

Tips for having a difficult conversation

Use the GROW model to plan your conversation:

- ❖ **G**oal (set the goal for the discussion)
- ❖ **R**eality (explore the current situation)
- ❖ **O**ptions (help the staff member create and consider options)
- ❖ **W**ay forward - (prepare an action plan)

Goal

1. Firstly, ensure you have a clear understanding of what needs to change and what you would like to achieve.
2. Consider the staff member's behaviour that you want to change and the improvements you would like to see. Can you structure this change as a goal to be achieved by the staff member?

Reality

1. Discuss with the staff member what is working well, i.e. provide some positive feedback.
2. Discuss what needs improving, and how errors and poor performance can affect other areas within your business unit or the University as a whole.
3. What is the business impact of the staff member's poor performance?
4. Be respectful, but clear in articulating the broader implications of the staff member's performance.
5. Emphasise the value of positive performance, improvement of skills, knowledge, quality and productivity.

Options

1. Does the staff member require extra support on the job, i.e. training, resources, redistribution of workload?
2. Brainstorm options and opportunities with the staff member.
3. Do you have a solution to help the staff member? Are there cost benefits? Has this solution worked for you before?

Way forward

1. Prepare an action plan to confirm the next steps, time frames and to gain commitment from the staff member.
2. How often will you review progress against the action plan?
3. Consider the obstacles the staff member may face in meeting the goals in the action plan. What will you do if the staff member is not meeting their goals?

Other things to consider

1. Does the staff member know what is expected of them?
2. Are you communicating clearly with the staff member what you expect?
3. Have you reviewed the Position Description recently?
4. Does the staff member has the skills necessary for the position?
5. Are there positive consequences for the staff member if they perform well?
6. Are improvements being recognised and reinforced by you as their supervisor?
7. Have you had a similar conversation with this staff member before? Is there a history of [poor performance](#)?
8. Is disciplinary action required? Contact your [HR Adviser](#) to discuss.
9. Have you familiarised yourself with the relevant [policies and procedures](#)?