

Onboarding Manual: **WELCOME TO RECRUITMENT!**

Created by the Professional
Development Working Group





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INTRODUCTION TO UNIVERSITY RECRUITMENT

Welcome to the fun and fast-paced world of university recruitment!

As a new recruiter, you're entering a dynamic and rewarding field where your work will have real impact. You'll serve as a vital link between your university and prospective students, helping them navigate an important decision in their lives.

This onboarding manual is designed to support you as you get started. Inside, you'll find key information, tips, and resources to help you thrive in this role. While this guide will give you a strong foundation, remember that each university also has its own specific policies, procedures, and expectations. Be sure to connect with your institution's team to learn more about their unique practices.



Sustainability & Well-being on the Road

Recruitment's busy fall season can be incredibly rewarding as you meet students, share your school's story and unique selling points, and explore new communities – but it can also be physically and emotionally demanding. Sustainable recruiting means taking care of yourself so you can bring your best self to each visit. This section offers practical tips to help you prioritize safety, maintain balance, and find joy while on the road.

Safety as a Foundation for Well-being

Staying safe while travelling is the foundation of well-being. You will receive a full safety presentation during our Workshop, but here are a few key reminders to help you feel secure and relaxed during your downtime.

Your Vehicle: When you arrive at your hotel, remove or hide valuables from plain sight (use the glove box or trunk, or bring items inside with you). If possible, park near building entrances or under lights for visibility and added peace of mind.

Your Hotel Room: When checking in, ensure the front desk doesn't say your room number out loud. If they do, request a new room. Upon arrival, check the locks and consider bringing a portable door stop for extra security. Familiarize yourself with the nearest emergency exits. Knowing you're safe allows you to truly rest.

Meet Your Needs!

A sustainable travel routine starts with meeting your basic needs: food, water, rest, and emotional connection. These may seem simple, but they're often the first things to fall off your radar during a busy travel week.

Food: Trying new restaurants can be a highlight of life on the road! Enjoy exploring local spots with your per diem, but also pack snacks and aim for regular meals when possible. "Healthy eating" looks different for everyone. Ensure you listen to your body and fuel it in ways that support your energy and comfort.

Water: Travel, hotel air, and talking all day can dry you out. Keep a water bottle with you during drives and visits. Staying hydrated is one of the easiest ways to maintain focus and energy.

Sleep: Changing hotels can interrupt your sleep. Bring what helps you feel at home: earplugs, white noise, a sleep mask, or your favourite pillow. Prioritize rest – your days are full, and your body needs time to recover.

Personal Recharge Time

After a day of visits, presentations, and travel, it's important to step out of "recruiter mode" and into personal time. Here are some tips and reminders to help you take time for yourself:

- **Set boundaries:** Once you're done for the day, log off. Avoid checking email or doing work unless it's urgent.
- **Do what brings you joy:** Bring along books, games, crafts, or other hobbies that help you unwind.
- **Make long drives more enjoyable:** Listen to music, podcasts, or audiobooks (or schedule a catch-up call with a friend).
- **Stay connected:** Reach out to loved ones, and if you're near friends or family, try to plan a quick visit.
- **Explore where you are:** Take time (when energy allows) to discover local restaurants, parks, or landmarks.



Networking & Relationship-building

Networking and relationship-building are critical components of a successful recruitment strategy. As a new contract recruiter for Ontario universities, you will spend a significant amount of time on the road interacting with fellow recruiters and guidance counsellors. This section will guide you through the best practices for effective networking and relationship-building, helping you create lasting professional connections.

Importance of Networking

Networking is essential for a few reasons:

1. **Collaboration:** Sharing resources, information, and strategies with other recruiters can enhance your effectiveness.
2. **Support System:** Building a network provides a support system that can offer advice and encouragement.
3. **Enhanced Outreach:** Strong relationships with guidance counsellors can facilitate better access to potential students.

Networking With Fellow Recruiters

- **Engage actively in events.** Attend workshops, fairs, and social events organized by OURA. Participate in discussions, panels, and informal gatherings.
- **Share knowledge and resources.** Exchange information about successful strategies and recruitment challenges. Share materials, such as brochures and promotional items, to support each other's efforts.
- **Stay connected.** Use social media platforms like LinkedIn to maintain connections. Create or join groups for Ontario university recruiters to foster interaction.
- **Collaborate on initiatives.** Plan joint recruitment events or fairs to pool resources and attract more students. Share travel plans to optimize attendance at recruitment events and minimize costs.

Networking With Guidance Counsellors

- **Build trust and rapport.** Establish regular communication with guidance counsellors at high schools. Be approachable and reliable, and provide accurate information about your university.
- **Understand their needs.** Ask about the specific needs and concerns of their students. Tailor your presentations and materials to address these needs effectively.
- **Provide valuable resources.** Offer brochures, application guides, and other useful materials. Keep counsellors updated with the latest information about admission requirements, scholarship opportunities, and campus events.
- **Follow up.** After school visits or fairs, send a thank-you email or note. Provide any additional information or resources that were requested during your visit.

Best Practices for Effective Networking

- **Be genuine.** Show a genuine interest in getting to know people. Authenticity helps build trust and meaningful relationships.
- **Listen actively.** Pay attention to what others are saying. Show that you value their input by asking follow-up questions and reflecting on their points.
- **Be proactive.** Take the initiative to introduce yourself and start conversations. Do not wait for others to approach you.
- **Maintain professionalism.** Dress appropriately for events and meetings. Be punctual and respect others' time.
- **Follow up consistently.** After meeting someone new, send a follow-up email or message. Keep in touch to maintain the relationship.



Professionalism & Ethics

When we are on the road, we are representatives of our schools, our departments, and, of course, ourselves. We must be mindful of professionalism in our interactions while on the road.

Interacting With Students

A large part of our jobs involves talking to high school students who are exploring postsecondary education. We must keep conversations professional with students. Provide them with information about your school, and be friendly and inviting, but do not try to be friends with them. This means not adding students on social media, ensuring your personal accounts are private, and primarily talking to students about their educational goals. All communication with students should be done through official channels, as designated and approved by your recruitment departments.

Interacting With Schools

It is important to keep professional relationships with the schools you visit for presentations or fairs. Arrive before your presentation or fair is scheduled to start. If you are going to be late to the event, follow your department's processes for letting the school know promptly that you will be delayed. Introduce yourself to the guidance counsellors or administrators you are working with and be especially polite and professional to the administrative staff who welcome you in school offices.

If the experience with the school does not go well, make note of this but stay professional during your time at the school. Inform your supervisor of any unprofessional behaviour or experiences. If you feel the need to vent, connect with teammates or your supervisor after you have left to work through any frustrations. Not every visit goes smoothly, but we must remain professional and maintain positive relationships with schools to benefit the students there.



Interacting With Other Recruiters

It is fun to interact with other recruiters on the road! Nobody else will understand the ins and outs of your role more than another recruiter, so be sure to connect with one another. (Check out the networking and relationship-building section for more).

When you are at an event or speaking with students, remember to never talk poorly about another school or representative. We are all trying to showcase the things that make our schools and programs unique and exciting, but we are not trying to make others think that another school is bad. Remember, we are in co-opetition and are trying to give students information to make the best decision for themselves.

When you are at an event, remember to be friendly, sociable, and polite, but also remember that people are working. It is great to be friendly, but don't overstay your welcome while recruiters are trying to do their job.

Other Tips

- **Keep your personal social media accounts private.** Sometimes students think we are so cool that they want to connect with us on social media after an event. Do not friend students on social media. Keeping your accounts private allows a separation between your work world and your home world.
- **Be honest.** When talking about your school, portray it in the best light possible but do not make promises you cannot keep. If there are program requirements, let the students know what they need to do to qualify.
- **Stay professional and friendly.** With anyone you interact with, keep a friendly, approachable demeanour while maintaining professional boundaries.
- **Know your university's policies.** Follow the specific guidelines and policies set by your university for interacting with students and others.



Effective Communication Skills for Recruiters

Effective communication is key to your success, as you will be interacting with a diverse group of people from all walks of life, including colleagues, managers, other recruiters, high school teachers, guidance counsellors, students and their parents and supporters. This guide provides essential tips to help you communicate effectively with each of these groups.

Communication With Colleagues

1. **Be respectful and professional.** Treat your colleagues with respect and maintain a professional demeanour. This builds a positive and collaborative work environment.
2. **Listen actively.** Pay attention to what your colleagues are saying, show interest, and provide feedback. This demonstrates that you value their input and fosters mutual respect.
3. **Communicate in a clear and concise way.** Be clear and to the point in your emails, meetings, and conversations. This helps avoid misunderstandings and ensures that your message is well-understood.
4. **Be open-minded.** Be open to different perspectives and ideas. This can lead to innovative solutions and a more dynamic work environment.

Communication With Managers

1. **Give regular updates.** Keep your manager informed about your progress and any challenges you encounter. Regular updates show that you are proactive, forward-thinking, and reliable.
2. **Seek feedback.** Ask for feedback on your performance and be open to constructive criticism. This helps you grow and improve in your role.
3. **Be prepared.** When you meet with your manager, come prepared with information and questions. This shows that you are organized and serious about your work.
4. **Respect hierarchies.** Understand the organizational structure and respect the chain of command when communicating with managers and other higher-ups.

Communication With Other Recruiters

1. **Collaborate.** Work together with other recruiters to share best practices and strategies. Collaboration can lead to better results and a more cohesive team.
2. **Share information.** Keep each other informed about important developments and updates. This ensures that everyone is on the same page and can work effectively.
3. **Be supportive.** Offer support and assistance to your fellow recruiters. A supportive team environment enhances overall productivity and job satisfaction.

Communication With High School Staff

1. **Build relationships.** Establish strong relationships with high school teachers and guidance counsellors. They play a crucial role in students' decisions and can be valuable allies in your recruitment efforts.
2. **Be informative.** Provide clear and detailed information about your university's programs, admissions process, and benefits. This helps teachers and counsellors guide their students effectively.
3. **Be responsive.** Respond promptly to queries or requests for information. Timely communication builds trust and reliability.
4. **Offer support.** Offer resources and support to help teachers and counsellors in their roles. This could include providing brochures, organizing information sessions, or offering to speak at school events.

Communication With High School Students

1. **Be approachable.** Present yourself as friendly and approachable. Students are more likely to engage with you if they feel comfortable.
2. **Use clear language.** Avoid jargon and complex language. Explain things in a way that is easy for high school students to understand.
3. **Be honest and transparent.** Provide honest and accurate information about your university. Transparency builds trust and credibility.
4. **Engage and inspire.** Share stories and experiences that can inspire students. Highlight the opportunities and benefits of attending your university.



Communication With Parents and Supporters of High School Students

1. **Acknowledge their concerns.** Understand that parents and supporters may have concerns and questions about their child's future. Acknowledge their worries and address them with empathy.
2. **Provide detailed information.** Parents often seek detailed information about safety, costs, academic programs, and career prospects. Be prepared to provide comprehensive answers.
3. **Be patient and understanding.** Parents and supporters may need more time to process information and make decisions. Be patient and give them the time they need.
4. **Reassure and support.** Offer reassurance and support throughout the admission process. Show that you are there to help their child succeed.

Tips for Effective Communication

1. **Active Listening:** Always listen actively to understand the other person's perspective before responding.
2. **Non-verbal Communication:** Be mindful of your body language, eye contact, and facial expressions. Non-verbal cues can significantly impact your communication.
3. **Empathy:** Show empathy and understanding in all your interactions. This builds trust and rapport.
4. **Adaptability:** Be adaptable and tailor your communication style to suit different audiences and situations.
5. **Confidence:** Communicate with confidence but avoid coming across as arrogant. Confidence helps convey your message effectively.



Time Management & Prioritization

When it comes to time management and prioritization, there is no one-size-fits-all approach, and no one is an expert. Inevitably, there will be weeks where you feel overwhelmed. When that happens, take a breath – 9 times out of 10, you've got this! And if you don't, ask for help. To help avoid getting into overwhelming situations, we have outlined strategies that may help.

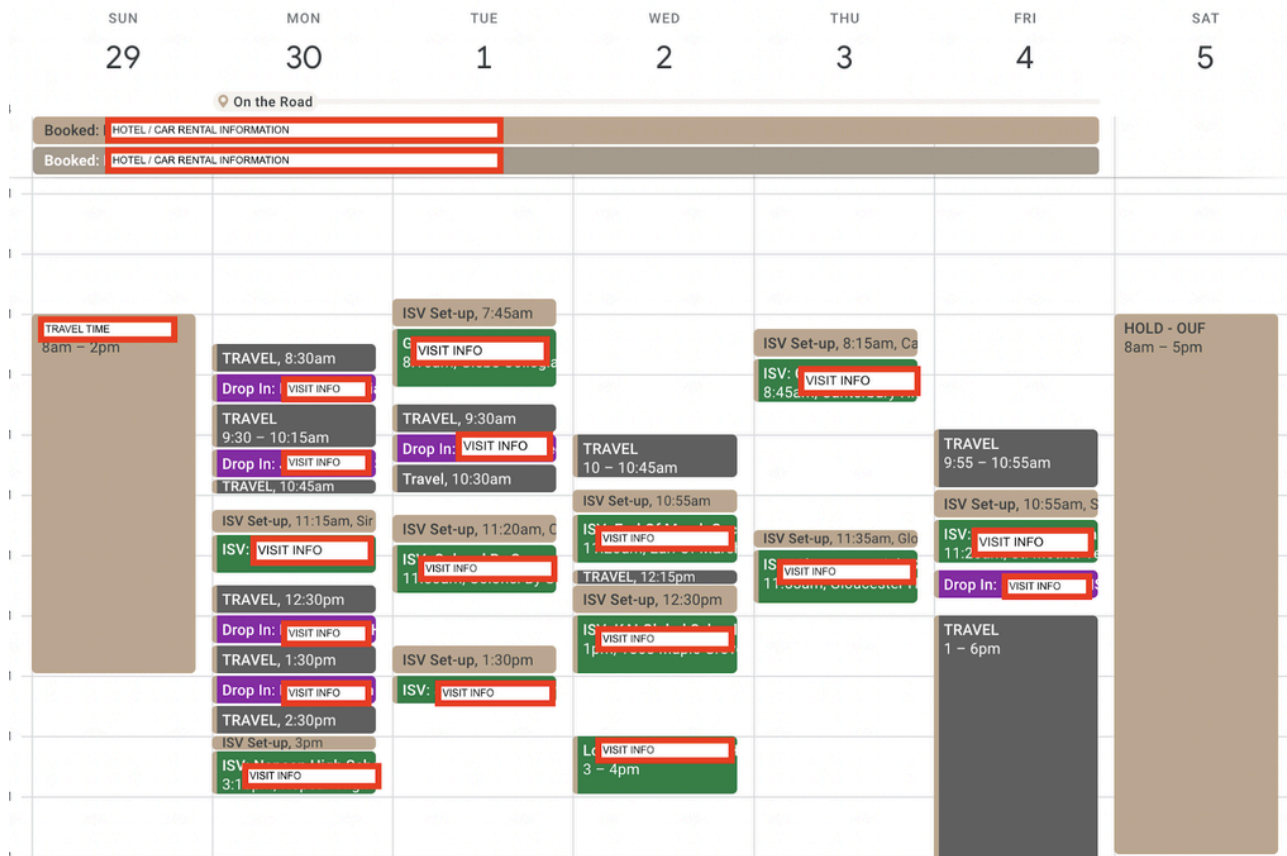
Why is this important?

- We want to provide you with the best tools possible to be successful in this position.
- Take these tips as suggestions or a starting point for brainstorming sessions to figure out what works best for you.

Strategies to Help With Time Management

Scheduling Systems

- **Consolidate everything to 1 system.** If you use Google Calendar or another system, add your driving time, meals, visits, reminders to answer emails, etc., all in 1 place. This helps you see how much spare time you actually have and allows you to map out your priorities within the allotted time.
- **Colour-coordinate.** Use colours to acknowledge the status of the visit:
 - Drop-in (purple)
 - Presentation (green)
 - Contacted or confirmed with the school (beige)
 - Travel time (grey)



To-Do Lists

- **Crossing Off Tasks:** Writing tasks down on a piece of paper and crossing them out can be very satisfying.
- **Task Managers:** Use tools like Google Tasks, which can be integrated into your calendar system, clearly labelling tasks with start and end times.
- **Due Dates:** Even if tasks don't have specific deadlines, assign due dates to avoid procrastination.
- **Morning Review:** Start your day by reviewing or writing a to-do list to determine what needs to be done first thing in the morning.

Back-up Plans

- **Offline Access:** Take a screenshot or photo of your daily schedule so you will have access even without data or Wi-fi.
- **Seeking Help:** If you cannot finish a task on time or if you see your time management slipping, reach out to someone for help.
- **Team Prioritization:** Speak to your team about what tasks to prioritize and let them know when you cannot meet an expectation.

Organize Your Inbox

- **Label and colour-coordinate.** Label all emails, set deadlines, and colour-coordinate tasks by urgency to know which to tackle first.
- **Utilize features.** Bring action items to the top of your inbox.
- **Use communication channels.** Coordinate with your team on the primary communication channels (e.g., g-chats, WhatsApp, emails). For urgent information, WhatsApp can be used for instant visibility on Apple CarPlay or Android Auto while you are driving.

Be Proactive

- **Plan your route.** Look up the route to a school the night before to be prepared.
- **Allow extra time.** Always allot extra time for traffic or unexpected delays.
- **Review schedules.** Regularly review your schedule and notify someone if something does not make sense ahead of time.
- **Coordinate deadlines.** Talk to your team about deadlines and keep tabs on each other to offer support if needed.

Schedule Down-time

- **Take breaks.** Schedule me-time to avoid burnout. Do activities that help you relax, such as talking to friends, napping, or having dinner with friends.
- **Drive safely.** Ensure you are not overworked or overtired to maintain safety on the road. Managing your mental and physical health is crucial.

Balance Your Workload

- **Set limits.** You are not expected to work all hours you are awake. Talk to your management team about the appropriate number of hours you should work per day.
- **Postpone non-urgent tasks.** If a task does not get done within the allotted time, it is okay to do it the next day.

Use Available Resources

- **Leverage your network.** Talk to fellow recruiters to share strategies and experiences. Utilize the collective knowledge to tackle the challenges of this role.



Technology & Data Management

In this section, we will explore aspects of technology and data management that are crucial for effectively recruiting prospective students. These concepts not only provide a foundation for technologies used in the sector, but also showcase how the data you collect can be used strategically to engage with prospective students.

Types of Technology in Recruitment

University Websites: A user-friendly, informative, and visually appealing website is your virtual front door. Ensure that the university's website provides clear information about programs, admission criteria, campus life, and student testimonials. Familiarize yourself with your own university's website to ensure you (and prospective students) can easily find the information you need.

Social Media: Platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and TikTok are powerful tools for reaching prospective students. Your university likely uses a social media strategy that showcases campus life, academic achievements, and student success stories. Stay up to date with the social media channels your university uses and how they can be useful for prospective students.

Meeting Software: Even if there is distance between you and your prospective students, there are many ways to communicate "face to face" with them. Consider how you can connect with students virtually through meetings, phone calls, or webinars.

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Systems: CRM systems are fundamental tools for managing prospective student data. These systems help you track interactions, manage communications, and personalize outreach efforts. Familiarize yourself with the university's CRM platform to efficiently manage leads and streamline your workflow.

Lead Collection Software: Many universities collect leads throughout the fall recruitment season. Learn about what software your institution is using and how to maximize your lead generation efficiency. Ensure you are using collective-approved lead generation methods, such as StriveScan, during collective events like the Ontario Universities' Fair and Regional Fairs.

With so many pieces of technology to use, there are more and more ways to optimize your recruitment efforts. Beyond simple emails, consider how the data you have can be used to connect with prospective students ethically.



Best Practices With Technology in Recruitment

Data Collection and Privacy: When collecting prospective student data, ensure compliance with data protection regulations or any institutional regulations. Obtain consent before collecting a prospective student's personal information and ensure that their data is not shared improperly.

Personalized Communications: Through integration with your university's CRM system, you can track and communicate with your prospective students. Ensure you are providing relevant information to each student and personalizing communications as much as possible to their individual needs.

New Technologies: There are plenty of emerging technologies that may find their place in recruitment in the future. Continue to consider how tools such as virtual reality, artificial intelligence, and more can impact the ways you connect with students.



Co-opetition

Definition

[Investopedia](#) defines “co-opetition” as the act of cooperation between competing companies by forming a strategic alliance designed to help both companies. In student recruitment, while our primary focus is recruiting students for our respective universities, we have learned there are many benefits to working together. In fact, Ontario universities have been practicing co-opetition for decades, achieving significant milestones collectively.

Examples of Co-opetition

Ontario Universities' Application Centre (OUAC)

- **Founded in 1971:** The OUAC has greatly improved the university application process for students and institutions.
- **Application Volume:** For the fall 2025 application cycle, the OUAC processed more than 580,000 Undergraduate applications (as of spring 2025).

Ontario Universities' Fair

- **Major Event:** Together, we host one of the largest educational fairs in North America. Last year, we welcomed more than 70,000 guests over our 2-day event.

Ontario Universities' Regional Fairs

- **Provincial Coverage:** We travel together to every corner of Ontario to provide information and access to postsecondary studies for prospective students.

Ontario Universities' Info

- **Trusted Resource:** A single, reliable platform for students and guidance counsellors to find comprehensive information about Ontario universities.

Practicing Co-opetition on the Road

Maintain Professionalism

- **Positive Representation:** Never speak negatively about other universities or programs. Focus on being an expert about your own institution and its offerings.

Respect Boundaries

- **Designated Spaces:** At fairs or events, stay in your designated space and do not intrude on another university's area.

Promote Collective Learning

- **Encourage exploration.** Encourage students to learn about other Ontario universities. It is important for students to find the right fit, and if your university doesn't offer what a student is looking for, do not hesitate to point them to another institution for more information.

Support Each Other

- **Assist fellow recruiters.** The fall recruitment season can be challenging, and only other student recruiters truly understand these challenges. On the road, help each other out in various ways, such as:
 - **Set-up Assistance:** Help another recruiter set up their table if they arrive late due to traffic or another visit.
 - **Sharing Tips:** Share tips and tricks about parking or arriving at a school.
 - **Navigational Help:** Assist each other in navigating to the gym, cafeteria, or event space at a school.

By embracing co-opetition, we not only enhance our recruitment efforts but also create a supportive and collaborative environment that benefits everyone involved.



Conclusion

This onboarding manual was designed to equip you with practical guidance, foundational knowledge, and helpful tips to support your success as a student recruiter.

From understanding your role and embracing the spirit of co-opetition to managing your time and well-being on the road, we've covered key strategies to help you thrive during recruitment season.

As you embark on this journey, remember to collaborate with your fellow recruiters across institutions, maintain professionalism at all events, and lean on the tools shared here to stay organized and effective. Just as important: taking care of yourself and your teammates – this work is meaningful, but it's also demanding.

We wish you a successful, inspiring, and energizing recruitment season, and encourage you to share your experiences and strategies with your team to foster a collaborative and supportive environment.

Happy travel season! See you on the road!