

Onboarding and Training New Staff While Working Remotely During a Global Pandemic

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1. Background

The University of Kansas Cancer Center (KUCC) has a robust onboarding and training program for new employees; however, prior to the global pandemic, the majority of onboarding and training was provided in person with no virtual training options. We were not equipped to conduct training and onboarding in the remote setting. The development of additional training methods utilizing online training platforms, virtual training meetings, and recorded training sessions were required in order for new staff to feel supported while most clinical trials office (CTO) staff were working remotely.

2. Goals

- Transfer our standard operating procedures (SOPs) and guidance documents to the smart learning management solution, SABA
- Record virtual training sessions for new employees and investigators, in order to generate a recorded training library for new and seasoned employees
- Upload additional guidance and training to the CTO intranet site to provide a centralized location for staff to access information while working remotely
- Collect user feedback via REDCap survey, six to eight weeks following employee start date, to continue to improve virtual onboarding and new employee satisfaction

3. Solutions and Methods

The initial step was to gain access to virtual training platforms such as Skype, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams, which would allow us to screen share and present training materials, while utilizing the video option to engage new employees. We transferred all of our SOPs and guidance documents into SABA, where staff are required to complete a five-question knowledge check to assess their understanding of the content. CTO new employee orientation was hosted via Zoom and recorded for future staff that were hired during the pandemic. To support our investigators, we created a dedicated investigator page on our CTO intranet site that included recorded PowerPoint trainings, resources, and a handbook that can be accessed electronically. We also offered virtual training sessions quarterly, to keep staff engaged and continue to provide support while working remotely. These training sessions were saved in an electronic training folder for staff and new hires to access.

4. Outcomes

In 2020, 35 new employees were hired and onboarded to the CTO at KUCC during the global pandemic. Feedback was collected via a REDCap survey on the remote onboarding experience in hopes to improve our methods. Overall, the response was positive; our poster details these results.

5. Lessons Learned

Category: Training, Quality Assurance, Remote Monitoring, and Auditing – Work in Progress

We have learned that we need to find additional training options for staff who do not enjoy learning virtually and incorporate methods to effectively train based on all learning styles. This will allow for a more well-rounded onboarding and training program that includes virtual and in-person training utilizing audio, visual, and kinesthetic methods. The following feedback will be used to improve our processes:

- Colleagues not using their video during a training session
- Internet connection issues
- Lack of in-person shadowing in clinic
- Too much time between training and application of the task

We are working toward transferring our core competencies to a virtual training platform utilizing SABA. We also plan to collaborate with the University of Kansas Medical Center (KUMC) to standardize computer-generated training across the university campuses.