

Techniques to enable effective PDR conversations

Ensuring that conversations are constructive

Reviewees who have taken part in PDR conversations report that a PDR conversation is more likely to be productive when you:

- a. Ensure you read the relevant parts of the form returned to you by your reviewer in advance of the meeting, so that you know what they wish to discuss in the meeting
- b. Be prepared to discuss your development, achievements and contributions to focus the conversation
- c. Be prepared to do most of the talking (70% as a guideline)
- d. Are ready to listen as well as offer information, ideas and solutions. This is a two way conversation that should result in a plan agreed by both parties
- e. Seek clarification of anything you are unsure of
- f. Adopt a joint problem-solving approach where needed

Effective listening

1. Listening is a vital skill involved in effective 1:1 conversations.
2. Experienced reviewers/reviewees typically define the essential pre-requisites of an effective listening conversation as follows:
 - a. Choosing an appropriate venue for the discussion
 - b. Not allowing outside interruptions
 - c. Giving the meeting your full attention
 - d. Allocating an appropriate amount of time
 - e. Being open to what is being said.
 - f. Sharing the 'air-time', typically a 70:30 split with the reviewee doing most of the talking
3. Listening is not simply about being silent and allowing the other person to reflect and talk in their own time. Effective conversations occur where both parties are engaged and responsive.
4. Techniques to enable this include:
 - a. Testing our understanding of what has been said by asking clarifying questions
 - b. Giving or receiving feedback
 - c. Summarising what has been said and the point which the conversation has reached
 - d. Developing an idea or suggestion in collaboration with the reviewee

How to handle difficult conversations

1. Prior to meeting, it is important that both parties are clear about the agenda for the discussion. This will help to ensure that there are 'no surprises' raised during the meeting
2. If you anticipate that there might be any 'difficult' aspect to your conversation, it is important that you address this prior to the meeting. You may find it useful to speak to an experienced colleague or to your HR Adviser on how to approach the situation
3. You might also find it useful to visit the LDC website to access appropriate support and by reviewing some of the short videos around how to approach a range of scenarios