



Making Space for Growth: Career Conversations That Support You

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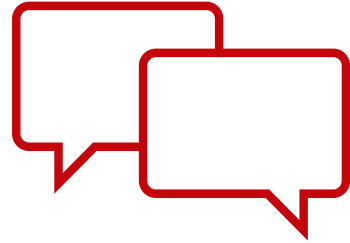


Objectives

- What are career conversations
- Why are they important
- How to prepare for career conversations
- What to ask your manager
- When to ask your manager
- Examples & Resources



What are Career Conversations





Definition

"Career conversations are a series of discussions designed to help you address your career development needs"

Source: Adapted from UW–Madison Office of Human Resources, Professional Development - Career Conversations (adapted from Right Management)

[Career Conversations | Professional Development | UW–Madison](#)

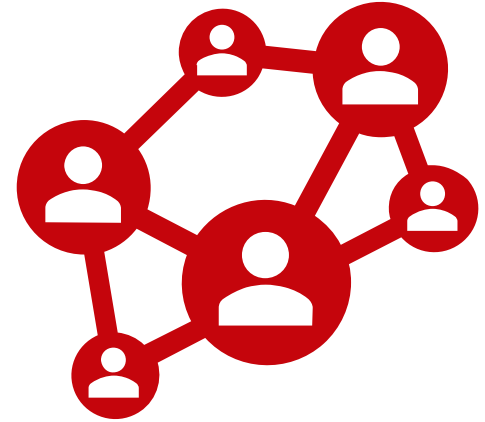


Types of Career Conversation

- Career conversations can be formal and/or informal, depending on the situation
 - Informal Conversations: coffee chat, hallway conversations, lunch chat
 - Formal Conversations: performance evaluation, scheduled 1:1, discuss new role or opportunities
- They don't always have to be formal. Both formal and informal conversations can support your career growth.

Relationship Styles

- Understanding your relationship with your manager can help you choose the best way to approach a career conversation.
- Keep in mind of personality differences and different communication styles.
- There is no one-size-fits-all approach. Think about the relationship and adjust your approach to the conversation.
- A same career conversation can land very differently depending on your relationship with your manager.





Why are Career Conversations Important?



- An opportunity to receive feedback and answers to questions
- Improve your engagement at work
- Improve work performance
- Can help you reach your full potential
- Discuss next steps
- To hear another person's perspective or experience



How to Prepare for Career Conversations

Schedule the meeting

You want to set a good amount of time to have this discussion without interruptions.

Set an agenda

Be clear on what you want to accomplish

Write down questions you want to ask...

Advice on skill development, understanding on opportunities for career growth at UW, suggestions on how to expand role

A red square box containing four horizontal lines, each preceded by a small square bullet point, representing a list of questions or agenda items.



What Do I Ask My Manager

Important: Go into the meeting with a goal in mind and the outcomes you hope to achieve.



Examples:

- Opportunities for career growth
- Review of career goals
- Insights and feedback



When Do I Ask My Manager (When not)



- If you are new in your role wait until you have successfully completed your probationary period
- Goal planning period of your performance management cycle
- Before a new task or responsibility is assigned
- Recommend **not** doing just before you start your annual review
- Schedule a designated time just for development, **do not squeeze it** into a 1-1 meeting



Example

Subject: Career Development Conversation

Hi [Manager's Name],

I'd like to schedule a 45-minute career development conversation with you. As I continue to grow in my role, I'd appreciate your perspective on my strengths and talents, the skills needed to advance, and opportunities for development.

I'd also like to discuss potential **on-the-job learning experiences, networking opportunities, and formal training** that could support my growth. (pick what works for you)

Please let me know a time that works for you.

Thank you,



Example (leadership focus)

Same as the first example with this added paragraph

I'd also like to discuss potential on-the-job learning experiences, networking opportunities, formal training options, and your thoughts on leadership development. **I'd also like to hear your thoughts on the leadership skills and experiences that would be worthwhile for me to develop as I continue to grow professionally.**



Resources

- [Career Conversations | Professional Development | UW–Madison](#)
- [It's Your Career: Having a Productive Career Development Conversation with Your Supervisor | Professional Development | UW–Madison](#)
- [Setting Career Goals | Professional Development | UW–Madison](#)
- [Career Mentoring | Professional Development | UW–Madison](#)
- [Career Growth | Professional Development | UW–Madison](#)
- [Employee Career Counseling | UW–Madison](#)



Thank you!

