

Principles of developmental conversations

As we discuss in our online “Developmental conversations” learning module, developmental conversations should be **OPEN** and provide the opportunity for two-way feedback.

Ongoing

- 1:1 meetings between a colleague¹ and their supporter² will typically focus on day-to-day operational responses to the work environment instead of discussing and supporting a colleague’s developmental journey that is aligned with their goals.
- On an ongoing basis, these 1:1 meetings should be purposefully structured to allow space for a developmental conversation, enabling colleagues to review their progress against goals, share lessons learned and what we can do to improve going forward, with longer term career planning in mind.
- It is important to allow for goals to be refreshed and revisited as circumstances and organisational needs change throughout the year.
- Reviewing and setting goals just once a year is no longer sufficient in these changing times. We will likely find the formal appraisal process more challenging if we haven’t kept the dialogue open and information flowing. It is recommended that developmental conversations are scheduled at least once per term.

Purposeful

- Goals need to be purposeful and should only capture the most important activities that we seek to change and/or enhance in our performance year.
- Goals should not replace a job description, they should instead capture our purpose and the impact we are intending to make in our performance year with our longer term development plan in mind.
- The number of goals we set ourselves should not exceed 6 in total, as their design is purposefully iterative and measurable.
- Colleagues should prepare to review progress against goals and discuss changes in personal circumstances or barriers at work with their supporter during 1:1 meetings.
- Supporters should equally provide any updates on the strategic focus of the organisation and discuss how this might impact their colleague.

Empowering

- Developmental conversations are aimed to empower colleagues and their supporters to solicit input and feedback, taking the opportunity to celebrate great achievements as well as collaborate on alternative, creative or practical options for addressing any issues.
- In our online “Developmental conversations” learning module, we introduce specific questioning techniques to help us structure an open and honest two-way dialogue, thereby empowering us to explore our full performance potential.

Non-discriminatory

- By having regular developmental conversations, we are embracing our collaborative and inclusive culture here at UCL.
- We need to ensure that we express our views and opinions in a non-judgmental way and feel that we are being listened to.

¹ staff member or appraisee

² line manager or appraiser