



# **My Development Conversation Guide 2022**

# My Development Conversation



## What is it?

My Development Conversation is the approach we use for 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 and by our [behaviours](#):

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

## Key elements of MDC

- 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.
- Our behaviours enable you and your manager / reviewer to discuss not just the outcomes you've achieved but also how you achieved them.
- We use the term priorities to describe 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.

# Setting and recording priorities



## When will my priorities be set?

To keep things simple, we 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.
- 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.
- 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 **MDC template form**.
- Document your career aspirations and the agreed development or support you need including any CPD or professional requirements.
- Record any wellbeing and inclusion issues discussed at your meeting.
- Upload the form to employee's profile in Aston Staff Portal (guidance for managers on uploading the form can be found [here](#))

# Categorising your priorities

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, job shadowing, reading, research 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 or Clearing, being an active member of a staff network, supporting new students or helping a colleague.

Watch the [Citizenship at Aston video](#) to find out more

*\*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.



# Priorities for academic staff

## 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.

## Knowledge exchange

All academic staff should have at least one priority set related to knowledge exchange. This 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.

## Leadership (for academic staff in leadership roles)

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



Area	Characteristics
<p><b>1) Learning and Teaching</b></p>	<p><b>Module Feedback:</b></p> <p>Reflect on the student feedback for the modules you teach on, in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any high or low rating.</li> <li>• Any significant variances from the previous year or term.</li> <li>• Specific comments made by students relating to your teaching practice.</li> </ul> <p><b>Peer observation:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How many peer observations you have performed and the number of times you have been observed.</li> <li>• Who you have observed (you do not need to name staff, rather their status, College, School and academic group)</li> <li>• Any changes you have made to your practice as a result of your observations or feedback you have received from others.</li> <li>• Any ideas you have identified for implementation in the future.</li> </ul> <p><b>Innovation and Enhancement:</b></p> <p>Reflect on any learning and teaching innovations or enhancements you implemented this year and reflect on how successful they were.</p> <p>Where appropriate, support this with feedback, statements/testimonies and any research conducted in relation to the innovations or enhancements.</p>
<p><b>2) Commitment to Continuing Professional Development (CPD)</b></p>	<p><b>Fellowship of the HEA:</b></p> <p>State your current Fellowship status (if applicable) and explain what progress you have made towards the next stage of Fellowship during the academic year.</p> <p>List your targets for the next 12 months in relation to working towards the next stage of Fellowship and/or to retain your Fellowship.</p> <p>(Note in reflecting on the next sections that the Higher Education Academy require evidence of CPD in relation to ongoing Fellowship).</p>

Area	Characteristics
	<p><b>Relevant CPD Activity:</b></p> <p>Any relevant activities undertaken during the academic year and reflect upon how these activities have impacted your approach or philosophy in relation to learning and teaching. Relevant CPD activity could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance at conferences and consequent briefing for staff and the University, where relevant.</li> <li>• Education publications/submissions.</li> <li>• Development/CPD sessions/,mentoring and or coaching.</li> <li>• Learning and Teaching events attended. Involvement with other organised CPD events.</li> <li>• Have you achieved Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy? If not, might you apply for this, or Senior or Principal Fellowship or our MEd, or a National Teaching Fellowship. How are you ensuring that you remain in “good standing” in relation to your teaching practice and HEA membership?</li> </ul>
<p><b>3) Citizenship in teaching</b></p>	<p><b>Contribution to the development of teaching practice within your College, School and/or the wider University:</b></p> <p>Reflect on your involvement in relevant activities over the last 12 months, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentoring of colleagues or HEA Fellowship applicants.</li> <li>• Presentation at any Learning and Teaching events.</li> <li>• Contribution to events and initiatives.</li> <li>• Participation in University RITE teams.</li> </ul> <p><b>Leadership in Teaching</b></p> <p>Describe any leadership activities/roles you have undertaken in the last 12 months, this could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Programme Directorship.</li> <li>• Supporting the Associate Deans and Head of Group with teaching initiatives and projects.</li> <li>• Undertaking the role of group Learning and Teaching Convenor/Enhancer.</li> <li>• Attendance at Learning and Teaching and/or Programme Committees, dissemination of information back to groups and co-ordination of group responses.</li> <li>• Chairing committees and boards.</li> </ul>

Area	Characteristics
	<p><b>Knowledge Exchange</b></p> <p>Record your involvement in relevant activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of masterclasses outside of Aston University.</li> <li>• Participation in other school liaison activities.</li> <li>• Participation in Open Days.</li> <li>• Participation in collaborative educational initiatives regionally, nationally and / or internationally.</li> <li>• External examination.</li> <li>• Presentation at educational conferences and events.</li> <li>• Influencing Government policy at a regional and / or national level.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4) Teaching Related Administration</b></p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>Please reflect on the completion of your administrative responsibilities during the year and what steps you took to manage these.</p> <p>Responsibilities could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertaking of all scheduled teaching.</li> <li>• Preparation of assessment documentation to deadlines.</li> <li>• Completion of marking to deadlines.</li> <li>• Attendance at all timetabled invigilation.</li> <li>• Completion of programme and module specifications to deadlines.</li> <li>• Attendance at all relevant committees and exam boards.</li> <li>• Completion of programme level reviews to deadlines.</li> </ul>
<p><b>5) Leadership</b></p>	<p><b>Overview</b></p> <p>Responsibilities could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability for setting and advancing the academic strategy of the Department in line with College and University strategic plans and direction.</li> <li>• Ensuring that staff performance is managed appropriately and that fair workload allocation processes are in place.</li> <li>• Creating and exploiting new opportunities for knowledge transfer activity to secure additional income streams and new areas of teaching and/or research.</li> <li>• Ensuring the highest levels of quality, integrity and ethics in all research undertaken.</li> <li>• Review and develop new programmes to attract new students, partnerships and markets.</li> <li>• Taking responsibility for devolved budgets and comply with University financial regulations.</li> </ul>

Area	Characteristics
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintaining compliance with auditing, quality assurance and risk management procedures both internal and external.</li><li>• Promotion and representation of the University both internally and externally.</li></ul>

**Need more information?**

View the [My Development Conversation](#) Intranet page or speak with your manager, HR or OD Business partner.

Visit the [Organisational Development](#) intranet pages to see the range of face to face and online solutions, on offer, to improve your professional and personal skills.

Go to the [HR intranet page](#) for information on policies and processes related to performance management.

# Questions

## Can I use the template to record my priorities whilst on probation?

The template is available to all academic staff, and non-academic staff who have completed their probation. Probation for all staff is a separate process.

## 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 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.

- **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
- **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.
- **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.