

# Performance Feedback & Development Discussion Guide for Managers

The following list of questions is presented as an opportunity to strengthen your relationship with your staff by seeking to understand how they feel about their role at the University, how they contribute to the overall goals of the unit and the institution, and how engaged they are overall.

This list is not exhaustive. It is also not prescriptive; however, the questions may be helpful to start a meaningful discussion. Note that they are open-ended and will support expanded conversation as needed. Use this as a starting point and change language to reflect your communication style.

You can choose a few questions to share in advance of meeting with your employee(s) to afford them some lead-time to reflect on how they are feeling about their role, which will transition to the objectives and development discussion.

## Initial meeting questions

- *How are you feeling about your job?*
- *Do you know the expectations for your role?*
- *What do you like most about your job...why?*
- *What gives you the most satisfaction overall?*
- *What do you like least about your job...why?*
- *If you could, what would you change about your role or do differently?*
- *How are you feeling about your role and how your position contributes to the department/unit?*
- *Looking ahead, what is the most important thing you could do in the next academic/fiscal year that would support those areas that you serve?*
  - *...for the university?*
  - *...for your co-workers?*
  - *...for yourself?*
- *What do you spend the majority of your time doing? Is this productive from your perspective?*

- *What can I do to help you to be more effective/productive?*
  - *In the last year, have you had development opportunities to learn and grow?*
  - *Is there anything else you want me to know?*
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## Principles in Providing Feedback

- **Specific:** Focus directly on the specific area/task you want to acknowledge and avoid broad statements such as “good job”. For example, “I appreciated the research you pulled together for the project, it will help us make a more informed decision.”
  - **Timely:** Provide feedback in a timely manner, and give the recognition soon after an employee has demonstrated/achieved something. The event will still be fresh in the employee's mind so they can put it in context and take the same approach again.
  - **Meaningful or behavioral:** The feedback should be genuine and acknowledge the impact of the individual’s contribution. How did their contribution impact the department/unit or support the broader vision?
  - **Focus on observables:** Base your positive feedback on factual events. Stick to what you have observed and know, not on rumors or information that you have received second-hand. For example, "I really like the way you took control of that meeting. It was obvious things were going awry, but because you stepped in and got everybody back on track, we were able to walk away accomplishing all of the items on the agenda."
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## Objectives

As the Manager of the Unit, share your vision of the overall goals for your department/unit for the upcoming academic/fiscal year and beyond. These will be high level and may include values-based examples (i.e. I want our Unit to stand out in the University for providing high levels of service).

This vision should funnel down into a discussion about how your employee can contribute to the overall goals. Consider sharing your vision in a team meeting so everyone hears the same information and encourage a discussion about the activities/actions that will support the vision. This will lead naturally into one-one-on discussions.

- *What tasks and/or projects can you think of that would help our Department/Unit achieve these goals?*

## Development

Understanding what an individual's short and long-term career plans are helps to inform Managers what type of development that they may need and helps to establish a plan over time.

An employee may indicate they want to continue in their current role for the duration of their career. The focus should be on identifying development opportunities that help them to stay current and relevant in their roles and to ongoing process improvement.

An employee may have career aspirations in the long-term of advancing in the institution or moving laterally into another department/unit to support their growth and increase their capacity.

Initial questions should be asked to understand what the employee's career plans are and then expand the discussion around the developmental opportunities that align with their plans.

- *Where do you see yourself in 5 years? What job would you ideally like to be doing?*
  - *If you intend to stay in your current role, what development will help you to stay current? What kind of support would you need to look for ways to streamline processes in your job?*
  - *What can I do to support you?*
  - *What experiences and opportunities would assist you in achieving your career goals?*
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### Check-in questions:

- How are you progressing with your objectives?
- Are you having any challenges or facing any obstacles that are affecting your progress?
- If so, what can I do to help mitigate or eliminate them?
- Do you need any resources to help achieve your objectives?
- What are your career aspirations?
- In what areas do you need to grown to achieve your career goals?
- What do you need to do to achieve your career goals?
- How can I support your professional development?
- What experiences and/or opportunities in the institution would support your development?