

Developing Your Employees

Questions to Ask During Career Conversations

The University expects supervisors to support employees in their career development, even if it means that the employee will move to another job or team.

We define career development as a series of planned actions taken by employees:

- with the active support of management;
- using a variety of tools and resources provided by the University;
- to productively meet the demands of their current jobs, prepare for future work opportunities and challenges;
- to experience satisfying and successful work experiences and future career choices.

To help facilitate career development conversations, follow the “Talking with Employees, The Conversation Process” outlined in the Toolkit and choose a few of the following questions on which to focus your conversation.

Current job

1. What do you like most about your current job?
2. What would you like to do more of?
3. What do you like the least about your current job?
4. What would you like to do less of?
5. What skills does my current job require? What is your current skill level in these areas?

Professional Growth Goals

1. Two or three years from now, where would you like to be professionally?
2. What would you need to achieve now to accomplish this?
3. What new responsibilities or challenges would move you ahead?

Untapped Abilities

1. Is there something more that you could do that would make a greater contribution to your organization?
2. Is there a new task or role you could take on that would make better use of your talents?
3. What additional value could you provide? What would it take to “release” this?
4. What are you not “allowed” to do that you could do and would like to do?
5. What challenges would you like to face that might help you grow?

Job Satisfaction

1. What would help you obtain more satisfaction from your work?
2. What changes could you make in your performance that would satisfy you more?

New Skills and Capabilities

1. What new jobs, roles and so forth, would you like to be better at?
2. What training, certifications, etc. would you like to obtain?

adapted from the University of Washington U-Plan: Workforce and Career Development Planning Guide, February 2007

*Source: Strategic Employee Development Guide,
Robert Brinkerhoff and Rhonda Messinger*

Make sure the content of the discussion is documented and that employees feel as though they are clear on the next steps which could include learning by experience, from others, or through additional education.

Employees can also seek guidance from the University’s internal Staff Career Management group.