

Career conversations guide

With the continual changing nature of work, it makes good sense to take time to think about your working life, how it fits into your broader life plans, the stage of life you are in and your career aspirations.

Gone are the days where we study one subject and remain in one job for life. Many of us will have multiple careers in a lifetime. As many of us live longer and work longer, our aspirations and needs may change over time. We can better manage our careers and transitions if we periodically take stock of what it is we enjoy most, what strengths we bring to our roles, and the contributions we feel are most valuable.

In the Queensland public sector, we recognise the valuable role career conversations can have to supporting employees to develop their careers by refocusing, reskilling, and retraining to remain relevant and thrive in future work.

Throughout this guide we refer to the word 'career'. By that we mean your experience or journey across your working life, including your contributions to your community or the community you work in. Unlike performance conversations that are often backward looking, career conversations are future focused.

Let's begin!

This guide is designed to help you navigate your career conversations and gain valuable insights into the direction you'd like to steer your career and the support you need to get there.

It's up to you how best to use this guide — you can complete it in a conversation with your supervisor or as a personal reflection exercise to guide a follow up discussion. It's often best to include aspects of the conversation in your more frequent one-on-one discussions with your supervisor and not bundle it into annual performance discussions. Even if you don't share your reflections with anyone else, completing the exercise will still give you a clearer picture of what you want, and who you might like to speak to for guidance and support.

Journey to now

- What led you to arrive at your current role?
- What changes did you make in your life and career that were instrumental in bringing you to where you are?
- What were you involved in along your journey to now, that you have truly enjoyed and thrived in doing?
- Looking back on your past career experiences, what values have been most important to you moving forward?

About your current role

- How would you describe your current role?
- What has been the most enjoyable or interesting aspect of your work? Can you give specific examples of what you have achieved or contributed towards that you are most proud of?
- When thinking about your most interesting and/or enjoyable aspects of your work, what strengths, characteristics or skills were you using to help you succeed?
 - If you've participated in [LEAD4QLD](#) or the [Competency Compass](#), this is a good time to reflect on your insights.
- What strengths, characteristics or skills are required for you to succeed in your role?
- How do the strengths, characteristics, or skills you use in your personal life intersect with your work?

Your future life and dreams

- What types of organisations/teams do you most enjoy working for?
- How do you want your career and work to fit into your life over the next 3–5 years?
- At the pinnacle of your career what do you see yourself doing?
- What kind of contributions do you want to make to work and/or your community?
- Where do you see yourself in the future (both professionally and personally): three, five or 10 years from now?

Creating your short-term action plan

- What things can you do in your current role right now to better align you with your desired future?
- What skills and attributes do you think you need to develop to move towards your longer-term goals?
 - Reflect on your insights against the Leadership competencies for Queensland using the Competency compass or LEAD4QLD.
- What transferable skills do you have for other roles you're interested in?
 - Check out [Jobs and Skills Australia](#) for more ideas.
- What networks and people would it be beneficial to connect with?
- What types of experiences or roles might you start applying for in the next 12 months to help you make your dreams come to fruition?
- What informal and formal development opportunities will you need to engage in? (Complete the self-assessment questions over-page to assist in answering this question)
- What support do you need from your manager?

Self-assessment for learning and development options

Building on your insights so far, the next few questions will help you target learning and development choices.

To strengthen our impact as public servants, we must understand the behaviours that make us successful. The [Leadership competencies for Queensland](#) describe what excellent everyday leadership at all levels looks like in the sector.

The [Competency Compass](#) tool is a great way to reflect on the leadership competencies you're using in your current role and highlights areas for professional development.

1. What are your strengths in relation to your role at work?

- I'm unsure of what my strengths are.
- I have some idea of what my strengths are (please describe below)
- I have a good idea of what my strengths are (please describe below).

2. What are your areas of development in relation to your role at work?

- I'm unsure of what of my areas of development are.
- I have some idea of my areas of development are (please describe below).
- I have a good idea of what my areas of development are (please describe below).

3. What are your strengths in your personal life?

- I'm unsure of what my strengths are.
- I have some idea of what my strengths are (please describe below).
- I have a good idea of what my strengths are (please describe below).

4. **Thinking about the skills and abilities you use outside work, how often would you also use them in your role with the public sector?**

- I'm unsure.
- Not at all.
- Some of the time.
- All the time.

5. **Thinking about the skills and abilities you use outside work, how important is it to you that you use these in your role with the public sector?**

- I have not thought about it before.
- It's not important to me.
- It's somewhat important to me.
- It's extremely important to me.

6. **Where are you in your career life cycle?**

- early stage (first five years in the workforce)
- mid stage (5–15 years in the workforce)
- mature stage (more than 15 years in the workforce)
- wanting to have a career break
- re-entry (returning to work after a career break)
- involved in formal education
- thinking about re-skilling and/or re-educating
- looking for new types of employment (moving to part-time, looking for full-time, prefer to contract)

7. **To help you gain clarity surrounding your career goals and how to achieve them, please rank the following development options in order of priority (1 = top priority, 7 = lowest)**

I want to....

- Learn more about or improve the core skills of my job.
- Learn more about or improve my skills of leading and managing teams.
- Broaden my skillset.
- Learn more about emerging technologies and approaches.
- Challenge myself in new roles, projects and responsibilities.
- Talk to someone to get guidance or advice (for example, a mentor or coach).
- Gain qualifications or accreditations.
- Other, please specify _____

What next?

You can use your insights from completing the guide and consultation with others to inform your next one-on-one discussion with your supervisor.

You can find resources and support through your agency intranet and HR advisors.

To discover opportunities available across the Queensland public sector, visit the [Career development](#) page.

If you have any questions, or would like more information, contact the Public Sector Commission via development@psc.qld.gov.au.