

Exploration Questions for Leaders and Direct Reports

We encourage year-round collaboration between leaders and direct reports, with a focus on positive development, and the value that our employees bring to the University of Michigan. For your reference we have developed several conversation starter questions that can be used to encourage impactful conversations and development. We encourage you to begin by looking at Forward Focused Development. Many of these questions were derived from the Ross School of Business' Mindful Performance methodology, and we sincerely thank them for their collaboration.

Exploration questions are available to help leaders and direct reports prepare for and shape each conversation. The questions are not a rigid set of required topics. They are meant to spark exploration, planning, alignment and assessment. Please use them as they are most constructive, adjusting them or adding to them as helpful.

(YOU) Forward Focused Development Conversation (should occur yearly at a minimum)

- In 3-5 years, what does career and professional success look like for you?
- What are 3-5 most important things you must do in order to achieve that career and professional success?
- How has your performance over the last 6 to 12 months contributed to your readiness (successes and misses)?
- What are your biggest opportunities for professional development, and how can your leader help?
- How are you contributing to the development of those around you?

(PLAN) Initial Conversation Starters (conversation should occur early in the fiscal year)

- What are your top 3-5 short-term priorities and expected outcomes?
- What strengths will you draw upon to accomplish them?
- Will you be required to try anything new? If so, what will you experiment with and what do you want to learn?
- What partnerships will be essential for your success?
- What can your leader do to enable your success?
- Do you require any training or development to achieve outcomes? How will you seek feedback?

(DO) Check-In Conversations (conversations should occur regularly throughout the fiscal year)

- What should we celebrate?
- How are you progressing on your priorities and how do you know this? Should any priorities change, given what you know now?
- What are your current challenges and what mid-course adjustments are necessary?
- What can your leader do to enable your success?

(REVIEW) End-Of-Year Conversation (conversation should occur toward the end of the fiscal year)

- What accomplishment(s) are you most proud of over the last year? What was most challenging for you?
- Did you learn about/connect with others (team members, committee work, etc.) in a new or different way this year? In what way?
- Were you able to engage in professional development opportunities that were indicated on your work plan? If so, what did you learn, and how did you experience growth?
- What are you doing that you should keep doing? What are you doing that you should change?

Note: YOU, PLAN, DO, REVIEW, provide mapping to Ross' Mindful Performance methodology.