

Career Development Conversations

Discussion Guide for Staff Members

Staff Member Tips

Why Hold Career Development Conversations?

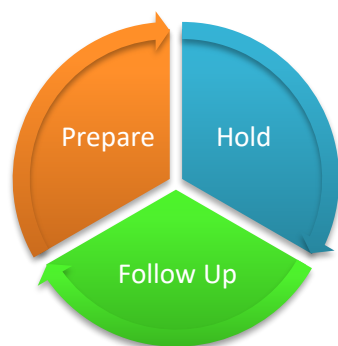
Talking to your manager about career goals is one of the most meaningful and results-driven activities you can perform as an employee. These conversations inspire reflection, illuminate possibilities, foster commitment and generate action. These will help you grow and develop while contributing to the organization. You are investing in your lifelong growth and well-being and your manager can help.

When Do You Hold Career Conversations?

The annual performance review is a great time to talk about the future, but it shouldn't be the only time. The most effective career conversations can happen in 15 minutes or less. Regular formal and informal career-focused conversations should take place throughout the year to identify goals, develop action plans and discuss progress.

Facilitating Career Conversations

Managers want their employees to thrive. They want to empower you and support your career journey. A great career conversation takes planning BEFORE, great communication DURING, and follow-through AFTER.



PREPARE FOR THE CONVERSATION

Do your homework! There's no better way to have a great career conversation than to plan for it in advance. Think about your performance and goals (strengths, opportunities, interests).

- In what ways do you bring value to the organization?
- What do you do best?
- What are your areas for growth and/or improvement?
- What work-related experiences or projects exist that you may learn from?
- What are you enthusiastic about?

HOLD THE CONVERSATION

Be ready to emphasize the value you bring (past accomplishments and contributions) and be open to feedback. If you know where you're headed, the conversation can focus on actions needed to get there. If you are not sure where you'd like to go, this conversation can help explore options. If you are happy where you are and not interested in advancement or a new role, the conversation could focus on broadening your skills and knowledge through new tasks or projects.

Ask to Meet

Communicate the purpose of this conversation and ask your supervisor when they are available to discuss your career goals.

Set the Tone

1. Thank your manager for the time. Promise to keep to the allotted length for the meeting and you hope that this will be an ongoing conversation — which is the ideal approach.
2. Explain that you want to explore next steps in your career and your desire to contribute at a higher level for the organization.
3. Remind your manager of your past 1–2 key accomplishments, including specific outcomes.

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4. Then, describe your vision for your career. What is it you want?
5. Next, ask your manager:
 - What do you see as my strengths?
 - In what areas do I need to improve? Why?
 - I really enjoy this task. Can you think of additional ways I can engage with it?
 - These assignments have been satisfying and interesting. How can I do more?
 - What ideas do you have about what my next steps here could be?
 - Which new skills will I need to learn?
 - Which roles, departments, or jobs provide this opportunity?
 - What does it take to be successful in this role?
 - Are you familiar with the internal resources offered by URM Learning & Development, including the UR Career Pathways program? If not, may I tell you more about it?
 - Would you support me in my career development?

Create Development Goals & Action Plan

Create a [Career Development Plan](#) (CDP) to identify 1-2 development goals and supporting activities. Your manager or HR Business Partner can provide helpful input and suggestions- or put you in touch with someone in your desired career path who can.

Career development includes more than taking a class. Experiential learning (learning by doing) is the most effective way to grow. In addition to formal education, other development activities may include:

- Taking on a new responsibility
- Shadowing a different role
- Finding a mentor
- Cross-training into a new area/function
- Networking outside your usual group
- Participating in a project team
- Implementing a solution to a problem
- Joining a professional organization

Before you decide on your career development activities, consider the questions below:

ASK:

- What is the best way I learn?
- What steps can I take?
- What experiences will help me learn more?
- Who might help me learn new skills and acquire new knowledge?
- What coaching or mentoring opportunities will help me achieve my goals?
- Which development needs can be addressed by reading articles, taking courses or seminars, and/or attending conferences?
- What ideas does my Supervisor have?
- How can I help make this happen?

Development goals should be specific, measurable, actionable, relevant, and timely (SMART). Include action steps, a timeline, and criteria for success.

FOLLOW UP

Ask about next steps. Be sure to follow-up with your supervisor to turn your Career Development Plan into action. Establish a timeframe and give at least 1 week before asking about any feedback or documents needed from your supervisor. Set a reminder or schedule into your calendar when you will check-back-in.

STAFF TIP:

Check out the Career Development resources available through [Learning & Development](#).

References and Additional Resources

- [URMC Staff Development](#) website
- [MyCareer Plan](#) (Self-Directed Career Development)
- [Career Development Plan Template](#) (CDP)
- [The 70:20:10 Model of Learning](#)