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A perspective on your handbook

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Fun Fact:

Reading 15 minutes a day puts you in the Top 1% of Learners in the world.

Tom Thomas



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Handbook vs Procedure Manual

HANDBOOK

- The handbook familiarizes employees with basic college policies and programs.
- Outlines the general expectations of the college.
- Provides general overview of how the college/ your department operates.



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Handbook vs Procedure Manual

PROCEDURE MANUAL

- Procedure Manual details specifically how work should be done.
- Procedure Manuals are much more detailed and department specific (recreation, intercollegiate sports, recruiting and travel, fitness center, etc.).
- Details processes to meet expectations.



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Handbook vs Procedure Manual

- The handbook is your rulebook.
- The Procedure Manual is your playbook.
- They serve different purposes but work in tandem with each other.



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Handbook vs Procedure Manual

Handbook

Procedure Manual

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All purchases must be made through approved official department purchase orders. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorized personnel may complete purchase orders (PO). • PO's must include detailed description and exact cost of items. • PO's must be approved by the AD before purchase. |
|--|--|



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Why a Handbook?

- Advantages?
- Purpose?
- Protection?
- Benefit to employers and employees?



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Why a Handbook?

- **A REFERENCE**
- **MOTIVATION/INITIATOR**
- **CONFIDENCE**
- **CONSISTENCY**
- **PROTECTION**



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Why a Handbook?

A REFERENCE



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As a Reference

- Need information, go to the handbook.
- With a handbook, everyone knows the rules of the workplace.
- When an employee breaks a rule, you can refer to the handbook. It helps make enforcement and discipline easier.



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MOTIVATION



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As a Motivator

- A handbook might include information about history and goals.
- A handbook can give employees a sense of being a part of something larger.
- It can build a sense of pride, keeping employees excited about the department and the success of the campus.



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CONSISTENCY



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Consistency

- A handbook helps ensure that people across the organization understand operation and handle issues consistently.

It should provide a

consistent framework

for people to follow.



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Consistency

- A handbook shouldn't be an "Instructional guide" on how to manage or deal with every conceivable issue.
- Consistent framework will be a positive hallmark of your tenure.



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PROTECTION



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Protection

- In most states, winning an unemployment claim requires proof that the employee was on notice of a certain rule and had been warned that violating the rule would lead to disciplinary action.
- A well-written handbook may be key to a successful defense of unemployment, improper termination, or other legal claims.



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Handbooks

WHAT'S INCLUDED?



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What's Included?

- Welcome and introduction.
- Purpose of handbook.
- Mission statement.
- Statement of priorities.
- Background information about the department and college.



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What's Included?

- Benefits - (HR information).
- Suggestion and complaint procedures.
- Workplace rules and policies.
- Standards of conduct.
- Employee's role and responsibilities.



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What's Included?

- Employer's role and responsibilities.
- Hours of work.
- Lunch periods and breaks? Ha!
- Overtime policy.
- Attendance and punctuality.



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What's Included?

- Time card information.
- Payday.
- Wage and performance reviews.
- Resignation or termination info.
- Summary and acknowledgment disclaimers (reviewed by your legal counsel).



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WARNING
WARNING
WARNING



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Protection

- Handbooks can create unintentional Employment Contracts.
- If you're not careful in the wording in your handbook, it may be considered a binding contract.



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Protection

SO, WHAT DO WE DO?!?!



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Avoiding Claims

- State that the handbook serves as a guide and is not a contract. It doesn't promise, directly or indirectly, a term of employment.
- Make sure that the handbook is carefully worded to avoid binding language and reserve the right to revise the handbook at any time.



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Include a Disclaimer

- Include a concise piece of language that clearly says that your handbook is not an employment contract.
- **This Handbook does not represent contractual terms of employment. It should serve as a guideline of policies which may be subject to periodic review and change.**



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HOW DO WE WRITE THIS?



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Effective Publishing Methods

- Select the size, shape and format of your handbook.
- If it is too small, it will probably get lost.
- If it is too big, it will probably be put somewhere out of the way and rarely consulted.
- Typical handbooks range from 5" x 7", to 8 1/2" x 11".



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Effective Publishing Methods

What about the language and style?



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Effective Writing Style

This is an official document for your employees and you want them to read and comprehend it.

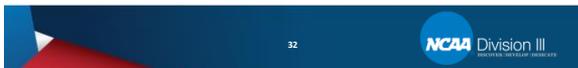
- Make it easy to read, but not too informal.
- Keep sentences short in length.
- Limit discussion of any subject to one page or less.
- Use drawings, charts, and cartoons as much as possible.
- Leave plenty of white space on each page.



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Effective Writing Style

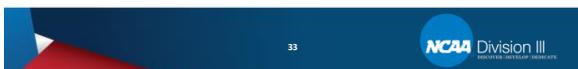
- Limit the size of the handbook. Don't make it complicated.
- Use a personal rather than an informal style. (Instead of saying "Employees will be paid on a bi-weekly basis," say "You will be paid every two weeks").



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Effective Design Style

Design Tips



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Effective Design Style

- Do you want the cover to be colorful?
- Do you want to include the college or department logo or motto on the cover?
- Do you want the printing limited to black and white, or do you want different colors of ink?
- Do you want colored paper for the pages?



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Effective Design Style

- Do you want drawings or photographs in your book (Make sure they are good quality and print well)?
- Do we highlight what we want people to see (what we think is important)?



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SUSTAINABILITY



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Publishing Options

- Forgo paper altogether by providing your handbook in an electronic form.
- Use a format that everyone can read, but that only you can edit (pdf).



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Handbook Ideas and Examples

[Cortland State Athletics](#)

[Washington College Athletics](#)

[Wooster College Athletics](#)

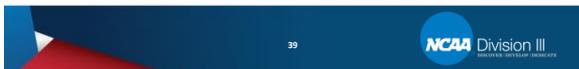


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Handbook Ideas and Examples

Addendum and/or Exhibits

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| New Employees | Orientation |
| | Welcome Packet |
| | Checklist |
| | Mentor Program |
| Exit Interview Tasks | |



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Final Considerations

- A handbook should be tailored to your organization and should reflect how you conduct business.
- Handbooks that contain typos, are copied askew, are out of date, contain inapplicable policies and look sloppy or unprofessional send a message that you don't really care.



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Final Considerations

- No handbook works if employees do not have easy access to it and you cannot "prove" an employee received and understood that he or she was required to abide by it.
- Include a signed acknowledgement form that your handbook was received, read, and understood.



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Final Considerations

- Refer to the handbook yourself, at department meetings and in individual meetings with your employees.
- Modeling this type of behavior will lend a sense of acceptance to using the handbook.



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Final Considerations

- Review your handbook regularly and refer to your human resources office for compliance.
- Review changes, as they are made, with your entire department.
- Have your athletics direct report (ADR), HR, and legal counsel review and approve your handbook.

