

Continuous Learning – conversation starters

The APS Academy has developed conversation prompts to guide and inspire managers to engage in conversation with staff about learning reflection. The aim is to create an open and supportive environment, where employees feel enabled, encouraged and comfortable discussing their learning experiences, goals, and challenges.

Through thoughtful conversation and reflection, we aim to inspire staff to pursue learning opportunities and grow a continuous learning mindset. We aim to empower managers to build committed, high-performing and engaged teams. We aim to instil a culture of continuous learning in the APS, and we aim to build an agile, highly capable and future-ready APS workforce.

1. Reflecting on learning

- What's something new you've learned recently that you're excited about?
- How have your recent learning experiences been applied to or influenced your work?
- How have your recent learning experiences shaped the way you think?
- What's something you've learned that you would approach differently next time?
- What is something you have learnt that surprised you, or that you didn't expect?
- What learning have you experienced that could benefit others, by you sharing your 'lessons learnt'?

2. Setting learning goals

- What are your current learning goals, and how can I support you to achieve them?
- Are there any specific areas you'd like to improve on or explore in your role?
- What new skills or knowledge do you think would make the most impact on your performance?
- What are your short-term, middle and long term goals? How can I support you to achieve them?
- When do you want to achieve your goals? Do you have a timeframe in mind?
- What are your long term goals and what learning could you undertake to work towards achieving them?

3. Resource sharing

- Have you come across any interesting articles, books, videos or online courses that you'd recommend to the team?
- How did/do you find interesting resources to share?
- Are there any online communities or forums you've found valuable for learning and networking?
- Have you connected with other stakeholders, agencies, SMEs who could add value to our work?

4. Challenges and experiments

- What lessons have been learnt from challenges you've encountered, and how can these lessons be applied in future?
- What experiments or projects could you take on that would stretch your abilities?
- What would help you adapt to new priorities and tasks?
- What are your developmental needs, and what is your appetite (and capacity) to address them? How can I demonstrate my support and encouragement?
- How can I support you to explore development opportunities?

5. Feedback and growth

- Can you think of a recent project where you learned something new? How can we build on that experience?
- How do you think your role might evolve over time, and what skills will become more important?
- Does the feedback you receive help you to recognise your learning and development? If not, how could it be better tailored to you?

6. Learning from setbacks and change

- What setbacks have you faced lately? How can we turn those experiences into learning opportunities?
- What recent changes have affected your work? What did you learn from how you responded?
- How has failure made a positive impact on how you approach things?

7. Cross-agency learning

- Are there colleagues from other departments whose expertise you're interested in learning from?
- How might we encourage more knowledge-sharing and collaboration across agencies?
- Are you a member of, or are you interested in joining Government networks (via GovTEAMS) or forums?
- What information or expertise do you have that could benefit others (in agency or across agencies)? Would you be interested in sharing?

8. Applying learning to work

- How can you incorporate your recent learning into your daily tasks or approaches to your work?
- Can you think of a project where applying a different approach could lead to better results?
- What learning have you undertaken that has informed a change in perspective or strategy?
- How has your learning impacted your perspective on how to manage unpredictable and fast-paced change?

9. Celebrating Learning Achievements

- What's one learning accomplishment you're proud of?
- How can we better acknowledge your learning success and its positive effect?
- How can we recognise and showcase your learning journey to inspire others?

10. Manager support

- How can I help you to feel supported to invest in learning?
- How can I support you to undertake/implement new learning?
- What is your preferred learning style? Learning through work (on-the-job), people, resources, courses?
- Are there any specific learning opportunities you would like to undertake or wish we offered?

These conversation starters are simply a starting point to promote reflective conversations about developing continuous learning practices and growing a continuous learning culture in your workplace.