



Questions INDIVIDUALS Can Ask Their Supervisor During an IDP Meeting

Ask your supervisor if he/she has about 30 minutes to talk with you about your career and that you have some questions you would like to ask them. Before the conversation, conduct an assessment to determine your strengths, weaknesses, personal values, interests, and preferences and think about how these align with your career goals or support them. Do your homework and come prepared for the meeting. Below are the key areas you will want to explore with your supervisor along with suggested questions you can ask.

OBTAIN YOUR SUPERVISOR'S THOUGHTS ON YOUR CAREER GOALS

Share with your supervisor your desired career direction/interests/goals and why you are interested in moving that direction. What you already know about that career direction and how it appears to align with your strengths, personal values, and interests. Share other additional information to help provide context for your interest in moving in this direction.

- “Given what I have shared with you about my interest in exploring/shifting/advancing my career in the direction of _____. What are your thoughts about this career direction based on what you know about me?”
- “Does this direction seem realistic?”
- “Are there additional/different/related career options you might recommend I consider?”

EXPLORE ORGANIZATIONAL ALIGNMENT WITH YOUR CAREER GOALS

It is important to understand how your role fits into the organization. This will help you gain the support you need from your supervisor and to identify how you can continue being a contributor within your organization.

- “Can you see a way in which my career goals align with those of our organization?”
- “As the manager, what do you see as the biggest organizational barriers to achieving my goals?”
- “What can I do to help resolve these organizational barriers?”
- “What do you see as the key issues or trends driving our organization and/or the industry?”
- “How might these issues/trends affect my job and/or future opportunity?”
- “What are some things I can do to better to prepare myself for these changes?”
- “Are you aware of any opportunities to support my career growth in this area?”
- “Might you have any advice or recommendations for me to better prepare for the new opportunities I am seeking.”

EXPLORE AND IDENTIFY GAPS AND BARRIERS

It is important to identify barriers that is stopping you from moving forward with your career goals such as: skill gaps, communication skills, personality traits, qualifications, knowledge, reputation within the organization, etc. Be prepared to discuss your thoughts on how you might overcome these barriers. Be open to honest feedback and hearing an entirely different perspective from your supervisor. **It is important that you are not defensive.** Ask clarifying questions and share your thoughts.

- “How am I perceived?”
- “What do you see as my strengths?”
- “What would you like to see me do differently?”
- “What can I do to recover from mistakes I’ve made and repair my reputation?”

If they have the knowledge/expertise in your chosen development direction, you could ask:

- “Might you know what I need to do to become qualified for this career goal?”
- “What skills do you think I need for the future role?”
- “What skills do you think I have for my future role?”
- “How long do you think it will take me to learn and master those skills?”
- “Are there any special development opportunities that you think would benefit me?”
- “Are there any special projects I could take on in my current role that would help me obtain needed knowledge, skills, competencies, or experience?”

If they don't have the knowledge/expertise in your chosen career direction:

- Might you know of experts or other resources in the organization that I might speak with about my career and development goals?

EXPLORE WAYS AND OBTAIN AGREEMENT IN HOW YOUR SUPERVISOR WILL SUPPORT YOU

Think about what **specific actions** you would like from your supervisor which could help you with your career goals. Then ask for them. The worst that could happen is that your supervisor is not able to approve your request/s. Some possible actions you could ask of your supervisor include:

- ✓ Shift in assignments or projects
- ✓ Some additional duties related to your career goal
- ✓ Be part of a project team, advisory committee, or task force
- ✓ Allow you to take special duty assignments inside your department or with another King County department
- ✓ Flex your work hours
- ✓ Take a class on paid time
- ✓ Pay all or a portion of training costs
- ✓ Ability to meet with King County Career Support staff and/or attend their online workshops on paid time. (Go to: www.kingcounty.gov for workshops and resources offered through King County Career Support Services.)
- ✓ Be allowed to job shadow experts on paid time or on personal time (*which would require to flex your work hours or lunch time*)
- ✓ Participate in one of [King County's Affinity Groups](#)
- ✓ Serve as a mentor
- ✓ Others?

Questions you could ask:

- “Are there any barriers that might get in the way of you supporting me in meeting my career goals? Are there ways in which I might address them?”
- “Can we discuss ways in which you could support me in meeting my career goals? I have a few ideas I would like to explore with you.”
- “I really appreciate the support you are able to provide. Could we summarize the ways in which you are able to support me just so I am clear on them? I'd like to have them documented in my IDP.”

Thank your supervisor for their suggestions and honest feedback. Take all that you learn from your meeting and add what you believe is most important and relevant to your IDP form.