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Assistant Onboarding Guide

(Licensed & Unlicensed Support Staff)

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Purpose

This guide outlines a structured onboarding process for new support staff in financial advisory teams, including both Licensed Assistants (registered individuals) and Unlicensed Administrative Assistants. It clarifies role expectations, compliance boundaries, and training for essential tools. Like the advisor guide, this assistant guide is designed for reuse and customization, so advisors or branch managers can efficiently onboard each new team member with consistent results. It includes checklists, defined workflows, and editable templates (scheduling scripts, checklists, role worksheets) to get assistants up to speed in a Canadian wealth management context.

Informational Only. Not Legal, Regulatory, Tax, or Compliance Advice

This guide is provided for general educational purposes to support advisor onboarding. It is **not** legal, regulatory, tax, accounting, or compliance advice and should not be relied upon as such. Obtain advice from qualified counsel and your firm's Compliance team regarding your specific facts, products, and supervisory structure.

Role Clarity: Permitted vs. Prohibited Tasks

Start by clearly defining the assistant's role and responsibilities, especially distinguishing what unlicensed vs. licensed staff can do. This prevents compliance issues and sets expectations:

Unlicensed Assistants (Non-registered Staff)

These team members are not registered with CIRO or securities regulators, so their activities must be strictly non-advisory and non-trading. Under Ontario securities law (Section 25 of the OSA), an unregistered assistant cannot handle trades or provide investment advice to clients. Their role is purely supportive and administrative. Permitted tasks typically include answering and directing client calls, scheduling appointments, preparing paperwork or reports for client meetings, processing account forms for signature, handling incoming/outgoing mail, updating basic client information (like address changes), and organizing client files. They may also assist with marketing activities (sending newsletters, organizing seminars) and internal office management. However, they must not discuss specific investment products or

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strategies with clients, make recommendations, or solicit trades – any inquiry of that nature must be referred to a licensed advisor. Additionally, unlicensed staff cannot approve account openings or perform any activity that requires registration (e.g. they can help fill a form, but a licensed advisor must review and sign it). It's critical to communicate these boundaries on day one, so the assistant isn't put in an uncomfortable or non-compliant position. Provide a written "Task Permissions" list for unlicensed assistants, detailing Do's and Don'ts.

Licensed Assistants (Registered Support Staff)

Some assistants hold a license (such as IFIC/CSC completed and registered as a Dealing Representative or IIROC Investment Representative). These individuals are registered representatives under the firm and thus Approved Persons with regulators. A licensed assistant can perform certain client-related activities under supervision, but their function is still generally to support a lead advisor rather than build their own client base. According to CIRO/MFDA guidance, licensed assistants are restricted to sales support activities only – they cannot operate as full advisors or open their own client accounts. For instance, a licensed assistant may accept and process unsolicited trade orders from clients of the advisor they support (since they are registered to handle trades). They can discuss account details with clients and provide information like account balances or status of transactions. They might also help in preparing investment recommendations or financial plans, but any recommendation to the client must be delivered by or approved by the lead advisor. Importantly, even licensed assistants cannot make suitability determinations or complete the KYC process on their own gathering KYC data can be done collaboratively, but the ultimate approval and review must be by a qualified advisor or branch manager. They also cannot sign off as the advisor on official documents or account forms. Essentially, being licensed broadens the administrative support they can provide (like trading and detailed client discussions) but does not allow them to act independently as an advisor. They remain in a support role with a defined scope. For example, IIROC categorizes many licensed assistants as "Investment Representatives" who can trade but not advise. Make sure any licensed assistant knows their category and its limits. If the assistant is on track to become an advisor, clarify that further licensing (e.g. upgrade to Registered Representative) and possibly courses like Wealth Management Essentials are required to expand their duties.

Role Definition Worksheet

As part of onboarding, use a "Role Definition" worksheet to outline the specific tasks assigned to the assistant, who they report to, and what decisions they can or cannot make. For instance, it might list: *"Can call clients to gather missing information on forms; Cannot answer client questions about whether an investment is good or not – must refer to advisor."* Both the new assistant and the supervising advisor should review and sign this document to acknowledge understanding. This not only educates the assistant but also reminds the advisor of how to properly utilize their support staff. Regularly reinforce these boundaries – as the advisor delegates tasks, they should explicitly state whether something is within the assistant's allowed duties.

Finally, discuss career path (if applicable). If the assistant is unlicensed but interested in becoming licensed, outline the steps and timeline (e.g. passing the CSC exam, getting registered) and that until then they must stick to unlicensed tasks. Clarity at the outset will foster a better working relationship and keep the team in compliance.

HR Onboarding and Workplace Requirements

Just like any new employee, an assistant must complete general HR onboarding. However, in Canada (and specifically Ontario), there are some requirements to highlight:

Employment Standards & New Hire Documentation

Provide the assistant with information about their rights and the employment standards. In Ontario, employers are required to give all new employees a copy of the *Employment Standards Act (ESA) poster* within 30 days of hireontario.ca. Ensure this poster (which outlines basic rights like minimum wage, hours of work, overtime, vacation, termination, etc.) is given to the assistant or displayed prominently. Have them sign an acknowledgment of receipt. If your firm operates in multiple provinces, provide the equivalent provincial employment standards info. Additionally, have the assistant complete other standard HR forms: federal and provincial TD1 tax forms for income tax withholding (the CRA mandates that TD1 forms be collected when an individual starts a new job to determine tax deductions), direct deposit banking info for

payroll, and any benefit enrollment forms if the firm offers benefits. Verify you've obtained a copy of their Social Insurance Number (SIN) as required for payroll records.

Policy Training (HR and Safety)

New assistants should be introduced to the firm's workplace policies such as the *Code of Conduct, Anti-Harassment and Violence Policy, Privacy Policy,* and any other internal guidelines (IT usage policy, social media policy for employees, etc.). Many provinces require employers to have a Workplace Harassment policy and to train employees on it. Ensure the assistant reads these policies and perhaps attends an HR orientation or e-learning on topics like respectful workplace and privacy. Document their completion.

Health and Safety Training

All workers in Canada are entitled to a safe workplace and in Ontario (for example) there is mandatory basic health and safety awareness training. Make sure the assistant completes the Ontario Ministry of Labour's Worker Health & Safety Awareness 4-step training, which is required under Regulation 297/13. This training educates them on their rights (like the right to refuse unsafe work), the duties of employers and workers, common hazards, and the internal responsibility system. It is often available as a free online module and results in a certificate retain this in their file. Also, if your firm has any specific emergency procedures (fire drills, building security, ergonomic guidelines for office workers), cover those in the first week. Even though an assistant works in an office environment, they should know about ergonomics (proper workstation setup), what to do in case of fire (exits and meeting points), who the First Aid attendants are, etc. If there are additional required trainings due to your specific setting (for instance, Quebec has a linguistic policy Bill 101 training, or federally regulated workplaces have different requirements), ensure those are scheduled.

Work Hours and Timekeeping

Explain the assistant's work schedule, breaks, and overtime policy. Under ESA laws, there are daily and weekly limits to hours (e.g. typically max 8 hours/day and 44/week in Ontario before overtime kicks in, unless an agreement exists). Make sure they know how to track their time if required (especially if they're hourly). If your firm expects occasional overtime or evening seminar support, clarify how that time will be

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compensated (time off in lieu or overtime pay as per law). This is important for staying compliant with employment laws and for the assistant's understanding.

Payroll and Benefits Orientation

Briefly, let the assistant know when paydays are, how to access their pay stubs, and whom to contact for payroll questions. If they are eligible for benefits (health insurance, etc.), give an overview and timeline for enrollment. Also mention any RRSP matching or pension plan eligibility if the firm offers it, plus any other perks (transit passes, education reimbursement) a well-informed employee is more engaged. While these are not compliance issues, they are part of a smooth onboarding that makes the assistant feel welcomed and taken care of.

By covering HR fundamentals early, you not only meet legal requirements but also build goodwill. It shows the firm is organized and respects the employee's well-being. Use an HR Onboarding Checklist to ensure you've covered: ESA poster given, TD1 forms completed, safety training done, policies acknowledged, and all documents filed. Typically, the HR or office manager will handle much of this, but as the hiring advisor, stay involved to show support.

Tools and Systems Training (CRM, Workflow, Communication)

Assistants are often the ones in the trenches managing the day-to-day operations of an advisory practice. Training them on the tools and systems is crucial for efficiency and accuracy. Focus on the following areas:

CRM (Client Relationship Management) System

The assistant will likely be a power-user of the CRM, handling data entry and upkeep. Train them on how to navigate client records inputting new client information, updating contact details, recording client interactions or service requests, and retrieving information quickly when the advisor asks for it. Show them how to log call notes and set tasks or reminders (e.g. follow up for a client's document). Explain any tagging or categorization your team uses (such as marking client types, important dates like client birthdays or renewal dates). Emphasize the importance of CRM data for

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compliance (e.g. notes in CRM can serve as evidence of advice or instructions, and KYC details must be updated in CRM). If the CRM integrates with other systems (like an email or marketing tool), cover those features too. Use scenarios to practice: for example, "A client emails a new address please update it in CRM and initiate an address change form; now log an activity that you did this and set a reminder to verify the change in 1 week." Provide a CRM usage guide or cheat sheet for reference. Over the first few weeks, audit some of their entries to ensure quality and provide feedback.

Workflow and Task Management

Many advisory teams use workflows for recurring processes whether within the CRM or via a separate tool or even checklists. If your firm has an established client onboarding process, walk the assistant through each step they need to handle (e.g. preparing welcome kits, scheduling follow-up calls, ensuring compliance signoffs). If you use a task management system (maybe something like Asana, Trello, or a built-in CRM task board), train them on adding tasks, updating status, and managing deadlines. Assistants often become the "traffic controller," so they should be comfortable monitoring workflows for things like account transfers, trades pending settlement, or documents awaiting signatures. If the assistant is licensed and can enter trades, train them on the trade entry system as well but if unlicensed, their workflow might be to prepare trade tickets for the advisor's approval. Teach them how to generate standard reports (e.g. an upcoming client review report or pending tasks report) if applicable.

Calendar and Email Management

Assistants frequently manage the advisor's calendar and email, at least partially. Outline your expectations here: Will the assistant be scheduling all client meetings? If so, they need access to the advisor's calendar and perhaps to clients' preferred meeting times. Show them how to create appointments (ensuring no double-booking), set up meeting invites (if using Outlook/Google Calendar) and include conference call or video links if needed. Provide any meeting scheduling protocols: for instance, always leave 15 min buffer between meetings, never double-book lunches, etc. A scheduling script template is invaluable for example, when calling or emailing a client to schedule a review: *"Hello, this is [Name] from [Firm]. I'm reaching out on behalf of [Advisor] to schedule your annual review meeting. Would next Tuesday at 10 AM or Wednesday at 2 PM work for you?"* The script ensures professionalism and consistency. Practice a few

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scheduling calls with the assistant or have them draft a couple of scheduling emails for you to review. Regarding email, decide if the assistant will have access to the advisor's inbox to help respond to simple inquiries. If yes, set clear rules: the assistant can draft replies to administrative questions (like "please find attached the form you requested") but should not reply to anything requiring advice or sensitive info. Many assistants flag important emails for the advisor and may even organize the inbox into folders. If using a shared team inbox or CRM email integration, cover that system.

Document Handling and Filing

Introduce the assistant to how documents are managed in your practice. This includes physical files (if you keep client paper files) and electronic document management. For physical documents: show the filing structure (client folders, alphabetical or by client number) and how to file statements, forms, signed documents, etc. Also cover retention policies (e.g. trade tickets must be kept X years, old files are archived after Y years). For electronic documents: if you have a network drive or a document management system (DMS), teach the proper way to scan and save files. For instance, you might require that all signed client forms are scanned to PDF and saved in a specific client folder on the server, with a naming convention like "2025-08-05 Account Transfer Form - John Doe". If you use specialized systems like DocuSign for e-signatures or a client vault (e.g. SideDrawer, Box, or ShareFile), train on sending documents for signature and storing the executed copies securely. Reinforce privacy and cybersecurity practices: no saving client info on personal devices or unapproved cloud services, always clear desk of sensitive papers, shred confidential waste. If the firm uses encryption for emails or a secure portal, ensure the assistant can use these tools when sending sensitive data to clients (like SIN, account numbers). Provide a Document Checklist for common tasks (e.g. for account opening: documents to prepare and send to compliance, copies to file, etc.).

Phone and Communication Systems

Whether the office uses a traditional phone system or VoIP, the assistant should learn how to transfer calls, conference in team members, and handle voicemail. Provide guidance on phone etiquette in a financial office: answering with a proper greeting, verifying identity before releasing account info over the phone, not discussing sensitive info loudly in open areas, etc. Many clients will first interact with the assistant when

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they call, so role-play a standard greeting and handling of frequent call types (like a client asking for an account balance or wanting to leave a message for the advisor). If the assistant will make outbound calls (scheduling, info gathering), train them on your call scripts (provided in templates). Emphasize how to authenticate clients on inbound calls for security (some firms have protocols like asking for date of birth or address). If your team uses internal chat (e.g. Microsoft Teams or Slack) and the assistant will interface with head-office departments (like operations or IT through those channels), get them set up and show them appropriate use. Also, cover handling of client complaints or issues a if client calls upset or with a complaint, the assistant should know to express empathy, gather details, and immediately escalate to the advisor or branch manager, rather than trying to handle it all themselves.

By giving comprehensive training on these tools, the assistant can significantly increase the productivity of the team. It's often helpful to assign another experienced assistant or the office administrator as a "mentor" for systems – someone the new assistant can shadow for a day to see how they organize their work or ask quick questions. Provide reference manuals or quick start guides for the software if available. Remember, a well-trained assistant who masters the tools can handle many time-consuming tasks for the advisor, freeing the advisor to focus on clients. It's worth investing the time up front to get them proficient. Use the Assistant Technology Training Checklist to mark off each system as they become comfortable, and encourage them to practice with dummy data if possible (for example, entering a test client in CRM, or creating a fake calendar entry) before doing real tasks.

Compliance Boundaries and Best Practices

Assistants, whether licensed or not, must adhere to strict compliance boundaries in a financial advisory setting. It's essential to train them on these boundaries and the why behind them, so they don't inadvertently create issues for the firm or themselves. Key points to cover:

Recordkeeping and Documentation

Assistants often handle paperwork and could be the last line of defense to catch errors. Train them on the importance of complete and accurate recordkeeping. For example,

when preparing forms for client signature, they should double-check that all required fields are filled and that the client and advisor have signed/dated appropriately. Incomplete forms can lead to compliance findings. They should maintain an audit trail: if they receive a client instruction via email or phone, the content of that instruction should be documented and saved (e.g., saved email or a call note in CRM). Explain the retention requirements for different documents and that regulators may review files during audits. Thus, everything should be filed in the correct place. Assistants should never dispose of documents outside of policy (for instance, shredding something they shouldn't). Teach them to timestamp and initial any manual logs or checklists they complete for compliance tasks (such as checking IDs for AML). Essentially, instill that "if it's not documented, it didn't happen" so they habitually document tasks and client communications.

Privacy and Confidentiality

Reiterate confidentiality obligations. The assistant will see sensitive client info (account numbers, net worth, SIN, etc.) daily. Under privacy laws like PIPEDA, this information must be protected. The assistant should never share client details with anyone outside the firm, and internally only discuss on a need-to-know basis. Provide practical rules: use client initials, not full names, on Post-it Notes or whiteboards that others might see; lock your computer when away from your desk; do not discuss clients in public areas (elevators, hallways, or outside of work). If someone calls claiming to be a client, the assistant should verify identity before revealing info. If someone calls asking for a client's information and they are not on file as authorized (e.g. a spouse not on the account or an accountant without authorization), the assistant must politely refuse and refer to the advisor. Also, cover the firm's clean desk policy if any basically that client files should be secured in locked cabinets when not in use, and nothing sensitive is left out overnight. On the digital side, ensure they use encrypted email or secure portals for sending client data (teach how to use email encryption if a client asks for a statement via email, for example). Explain that even within the firm, emails containing personal client info should be kept to a minimum use client ID numbers or initials in subject lines, etc., to minimize risk. They should also know what to do if they suspect a privacy breach (e.g., if they accidentally email the wrong person, or lose a USB drive with files) generally, report immediately to the compliance officer.

Client Interaction Rules

This is crucial. Provide scripts and guidelines for how an assistant should handle various client inquiries in compliance with regulations. For example, if a client asks, "Should I move my RRSP into this fund?" an unlicensed assistant must not answer even if they think they know the answer because that's advice. Instead, they should respond with something like, "That's a great question for [Advisor]. Let me take down your question and I will have [Advisor] get back to you shortly." Role-play scenarios: *Client:* "The market is crazy, should I sell everything?" *Assistant:* "I understand your concern. I'm not registered to provide advice on that, but I will make sure [Advisor] calls you as soon as possible to discuss your portfolio." Reinforce this golden rule: when in doubt, refer to the advisor. It protects both the assistant and the client. For licensed assistants, clarify what is allowed: e.g., they can take trade instructions (unsolicited orders) from clients but only within the products they're licensed for, and they must still inform the advisor of significant client activity. They cannot solicit trades or initiate recommendations themselves. And any order they do take must be properly documented and processed under supervision. As noted in an industry guidance, even licensed assistants cannot operate outside their category an IIROC Investment Representative (IR) can trade but not advise, and a Registered Representative (RR) can do both. Most licensed assistants are IRs, not full RRs, so they should not be making recommendations.

Signature and Approval Limits

Make it clear that assistants must not sign documents on behalf of clients or advisors. There have been compliance cases of assistants forging client initials or advisors delegating signing strictly prohibit this. If something needs the advisor's signature or review, the assistant can prep it, but the advisor must sign. Similarly, assistants shouldn't approve their own work that requires a second check e.g., if the assistant is licensed and fills a KYC form, a supervisor or advisor must approve it; the assistant alone approving KYC is not allowed. Explain the seriousness: falsifying signatures or acting beyond authority can lead to regulatory penalties and dismissal.

Surveillance and Mentoring

Let the assistant know that the firm will supervise their work as part of compliance. For example, email and communications might be monitored (the assistant should

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therefore avoid any casual commentary that could be misconstrued always be professional in writing). If the assistant is licensed, their trades and client interactions will be supervised by a senior advisor or branch manager. This is not to intimidate them, but to ensure they understand the structure it's normal in finance to have oversight. Encourage them to see compliance as an ally; if they are ever unsure about whether they can do something, they should ask the compliance officer or their supervisor first. This proactive communication is highly encouraged.

Training and CE for Assistants

If the assistant is licensed, remind them they also have Continuing Education obligations as per CIRO. They might need to complete courses each cycle just like advisors (for example, an IIROC-licensed IR or RR must do compliance and professional development credits; MFDA-licensed assistants need to fulfill CE too as Dealing Reps). Ensure they register for any firm-provided compliance training (many firms have annual trainings on topics like AML refresher, privacy, cybersecurity awareness). Even unlicensed staff often have to do annual compliance attestations or short trainings (e.g., acknowledging the Code of Ethics each year, completing privacy training). This keeps them in the loop and helps them understand the regulatory environment the team operates in.

A real-world anecdote or two can drive the point home for instance, mention that regulators have disciplined advisors when their assistants overstepped duties. The MFDA and IIROC have issued notices that assistants filling out KYC forms or handling client questions beyond their qualification is a common infraction. By educating now, we avoid those pitfalls.

Provide the assistant with a one-page "Assistant Do's and Don'ts" list to pin at their desk for quick reference (e.g., "Do: answer client calls professionally, update basic info, prepare forms; Don't: recommend investments, sign on client's behalf, discuss performance except to read what's on a statement," etc.). Regularly check in, especially in the first months, to ask if they've faced any situation where they were unsure what to do. This invites dialogue and coaching.

Finally, instill in them that compliance is everyone's responsibility. If they spot something wrong say they notice a form was filed incorrectly or a client told them

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something that wasn't documented they should feel empowered to speak up to the advisor or compliance. Assistants are often the eyes and ears of the office; their attentiveness can prevent issues. With these clear boundaries and practices, the assistant will become a reliable, compliant member of the team, contributing to the firm's integrity.

Shadowing and Mentorship Structure

To accelerate learning and integrate the assistant into the team, implement a shadowing and mentorship program from day one. This approach pairs the new assistant with experienced individuals so they can observe best practices, learn the firm's style, and build confidence in their duties.

Assign a Mentor

Typically, the advisor who hired the assistant will be their primary mentor in terms of task prioritization and understanding how the advisor likes things done. In addition, it's wise to assign a secondary mentor often another senior assistant or the office manager who can provide guidance on general procedures and be a go-to for questions. Let the new assistant know who these mentors are and encourage regular interaction. For example, the office manager might have a weekly 15-minute check-in with the new assistant to answer questions about firm procedures (since advisors are sometimes busy with clients). The mentoring relationship should be friendly and non-judgmental, so the assistant feels comfortable admitting what they don't know.

Shadowing Plan

In the first few weeks, have the assistant shadow various activities. For instance:

- Sit with a seasoned assistant or advisor during a client meeting or call (with client permission if it's a meeting). Beforehand, explain the meeting's context to the new assistant and afterwards debrief what happened. This helps them see how client interactions flow and what follow-up is needed after meetings.
- Shadow the advisor while they do daily routine tasks: reading emails, placing trades, writing client notes. The advisor can "think aloud" to explain their process. For example, "I received this client email asking for withdrawal I will

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forward it to you to prepare the necessary form and then I'll approve it. Here's how I decide what to do…" This real-time exposure is invaluable.

- Have the new assistant spend a half-day with each department relevant to their job: an hour with the Compliance officer to learn how paperwork is reviewed, an hour with Operations to see how account transfers or check deposits are processed, etc. Even a brief shadow in these areas helps them understand the bigger picture and build relationships with people they'll liaise with.

Mentor Observation

Conversely, let the assistant perform a task while the mentor shadows them. For instance, after some training, have them attempt to enter a mock trade or fill a sample form while the mentor watches and provides tips. Or have them practice a client call with the mentor listening in quietly, then give feedback. This supervised practice is crucial for skill development. New support staff benefit from shadowing experienced team members to learn procedures and client service skills.

Scheduled Check-Ins

Establish a schedule for regular check-ins during the onboarding period. In the first month, perhaps a brief daily huddle at the end of each day with the advisor or mentor to discuss what the assistant learned or any challenges. Moving into weeks 3–4, shift to a weekly one-on-one meeting. Use these meetings to review their progress on the onboarding checklist, clarify questions, and set goals for the next week ("Next week, you will lead the scheduling of all client annual reviews coming up let's plan how you'll do that."). Encourage the assistant to bring a list of questions or observations to these sessions. This structure of constant feedback loops prevents small issues from festering and reinforces learning.

Progressive Responsibility via Mentorship

As the assistant grows more comfortable, the mentor(s) should gradually step back in certain areas to let them operate independently, while still being available for support. For example, after shadowing how to prepare for client review meetings for a month, the assistant can take over prepping meeting packs themselves; the mentor then just reviews the pack before the meeting for a while, and eventually trusts the assistant to do it solo. This "I do, we do, you do" gradual transfer of responsibility builds

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competence. Document these steps in the Training Plan so it's clear when the assistant is expected to perform tasks without direct oversight.

Peer Learning

If possible, connect the new assistant with other assistants at the company (maybe via a group chat or monthly assistant team call) to share tips and experiences. There might be an established network or lunch-and-learn sessions where support staff discuss best practices. This peer support can be very helpful it's less formal than a manager-employee relationship and often new hires pick up practical tips (like Excel shortcuts for budget spreadsheets, or how to politely handle a persistent sales caller, etc.) from peers who recently went through similar learning curves.

Ongoing Mentorship

Mentorship shouldn't end after onboarding. Ideally, maintain a mentoring relationship for the first year. The assistant's role may evolve, and having a trusted mentor to consult will help them continuously improve. The mentor can also introduce higher-level concepts as the assistant masters the basics (e.g., teaching them more about compliance rationale, or including them in discussions about improving office processes).

By shadowing and mentoring, the new assistant will not only learn what to do, but also why it's done that way, and the subtleties of client service that aren't written in manuals. It accelerates their integration into the firm's culture and team. This supportive environment is key to retaining good assistants, as they feel invested in and part of the success of the practice.

Templates and Checklists for Assistants

Provide new assistants with a suite of templates, scripts, and checklists that they can use and adapt. These resources help standardize tasks and ensure nothing falls through the cracks as they learn the ropes:

Welcome Call/Email Script

A template script for the assistant to introduce themselves to clients (as appropriate). For example, an email script: *"Hello [Client Name], I'm [Assistant Name], and I've joined [Advisor]'s team to help provide you with excellent service. I'll be your point of contact for any administrative needs. It's a pleasure to meet you. Please feel free to reach out if you need something, and I will work closely with [Advisor] to take care of it."* This sets a professional tone and clarifies their role to clients. A phone script for answering calls could also be included: *"Good morning, [Firm Name], [Assistant Name] speaking. How may I assist you?"* along with guidance for common call types (see next item).

Phone Handling Scenarios & Scripts

Prepare a short script or decision tree for frequent call scenarios:

Client wants account balance

(Unlicensed assistant) "I can certainly assist with that. For security, may I verify a couple of details first? [Verify client]. Thank you. According to our latest records, your account value is approximately $X as of [date]. Would you like me to email you a statement or have [Advisor] follow up on this?" (If licensed, they can give factual info, but still no recommendations.)

Client asks for a withdrawal

"I'd be happy to help start that process. I will notify [Advisor] and prepare the necessary forms. We'll need your signature on a form; I can email or mail it to you. What amount and to which account did you need the funds? I will confirm any tax implications or fees with [Advisor] and get this moving today." Then the assistant knows to prepare a withdrawal form and inform the advisor.

Cold sales call from product provider

A script to politely handle unwanted solicitations so the assistant can be firm but professional (e.g., *"We're not interested, thank you. Please remove us from your call list."*). Include these in a "Phone Scripts" document.

Meeting Preparation Checklist

A step-by-step checklist for preparing a client review meeting for the advisor. For example: one week before the meeting confirm appointment and agenda with client; 2 days before print/provide portfolio statements, performance reports, KYC update form, any product illustrations or documents for signature; prepare a summary of client's recent transactions for advisor; on meeting day ensure boardroom booked, water/coffee ready, etc. With this checklist, even if the assistant is new, they can independently get everything ready. There could be an accompanying Meeting Agenda Template (as mentioned in the advisor guide) which the assistant can fill in with client-specific details for the advisor's use. The checklist ensures nothing is missed (like forgetting to include a required form or not booking the conference room).

New Account Opening Checklist

This covers all steps from receiving a new client's info to opening their accounts. For instance: create new client in CRM, prepare account applications (RRSP, TFSA, non-reg, etc. as needed), pre-fill KYC info if available, send DocuSign or hard copies to client, track receipt of signed forms, submit to compliance, follow up on account numbers, set up online access for client, send welcome kit. Assistants can tick off each item as it's done. This is crucial for licensed assistants involved in onboarding clients, but even unlicensed ones can manage many of these steps (except anything requiring advice like portfolio selection).

Task Tracking Sheet

If your firm is small or doesn't have a fancy ticket system, a simple Excel or Trello board template can be given to the assistant to track open tasks and requests. It might have columns: Date received, Task description, Who it's for (which advisor/client), Deadline, Status, Completed date. The assistant can keep this updated daily, and the advisor can review it together periodically. This prevents tasks from being forgotten, especially while the assistant is still learning to use more complex workflow software.

Role Definition Worksheet

As noted earlier, a document that explicitly lists the assistant's duties and limits. This might include a section for the advisor to add any custom tasks and for the assistant to

write down any areas they want training in. It can be revisited after a few months to update as the assistant takes on more. It ensures alignment of expectations.

Compliance Acknowledgment Form

A template for the assistant to sign off that they understand key compliance rules (e.g., "I acknowledge that I have read and understood the rules regarding confidentiality, unlicensed activity, and firm policies, and I agree to follow them."). While not strictly necessary, it's a good practice to document this understanding for the file. It can be part of the HR onboarding packet or separate.

Daily Routine Checklist

For brand new assistants, a sample daily routine can be helpful. For instance: "Every morning: check voicemail and emails for any client requests, check calendar for that day's meetings and prepare files, review previous day's pending tasks. Mid-day: process mail and couriers. End of day: confirm next day appointments and ensure paperwork ready, tidy desk, lock files." This kind of list helps them settle into a productive routine. They can customize it as they get comfortable.

Encourage the assistant to use and adapt these templates. They are meant to be working documents for example, the meeting prep checklist could have a blank line for any special task that might be unique to a client (like "print tax loss report if client is tax planning"). The assistant can add that for a specific case.

By providing these tools, you empower the assistant to take initiative and manage responsibilities systematically. It also signals that the firm has a high standard of organization and client care. As they become more experienced, the assistant might even suggest improvements to the templates a great sign of engagement. Always keep the master versions updated with any improvements, so the next new hire benefits from accumulated knowledge.

In summary, this Assistant Onboarding Guide, with its clear role definitions, HR compliance steps, thorough tools training, strict compliance guidelines, mentorship plan, and ready-to-use templates, will enable a new support staff member to become a valuable, trusted part of the advisor's practice in a short time. It ensures consistency,

protects the firm and clients via compliance adherence, and sets the stage for the assistant's growth and success within the team.

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Appendix

Assistant Training Plan Template

Assistant Name: _____

Position/Title: _____

Start Date: _____

Manager/Supervisor: _____

Training Schedule and Content Overview:

Company Orientation (Week 1)

- Company history, mission, and values overview
- Introductions to team members and key departments
- Office tour and overview of branch operations and facilities
- Set up system access (email, CRM, phone, document systems) and IT orientation

Regulatory & Compliance Foundations (Weeks 1–2):

- Code of Ethics & Standards of Conduct (firm and CIRO expectations)
- Role boundaries: licensed vs. unlicensed activities; escalation rules
- Confidentiality & Privacy (PIPEDA); secure handling of client data
- AML basics and ID verification support procedures (FINTRAC context)
- Records management: what to document; retention and destruction rules

Tools & Systems (Weeks 1–3)

- CRM: create/edit records, log activities, tasks, and run lists/reports
- Calendar/email: booking protocols, shared inbox workflow, signatures
- Document management: scanning, naming conventions, filing structure, e-signature workflows
- Phone system: transfers, conferencing, voicemail, call notes
- Security: password manager, VPN, clean desk, incident reporting

Client Service Skills (Weeks 2 – 4)

- Professional phone etiquette; client authentication steps
- Scheduling best practices and confirmation procedures
- Preparing meeting packs and post-meeting follow-ups
- Written communication standards (email tone, templates)

Operations & Administration (Weeks 2 – 5)

- New account paperwork preparation and routing
- Transfers/funding tracking; status updates and reminders
- Daily workboard/task management; weekly reporting rhythm
- Coordination with Compliance and Operations

Shadowing & Mentorship (Weeks 1 – 8)

- Shadow senior assistant on calls, document prep, and filing
- Observe advisor client meetings (with permission) and debrief
- Gradual handoff of responsibilities with mentor review

Checkpoints & Evaluation

- Weekly 1:1 check-ins during Weeks 1–4; bi-weekly Weeks 5–8
- 30-Day review: tool proficiency and policy understanding
- 60-Day review: independent execution of core responsibilities
- 90-Day assessment: sign-off for full role execution within scope

Assistant HR Onboarding Checklist

Purpose

Ensure all HR requirements are completed before and during Week 1.

☐ Employment Standards & Documents

- Employment Standards information provided and acknowledged
- Federal/provincial TD1 forms completed; SIN verified for payroll
- Direct deposit information collected; benefits enrollment (if applicable)
- Offer/contract signed; confidentiality and policy acknowledgments signed

☐ Policy & Safety Training

- Code of Conduct, Privacy, IT Use, Harassment/Violence policies reviewed
- Health & Safety awareness training completed; certificate filed
- Emergency procedures reviewed (exits, first aid, incident reporting)

☐ Access & Equipment

- Email, calendar, phone/voicemail configured
- Network, VPN, password manager set up
- CRM, document management, e-signature, and collaboration tools provisioned
- Workstation ready (hardware, peripherals, office supplies)

☐ Orientation & Scheduling

- Day 1 agenda provided; key introductions scheduled
- 30/60/90 training plan shared; mentor assigned

Assistant Technology Training Checklist

Purpose

Confirm proficiency in core systems.

☐ CRM

- Create/edit client records; update demographics
- Log calls/emails/meetings; attach documents
- Tasks/reminders; list/report generation

☐ Workflow/Tasks

- Use workflow templates; update statuses/owners
- Generate weekly task summary for advisor

☐ Calendar/Email

- Booking protocols; buffer rules; virtual links
- Shared inbox triage; admin responses within scope

☐ Documents & E-Signature

- Scan and save using naming conventions
- Assemble/sign via e-signature; file executed copies
- Retention and destruction procedures

☐ Phone & Communications

- Transfer/conference calls; voicemail management
- Client authentication steps; call notes in CRM

☐ Security

- Password manager/VPN; device lock practices
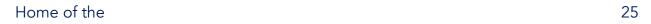- Clean desk; data breach reporting flow

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Document Checklist (General & Account Opening Support)

Purpose

Ensure accurate documentation and filing.

General

☐ Identity documents captured and stored securely
☐ Policy acknowledgments signed and filed • All client communications logged in CRM

Account Opening Support

☐ Applications pre-filled; KYC sections organized for advisor
☐ Required disclosures assembled; signature package prepared
☐ Submission to Compliance; approval tracking and filing
☐ Account numbers noted; online access instructions queued
☐ Welcome materials prepared and scheduled

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Meeting Preparation Checklist

Purpose

Standardize preparation for client meetings.

☐ One Week Prior

- Confirm appointment, attendees, and meeting format
- Confirm agenda; capture client questions

☐ Two Days Prior

- Compile statements, holdings, performance, and plan docs
- Pre-fill KYC update; verify contact details
- Prepare advisor briefing note (recent activity, issues, opportunities)

☐ Day of Meeting

- Room reserved or virtual link tested
- Meeting pack printed or digital folder ready
- Directions/arrival instructions sent (if in person)

☐ Post-Meeting

- Enter notes and tasks in CRM; send recap if directed
- Trigger signatures, transfers, or follow-ups as assigned

New Account Opening Checklist (Assistant Version)

Purpose

Support advisors; do not perform activities outside license/scope.

☐ Preparation

- Create new client shell in CRM; attach intake info
- Assemble correct account forms (RRSP/TFSA/Cash/Margin/Joint, etc.)
- Pre-fill known fields; leave advisor/KYC sections for completion

☐ Execution Support

- Send e-signature packets or arrange in-person signing
- Track signatures; follow up on missing items
- Submit package to Compliance; log submission and approval

☐ Post-Approval

- Confirm account numbers; update CRM
- Coordinate funding/transfer forms and track status
- Prepare welcome email/kit; schedule 30-day check-in

☐ Filing

- Scan and file executed documents per retention rules
- Ensure all artifacts are in the client electronic file

Daily Routine Checklist

Purpose

Establish consistent execution and documentation.

☐ Morning

- Triage voicemail and shared inbox; flag urgent items
- Review calendar; prepare materials for today's meetings
- Update task board; confirm priorities with advisor

☐ Midday

- Process mail/couriers; scan/file documents
- Enter call/email notes; advance workflows
- Check status of transfers/signatures; nudge as needed

☐ End of Day

- Confirm next-day schedule; prep meeting packs
- Secure files and devices; clean desk
- Update task board; list blockers for supervisor

Role Definition Worksheet

Purpose

Clarify responsibilities, reporting lines, and authority.

Assistant Name: _____

Role: Licensed / Unlicensed *(circle one)*

Supervisor: _____

Start Date: _____

Responsibilities (select/apply)

- [ ] Schedule and confirm client meetings
- [ ] Manage advisor calendar and shared inbox triage
- [ ] Prepare paperwork and meeting materials
- [ ] Provide factual account information to authenticated clients
- [ ] Prepare e-signature packets and file executed docs
- [ ] Enter notes and tasks in CRM; maintain data quality
- [ ] Track transfers/funding; update status reports

Limits and Escalation

- No investment recommendations or suitability discussions
- No trade instructions accepted unless licensed and within scope
- No KYC completion/approval without advisor review
- Escalate advice-seeking questions to advisor immediately

Assistant Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Compliance Acknowledgment Form

I acknowledge I have read and understand the firm's policies on confidentiality, privacy, permitted activities for my role, records management, and escalation procedures. I agree to always comply with these policies and applicable regulations.

Assistant Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Task Tracking Sheet Template

Purpose

Standardize task capture and reporting.

	Task: _____	Task: _____	Task: _____
Date Received			
Task Description			
For (Advisor/Client)			
Owner			
Due Date			
Status (Not Started / In Progress / Waiting / Complete)			
Completion Date			
Notes			

Welcome Call/Email Script

Purpose

Introduce assistant role and service scope.

Email

Subject

Welcome from [Advisor Name]'s Team

Body

Hello [Client Name],

My name is [Assistant Name]. I support [Advisor Name] with scheduling, documentation, and follow-ups. Please contact me for administrative requests; I will coordinate with [Advisor Name] to ensure timely responses.

Regards,

[Assistant Name]
[Firm Name]
[Phone]
[Email]

Phone Greeting

"Good [morning/afternoon], [Firm Name]. This is [Assistant Name]. How may I assist you?"

Scheduling Script Template

Purpose

Book reviews and follow-ups efficiently.

"Hello [Client Name], this is [Assistant Name] from [Firm Name] on behalf of [Advisor Name]. We would like to schedule your [annual review/follow-up]. Would [Option A: date/time] or [Option B: date/time] work better? If you prefer, I can arrange a virtual meeting link."

If declined: "No problem. What day and time generally work best? I will email options to confirm."

Phone Handling Scenarios & Scripts

Purpose

Provide compliant responses and escalation.

Balance Inquiry (factual)

"I can assist. For security, may I verify [items]? As of [date], your account value is approximately $[amount]. Would you like a statement emailed or a call from [Advisor Name] to discuss?"

Withdrawal Request

"I will prepare the request and notify [Advisor Name]. We will need your signed authorization. Do you prefer electronic signature or mail? What amount and destination account should we use? I will confirm any fees or tax considerations with [Advisor Name] and follow up today."

Cold Product Sales Call

"Thank you for reaching out. We are not pursuing new product presentations at this time. Please remove us from your distribution list."

Advice-Seeking Question (out of scope)

"That is a question for [Advisor Name]. I will document it now and arrange a prompt follow-up."

Task Permissions (Do's and Don'ts) – Unlicensed Assistants

Purpose

Define permitted activities and boundaries.

Do	Don't
• Schedule meetings; manage calendars and reminders • Update contact details and non-KYC demographics • Prepare paperwork for advisor review and signature • Provide factual information to authenticated clients • Log all interactions and documents in CRM	• Recommend securities, strategies, or allocations • Take or relay trade instructions • Complete or approve KYC independently • Sign for clients or advisors • Disclose confidential information without authorization

Assistant Do's and Don'ts (One-Pager)

Purpose

Reinforce best practices.

Do	Don't
• Always maintain confidentiality and data security • Document client interactions promptly and accurately • Follow written procedures and checklists consistently • Escalate questions outside your authority promptly • Keep supervisors informed of delays, risks, or errors	• Offer advice if not licensed or beyond license scope • Skip compliance steps or backdate documents • Store client data outside approved systems • Leave sensitive materials unsecured • Assume approval; obtain required signatures

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