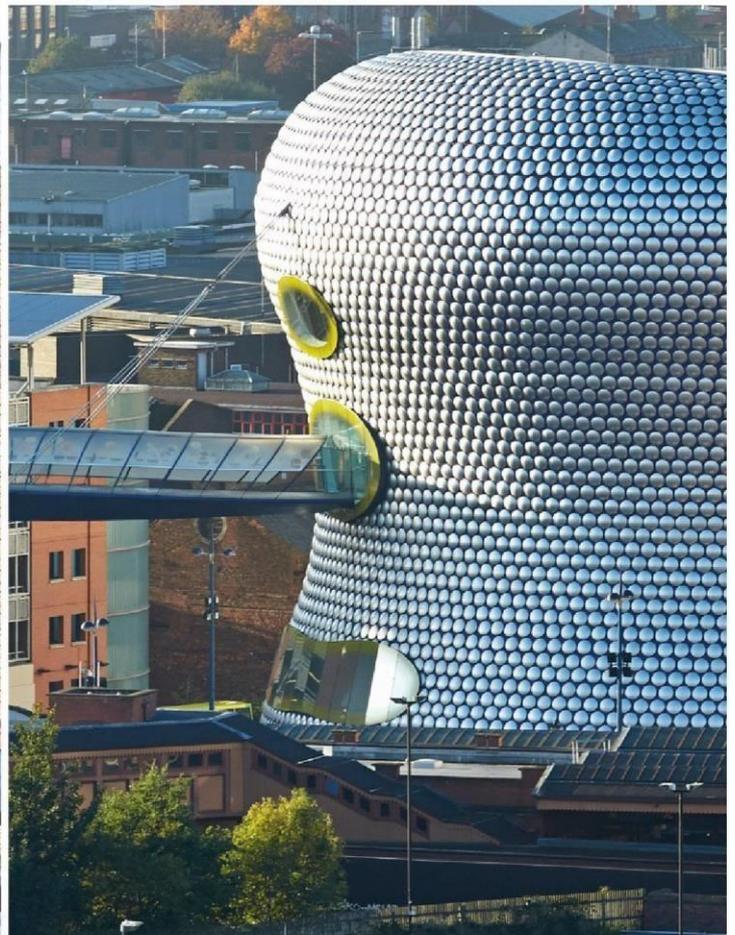
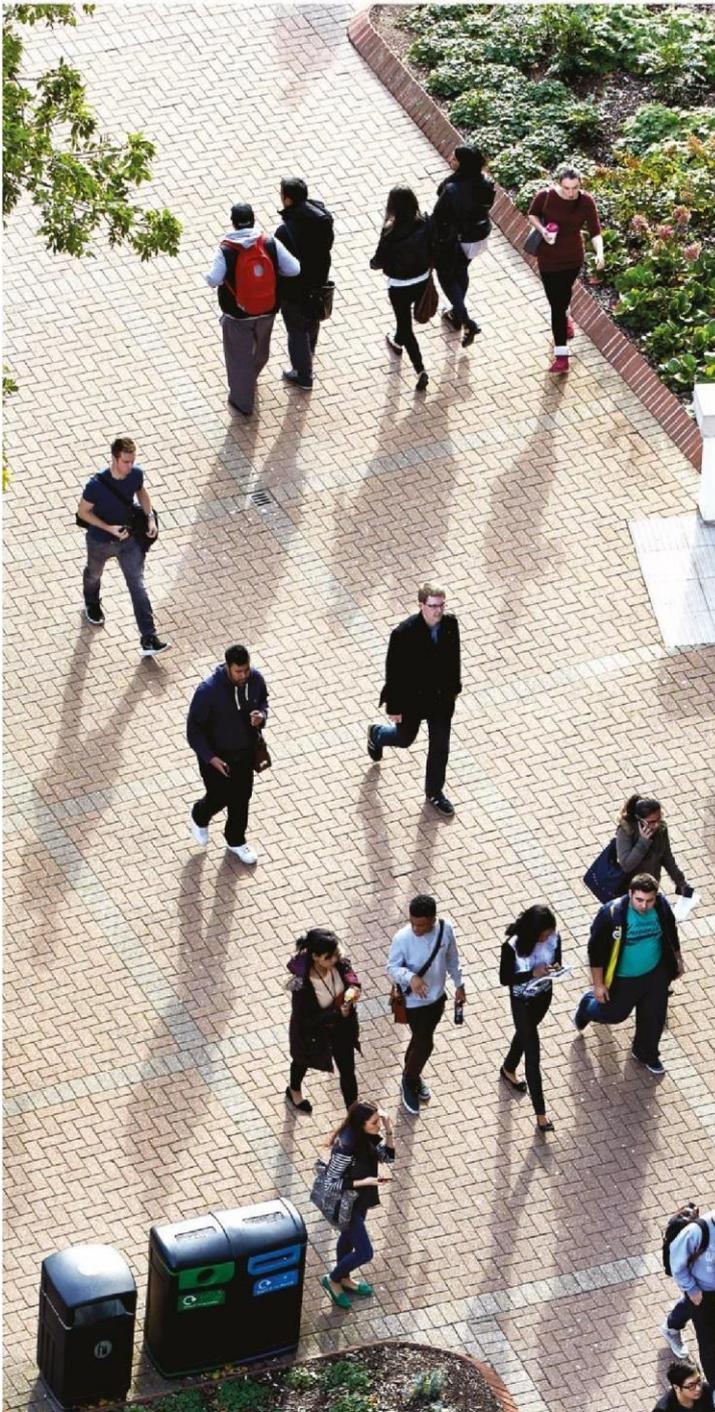


My Development Conversation

July 2021



My Development Conversation

What is it?

My Development Conversation is the approach we use to how we hold performance reviews.

My Development Conversation is about setting your work priorities for the year, aligned to the [Aston University Strategic Plan](#), your department or service plan and underpinned by our values:

- Ambitious and Professional
- Innovative and Collaborative
- Ethical and Diverse

We've also improved how you capture information, following your performance conversations with your manager / reviewer, by creating a new process on the staff portal.

How is it different from traditional approaches?

- Performance conversations will be held with your manager/reviewer throughout the year not just at the beginning or end.
- There is no end of year rating allowing for a more informed summary of overall performance to be discussed.
- Repositioning the responsibility for your performance back to you – your manager's / reviewer's responsibility is to manage and support you and ensure your performance is on track.
- We've created, in collaboration with staff from across the University, a set of [behaviours](#) that should be discussed in your meetings. These behaviours enable you and your manager / reviewer to discuss not just the outcomes you've achieved but also how you achieved them.
- We've changed some of the language we use in performance reviews – using **priorities** as your overarching areas of work or responsibility with more task specific objectives sitting underneath.

For example - my priority: Internal Apprenticeships

Objectives for this priority:

- Ensure all apprenticeship applications follow the internal process.
- Keep the apprenticeship intranet page up to date – reviewing monthly.
- Send an email report on the last Wednesday of every month to the Head of Organisational Development on the number of active apprenticeships, apprenticeships in the pipeline and the amount drawn down from the apprenticeship levy.

Remember, your priorities should be aligned to your department or service plan and to the University's strategic plan.

When will my priorities be set?

To keep things simple we will continue to follow the academic year therefore:

- You should have 6-8 priorities that will be discussed and set in Term 1 (by Oct 31) in agreement with your line manager / reviewer. We recommend having these conversations in September to ensure you are clear on what you need to achieve in the new academic year.
- Your overall performance of what went well and what could be improved, over the whole year, will be discussed in term 3 (by Sept 30) with your line manager / reviewer. We recommend you have this conversation early in September so you have time to reflect and review before the deadline.
- This will enable additional priorities to be discussed and set throughout the year as you complete existing ones or where they are no longer required.

Remember that conversations should happen throughout the year to ensure your performance is on track.

How do I record my priorities?

Once you have had your beginning of year development conversation you* can:

- Record your priorities and update the status of these priorities using the Staff portal.
- Document your career aspirations and the agreed development or support you need including any CPD or professional requirements.
- Record any wellbeing issues discussed at your meeting.
- **User guides and videos** are available to support you to use the system effectively.
- If you need further assistance using the Staff Portal you can contact hrrsystems@aston.ac.uk . **Some roles in Professional and Support services will continue to have job chats and may use a paper form, speak with your line manager to see if this applies to you.*

Mid - Point Review

The mid – point review is an optional but highly recommended step in the MDC process. The mid – point review should occur in February and enables you to speak with your manager about your progress to date, realign your priorities and if needed, adjust deadlines. This ensures you avoid getting to the end of the MDC cycle with incomplete priorities or missed opportunities to re-focus your work. This is also an opportunity to talk to your manager about your wellbeing and raise any challenges you may be experiencing. This conversation can also be added to the staff portal.

What are the benefits of putting the data from my development conversation online?

As an employee you can:

- Update the status of your priorities in real time.
- View your own form – providing a quick glance view of all your priorities.
- Link to any development opportunities that are booked via the portal.

- Capture a historical record, over time, of all your achievements.
- Evidence the outcome from achieving your priorities that support our beneficiaries
(Students, business and the professions and Birmingham and the West Midland region) or each other.
- Categorise your priorities as a: development (or personal), service and / or team or citizenship priority.

Category*	Example
Development	This priority relates to developing knowledge or skills and could involve: training, elearning, mentoring, coaching, shadowing, reading or networking.
Service or Team	This priority relates to the delivery of departmental or team activities aligned to the University's strategy.
Citizenship	This priority relates to how you demonstrate citizenship in your work or how you make a positive contribution to the University and our beneficiaries. This could include: volunteering for graduation, being a Go Green champion, reducing waste, supporting new students or helping a colleague.
*Academic staff have additional categories to choose from - research, teaching and external engagement. Information regarding these categories is detailed on page 5.	

We know that this is not an exact science and that some priorities can fall into multiple categories – that's okay, choose the one where you feel the priority fits best.

As a manager or reviewer you can:

- View your direct employee's conversation and details of their priorities.
- View your in-direct employee's conversation and details of their priorities held with their manager.
- See what development or support your team members have identified.
- Review a historical record of activity or conversations that you have had with your team. Receive reports detailing activity, utilisation rates and outcomes.

Can I use the staff portal to record my priorities whilst on probation?

The module is available to all academic staff, and non-academic staff who have completed their probation. MDC is currently not available to staff on probation. The probation process is separate and will be discussed with you by your manager.

How can I develop my communication skills?

OD offer a range of courses to support staff and managers hold effective performance conversations. There is also an Introduction to My Development Conversation (MDC) module for managers available on Blackboard and a all staff presentation available via the [MDC](#) intranet page.

How can I develop my skills in priority creation and reviewing?

We will be offering sessions to support staff and managers hold effective performance conversations throughout the year through remote learning and face to face delivery where possible.

- 1) Creating priorities – how to assess your team’s potential and work together to create realistic and motivating priorities that engage team members and contribute to the Aston strategy
- 2) Managing priorities – how to check in throughout the year, ensure that priorities are on track and adjust these if needed, and how to keep momentum and wellbeing going throughout the process.
- 3) Reviewing priorities – how to have powerful conversations to respond to excellent performance, encourage reflection and development and how to address underperformance meaningfully.

Where do I find the learning?

Sessions can be booked through [Staff Portal](#) and this content will also be available on demand, with a wide range of additional resources on the [My Development Conversation intranet page](#) including:

- How to guides and self-assessments
- Video content and concept walkthroughs
- e-learning for managing your career development conversations

For Academic Staff

Academic promotion for Lecturers, Senior Lecturers and Readers is based on peer assessment of three areas of activity: Learning & Teaching, Research and External Engagement. It is expected that Lecturers, Senior Lecturers, Readers and Professors will engage in all three areas of activity. For others it is dependent on role e.g. Teaching Fellows are not required to carry out academic research and some Researchers may not carry out teaching, however, they may do so for developmental reasons.

The [academic promotions criteria](#) may be helpful in supporting career development and agreeing priorities.

Learning and Teaching Staff

All staff with a requirement to teach will have at least one priority set related to their Learning and teaching activities.

Research Staff

Where relevant to their contract, staff should have at least one priority set related to research activities.

External Engagement

All academic staff should have at least one priority set related to External Engagement. External Engagement is defined as the contribution to the wider external mission of the University, including contribution to businesses, the public sector and the community relevant to the University's mission.

Citizenship

All academic staff should consider how they demonstrate citizenship in their work and make a valued contribution to the University and our beneficiaries.

Below are examples for each area of activity for staff with teaching responsibility.