

Reviewer Guide to Career Conversations



Why is having a Career Conversation important?

All members of staff are entitled to an annual Career Conversation (which replaces PDR), to reflect on their contributions and achievements, consider priorities, and identify whether training or additional support is required. A Career Conversation is an ideal way to connect with your team members, give and receive constructive feedback, agree objectives, discuss roles and responsibilities, and consider future career plans.

Planning for a Career Conversation

- Organise the meeting in good time;
- Allow at least two weeks to prepare. The reviewee needs enough time to draft the form and you need time to read it;
- Make sure the reviewee knows what to expect during the Career Conversation;
- Ask your reviewee to send you the draft form at least one week before you meet;
- Read the draft. If there are significant amendments required, send these back to the reviewee in advance of the meeting, as there should be no surprises during the conversation.

Planning what to say

- Consider what has gone well, areas for development and any priorities or objectives for the next year;
- If you are anticipating a difficult/sensitive meeting, you may find it helpful to look at the skills guide on preparing for a career conversation;
- Make a note of any things that need to be agreed on by the end of the meeting.

Making practical arrangements

- Allow sufficient time for the conversation;
- Make sure you have a suitable room and that there will be no interruptions;
- Make sure you have any relevant information to hand (e.g., the useful resources document).

The meeting

- The Career Conversation form is there to guide and support the conversation but should not limit what you discuss;
- Some reviewees may be hesitant and may prefer you to lead. Listen, acknowledge other points of view, suggest options and look for constructive solutions;
- To prepare for the Career Conversation, take a moment to look at [POD's Skills Guides and FAQs](#) which includes useful advice on agreeing objectives and giving and receiving feedback;
- Keep the conversation constructive and focused;
- Ask for feedback as well as giving it e.g. ask the reviewee if there are things that they would suggest you stop, start, or change in terms of your working relationship;
- Make notes of the discussion and encourage your reviewee to do the same. This will help you both when you come to summarise the conversation;
- Remember that the Career Conversation should not be used to address a performance issue. Performance concerns should be addressed as and when they arise. If you need advice on this, please contact HR hr@dpag.ox.ac.uk

Reviewer Guide to Career Conversations



After the meeting

- Update any areas of the form as agreed during the meeting. Add a summary and any additional comments, sign it and send it to the reviewee for countersignature;
- The reviewee may add additional comments, sign the form and return it to you. You should each keep a copy for future reference;
- Send the signed form to HR (hr@dpag.ox.ac.uk);
- Arrange a brief follow-up meeting 6 months after the Career Conversation to check-in with the reviewee. This provides an opportunity to revise objectives (where appropriate), and consider areas where additional support may be required.