



How to tailor on-boarding for veteran employees

On-boarding can encompass more than just the employee's initial induction into a new role.

Instead, it can be viewed as a long-term process to promote employee growth and retention. On-boarding can extend to the employee's first year in the role and beyond.

How to use this guide:

This two-part guide will help you to get started in making your on-boarding process more veteran-inclusive.

Guiding Principles

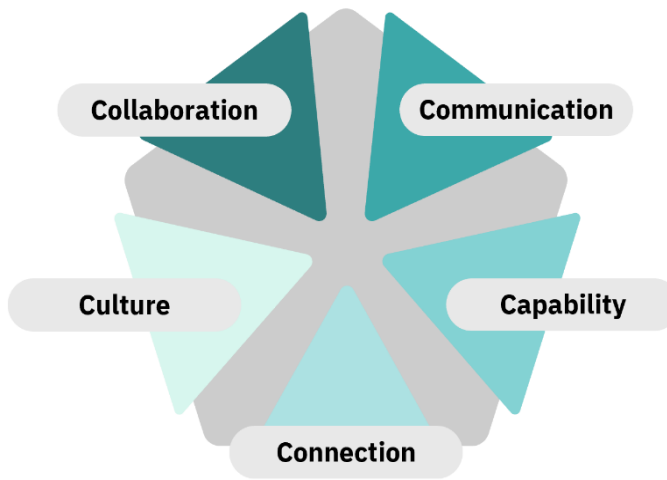
5 Guiding principles to underpin a veteran-inclusive on-boarding process.

Example on-boarding process

A detailed overview of an on-boarding process tailored for veteran success including priority actions.

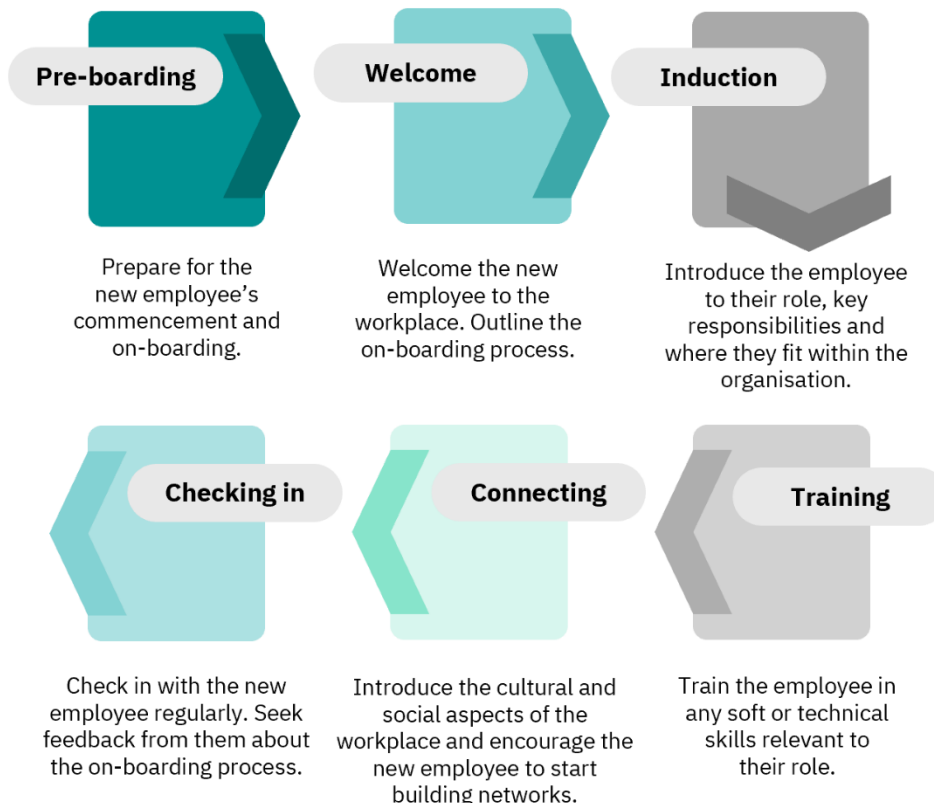
1

Use these principles to guide your on-boarding process.



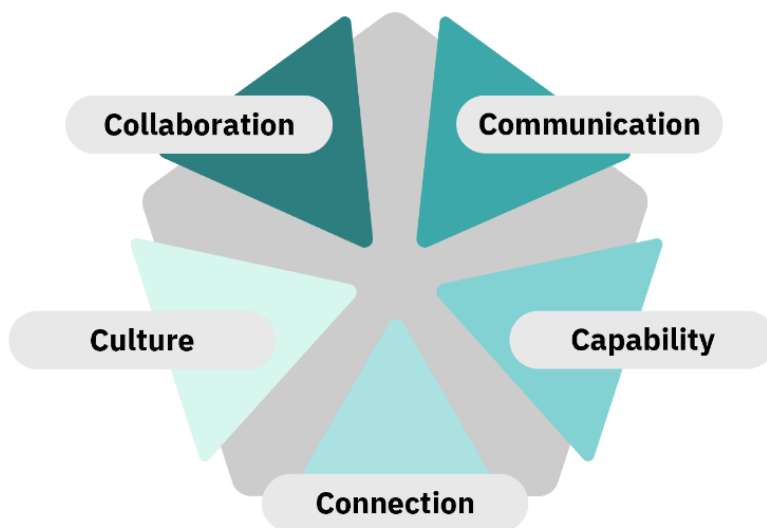
2

Refer to this example structure for ideas on how to make your on-boarding process more veteran-inclusive.



Guiding Principles:

There are several principles that underpin a veteran-inclusive on-boarding process. These principles are beneficial for all employees but are particularly relevant to veterans. They should be applied throughout your on-boarding process.



Communication

Ensure that communication to new employees is clear and consistent. Provide clear explanations of the new employee's role, responsibilities and required training.

Veterans will be used to a high level of clarity around their role and responsibilities. As a result, the move to a more flexible civilian work environment can require veterans to adapt. Good communication can help ease this process.

Capability

Invest in your new employees' capabilities. This may involve training and the development of knowledge and skills relevant to the role.

Members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) undergo constant training and have regular opportunities for growth. It is important to prioritise capability development for veteran employees. This helps veteran employees to build confidence in applying their valuable skills and experience to civilian roles.

Connection

Facilitate socialisation and relationship building between your new employee and their colleagues. This can involve both formal and informal interaction. These connections can support a sense of belonging in the workplace.

Camaraderie and teamwork are central to the culture of the ADF. It can therefore be particularly important to support veteran employees to build connections in the civilian workplace.

Culture

Emphasise and demonstrate your organisation's culture, values and mission. You should also communicate how the employee's role supports the organisation's wider purpose.

This helps new employees to:

- work and collaborate effectively
- develop a commitment to their role
- build relationships in the workplace.

The ADF is driven by a set of values and a strong sense of purpose. It can therefore be particularly important for veteran employees to be aware of your organisation's values and purpose.

Collaboration

Work with the new employee to tailor the on-boarding process to their strengths and needs. This may include consulting or collaborating with the new employee to deliver on-boarding in the way that best suits them.

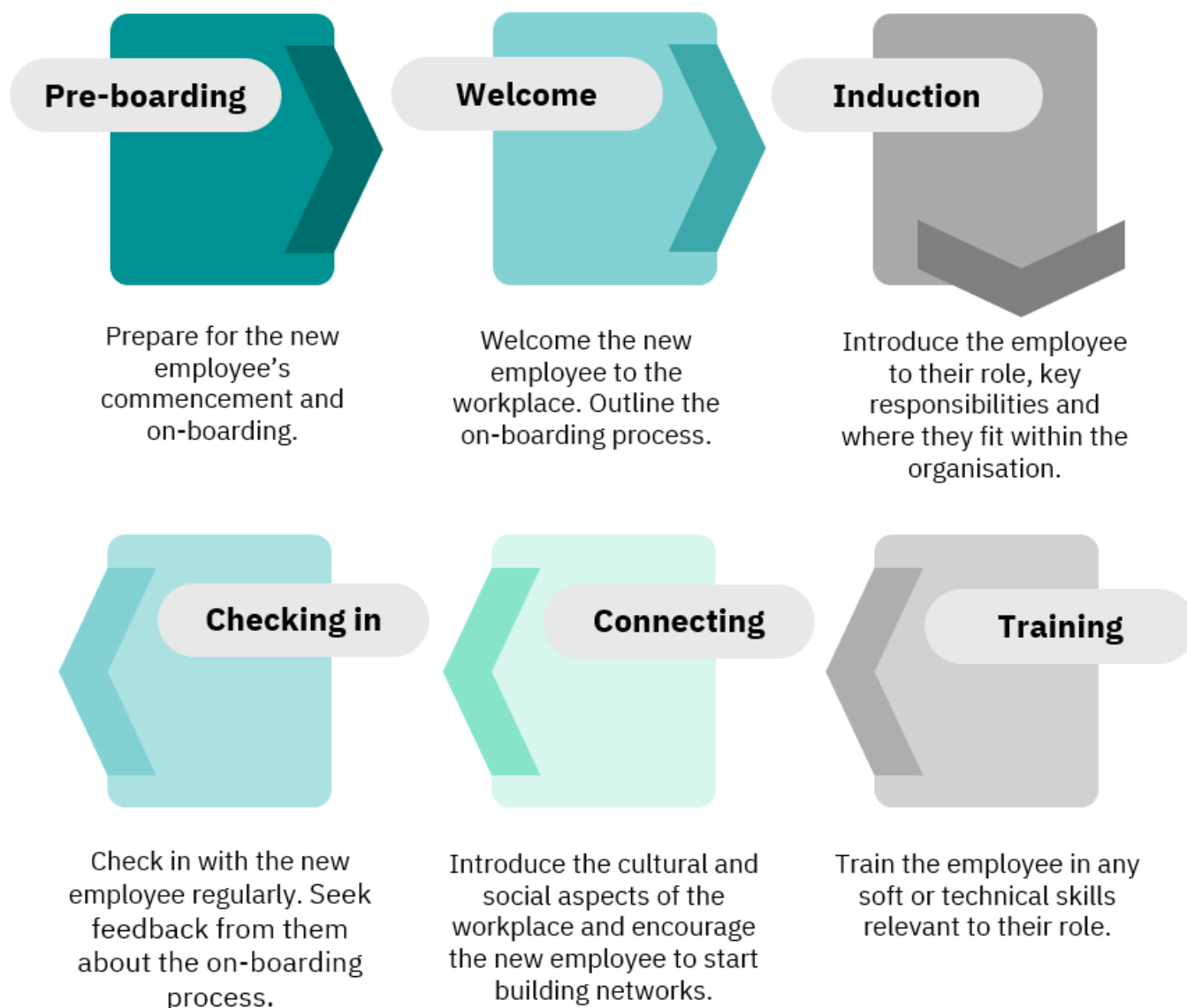
To do this, you should build into your on-boarding structure opportunities to tailor the process to the individual.

Example on-boarding process:

On-boarding can look different in every workplace. However, there are some common features that most employers can incorporate into their on-boarding.

The graphic below shows a structured on-boarding process that can be tailored for veteran employees. The process has six phases.

Each phase includes practical actions you can take to make your on-boarding process more veteran-friendly.





Pre-boarding

Prepare for the new employee's commencement and on-boarding.

Some veterans may not have worked in a civilian role before. Clearly communicating expectations prior to commencing the job can support a positive transition.



Prior to starting

After job acceptance

Actions

After the job has been offered and accepted, clearly communicate next steps. This should include:

- the start date
- when they will receive their contract
- who they should contact if they have questions
- when the new employee can expect to hear from you next.

It is also important to:

- offer to support your new hire if they have any issues or questions relating to their contract
- provide your new employee with an opportunity to discuss any flexible working arrangement requirements and request workplace adjustments if needed.

Pre-boarding (continued)

First day preparation

Before they start, give the new employee practical and detailed information to help them navigate their first day. It may be helpful to refresh your knowledge of veteran-inclusive workplace practices.

Actions

To enhance the pre-boarding phase for veterans, you can:

- ✓ familiarise yourself with your new employee's ADF skills and experience, and how these will translate into your organisation
- ✓ review any workplace policies that are relevant to veteran employees, such as your Reservist Policy
- ✓ liaise with your veteran support officer to plan for the on-boarding process (*if applicable*)
- ✓ re-familiarise yourself with your organisation's veteran training package (*if applicable*).

It is important to provide new employees with:

- ✓ a clear start date and time
- ✓ workplace dress code, with examples of appropriate attire
- ✓ the workplace location, access and parking availability
- ✓ anything the new employee must do to prepare for starting work.

Priority action

Communicate the detail

Clearly communicate what is expected of the new employee on or before their first day. Such as:

- procedures surrounding the employment contract
- a clear start date, time and location
- uniform or equipment requirements
- the workplace dress code.

Be specific and practical about what the employee is expected to do.



Welcome

Welcome the new employee to the workplace and outline the on-boarding process.

It is important for all new employees to feel welcome in the workplace. Veterans can benefit from clear communication about how the on-boarding process will take place.



Day 1

First day

Actions

To enhance the welcome phase for veterans, you can:

- provide an on-boarding schedule or timeline and talk through it with your new employee
- provide a 'welcome pack' containing policies, information, training details, staff contact details and other relevant resources
- conduct an office tour
- organise a team meet and greet introducing colleagues and their roles
- support your new employee to set up their workstation and log in to the relevant systems
- facilitate an introduction with senior leaders
- direct your new veteran employee to any veterans' initiatives you have in place. This may include veterans' groups or committees, mentoring or career development programs.

Priority action

Outline the structure of the on-boarding process

It is important to clearly communicate the structure of the on-boarding process to new employees. You can:

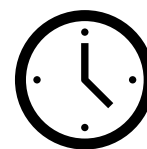
- provide a clear timeline of the on-boarding process (this may be in the form of a checklist or itinerary)
- talk through the process with the employee.



Induction

Introduce the new employee to their role, key responsibilities and where they fit within the organisation.

The ADF is a structured, hierarchical environment. The ADF's work is driven by values and a strong sense of purpose. It is important for veteran employees to understand the structure of the organisation. They will benefit from clearly understanding how their work connects to the organisation's wider purpose and values.



Week 1

Organisation induction

Actions

To enhance the organisation induction for veterans, you can:

- provide training on workplace structure and expectations
- explain your workplace policies and regulations
- explain the organisation's mission, culture and values
- discuss how the new employee's role relates to wider organisational mission and values
- provide information about your organisation and industry
- provide a timeline of the organisation's development
- provide an organisational chart showing where the new employee's role sits in the larger organisation
- provide information about ongoing support arrangements available to employees, including veteran-specific supports.

Induction (continued)

Members of the ADF are driven by a strong sense of responsibility and purpose, as well as clear expectations for performance and career progression. It can be helpful to clearly outline these elements in civilian roles.

Role induction

Actions

To enhance the role induction for veterans, you can:

- outline the key expectations for the employee in their role
- outline the employee's responsibilities, tasks and objectives
- identify the key relationships relevant to the role (i.e. who they will work with and how)
- establish standards and protocols for performance management (e.g. scheduled meetings, performance reviews, criteria for assessment)
- explain how employees can seek support to help them meet expectations
- the specific skills each employee needs to successfully perform their role.

Priority action

Clearly outline expectations

Be specific and practical about what the employee is expected to do. It is also important to show how the employee's role connects to your organisation's purpose. This will help veteran employees to adapt.

Clearly communicate:

- the responsibilities of their role
- expectations for the employee's performance
- how performance will be measured
- the relevance, meaning and value of the employee's work to the broader purpose of your organisation.



Training

Train the employee in any soft or technical skills relevant to the role.

Some veterans may lack experience in the civilian workplace and associated technical or soft skills. However, they have strong transferable skills and are quick learners.



Months 1-6

Skills training

Actions

To enhance the training phase for veterans, you can:

- work with the employee to identify their strengths and how they can be best utilised
- work with the employee to identify any skills gaps
- invest in technical skills training, where required. For example, you may need to provide essential IT training in your company's systems.

Priority action

Provide technical and role-specific training

Identify any gaps in employees' technical or role-specific skills. Endeavour to support employees to develop these skills during the onboarding process. This may involve providing formal training or assisting employees to learn new skills on the job.

For more information about training throughout an employee's career, see **Veteran employee career development**.



Connecting

Introduce the social and cultural aspects of the workplace and encourage the new employee to start building networks.

It is helpful for all new employees to foster the building of connections and socialisation within the workplace. The civilian workplace may be an unfamiliar environment, distinct from the culture of the ADF so some veterans may benefit from additional guidance



Months 1-6

Connecting in the workplace

Actions

To enhance the connecting phase for veterans, you can:

- ✓ outline the cultural and communication norms in the workplace
- ✓ hold unstructured social events (e.g. morning teas, team lunches)
- ✓ organise a structured team-building activity
- ✓ facilitate opportunities for the employee to engage with others in the wider organisation (e.g. through social events, working with different staff/teams)
- ✓ introduce your new veteran employee to your organisation's veterans' group or committee, or other diversity groups and committees (*if applicable*)
- ✓ introduce the new employee to your mentoring program (*if applicable*).

Priority action

Provide opportunities for networking

Support the new employee to connect with others in the workplace. You can provide networking opportunities by:

- holding social events
- making introductions



Checking in

Check in with the new employee regularly. Seek feedback from them about the on-boarding process.

It is important to regularly check in with the new employee. This allows you to seek feedback on their progress and address any gaps that might arise over the course of on-boarding.



First year

Employee review

Actions

To enhance this process for veterans, you can:

- ☑ be clear about how you will provide feedback to your employee on their performance and progress
- ☑ establish avenues for the employee to provide feedback on their on-boarding and seek further support, if needed
- ☑ check in with the employee about their wellbeing and progress with the responsibilities of their role
- ☑ provide opportunities for further or repeated training, if needed
- ☑ hold regularly scheduled and formal meetings. This provides a structure in which to check the employee's progress, answer questions and address issues.
- ☑ conduct ad-hoc check-ins with new employees. This can help to build rapport and a positive workplace environment.

Priority action

Provide regular feedback

Provide regular and constructive feedback to help employees meet expectations. Ensure that feedback is informed by an understanding of veterans' Defence and transition experiences. Feedback should account for both the challenges that some veterans may face during transition, and veterans' unique and valuable strengths.