members of staff.	HR Training and Development Team	This can also be incorporated into the Organisation Development Training and Diversity programme	This will assist mentors to formally and effectively deliver the support that is required by the members of staff.
Provision of evaluation and feedback process timetable	Line managers should provide a timetable on the feedback process during induction to allow for	Line manager	Within the first month of employment	This will enhance performance and also help the new members of staff to plan their work schedule in an effective and thorough manner.

	effective communication on the progress of work to new members of staff, and also ensure necessary training where applicable, in order to enhance performance and development.			
Filing, signing and submission of induction checklist to the HR team	The induction checklist should be signed by the new members of staff after completion and submitted by the line manager to the HR Team for proper filing, and to ensure proper monitoring process for effective induction.	Line managers	Within the first 2 months of employment	This will enable the HR team to know if induction is being carried out as expected by the line manager. This will help to monitor the practice of induction in line with the policy.