

The Five Roles of a Supervisor

If you are charged with managing others' performance, including conducting performance evaluations, you are considered to be a UVa supervisor. UVa supervisors are expected to understand and be able to assume many roles. The five key supervisory roles include Educator, Sponsor, Coach, Counselor, and Director. Each is described below. Note that in your role as a supervisor, you will be using these five roles, in some combination, simultaneously, depending on the needs of the team members.

Educator: You will act as an educator when employees and team members are new, when you are new to a team, when processes or conditions change, and when discussing performance expectations with your direct reports. Additionally, you will most likely educate when you hold or attend meetings, write and distribute policies, manuals, or other documents, and provide cross-training opportunities. (Refer to the Toolkit document, "Talking with Employees, The Conversation Process" for more information on having productive conversations.)

Examples: Reviewing upcoming Jobs@ changes, core UVA Leadership competencies, or helping employees write S.M.A.R.T. goals (Refer to the Toolkit document, "Writing S.M.A.R.T. Goals")

Sponsor: When acting as a sponsor, you assume your employees have the skills they need to perform their current jobs and work to provide opportunities for them to showcase their talents and strengths. Additionally, you are expected to support employee career development, even if it means that the employee will move to position outside your team. (Refer to the Toolkit document, "Developing Your Employees, Questions to Ask During Career Conversations" for more information on questions to ask and consider.)

Example: Helping employees identify and complete the Career Development Action Plan (CDAP)

Coach: You will be coaching an employee when you are explaining, encouraging, planning, correcting, or just checking in with your employees. (Refer to Toolkit document, "Coaching Employees, The Take 10 Check In".)

Example: You should take ten minutes a week to check in with each of your employees. During those ten minutes, ask the following three questions and document the result of your conversation:

- How do you think the team is doing?
- How can things be improved?

- How are you doing?

Counsel: Counseling is used when an employee's problems impact performance and is intended to mitigate any further action, including formal disciplinary action. The employee should solve the problem and your role is to be positive, supportive, and encouraging in that process. (Refer to the Toolkit documents, "Counseling Your Employees, The 2-Minute Challenge" and "Counseling Your Employees, The Role of a Good Supervisor".)

Example: One of your classified staff employees is habitually 15-20 minutes late and provides no explanation for her behavior. As soon as you notice her repetitive behavior, you should counsel her, seeking her ownership of the issue, and hopefully avoid any further action.

Director: Directing is used when performance problems continue and assumes you have educated, coached, and counseled. During "directing" conversations, you should make recommended alternatives and consequences clear, be calm and serious, get your school or department HR or HRCS involved, and make sure the meeting is thoroughly documented.

Example: Unfortunately the employee mentioned in the last example continues to be late. You should have a meeting with the employee clearly outlining the problem, the desired result, and the consequences of not correcting the problem. Additionally, you should document your conversation with the employee and forward it to HR.