

How to discuss the Career Mobility Program with your manager or direct supervisor – A Guide

Whether you're waiting to hear about the status of your application for the Career Mobility Program, or you've just been informed that you've been accepted, it's a good idea to start planning how to discuss this exciting opportunity with your direct supervisor so that you're both set up for success throughout this process.

If you're seizing this opportunity, it's clear that you are ready for a change in your career path and it's important to seek support in as many ways as possible.

Your direct supervisor plays an important role in your ability to succeed in the Career Mobility Program, so they will need to know how to best support you in achieving your goals while maintaining the equilibrium of your team and department.

Here are 5 tips for how to talk to your supervisor about your participation in the Career Mobility Program:

1.) Think. Reflect. Prepare.

Now that you're familiar with the requirements and benefits of the Career Mobility Program, it's beneficial to take a moment to clarify your thinking about WHY you're making this choice and to write down your top three reasons. Your supervisor will value knowing:

- why this matters to you,
- how important it is for your career, and
- how it aligns with your career and life goals

Clearly articulating and then writing down your reasons for participating in the program can also help motivate you when things get challenging along the way.

Further, reviewing the full job description for the role you're pursuing after completing the program and the responsibilities it entails can inspire your thinking about how you might communicate with your supervisor. Taking some time at the outset to consider how your current skill set coupled with the knowledge you'll acquire through the program could contribute to filling job shortages within the state will be useful in helping your supervisor understand that your choice benefits the both of you and the greater Oregon community.

2.) Schedule a Meeting.

You likely know the best way to communicate with your direct supervisor, how they prefer to be contacted to set up 1:1 meeting, (calendar invite, email, etc.), and where/how they prefer

to meet (face-to-face, online, over coffee, etc.). So follow their protocols for contacting them to set up a meeting and include the topic discussion to give them adequate time to prepare. It could be something as simple as, "I'd like to meet to discuss an upcoming career development opportunity."

Schedule it far enough out so you can prepare and practice, but early enough so you will have enough time to create a plan together, which can take more than one meeting. Also, make this a separate meeting from your scheduled 1:1 or performance review since career development conversations can take time to process and work through any potential scheduling or resource barriers. This conversation deserves a space of its own, and you deserve the time to discuss it fully without other items on the agenda.

3.) Practice.

Yep. Practice makes...better. So if you're nervous about the conversation with your supervisor, or if you have never talked to your boss about what you want for your future, take some time to practice the things you might say, questions you might ask, and the responses you might give depending on how you anticipate they will respond. Even if you've worked with your supervisor for some time, it's always helpful to practice professional communication whenever you're unsure of a meeting's outcome. You can write down a list of questions or a list of talking points to practice at home or with a trusted friend or family member. However, you choose to go about it, practicing ahead of time can help alleviate your fears of any unknowns when talking to your supervisor.

4.) Create a Plan.

When you meet with your supervisor, focus on the main points about the program, its duration, what it will entail, and any time and resources that you might request (work time, use of your work computer to complete assignments, etc.). Doing this will give them all the information necessary to help create a clear plan and set of expectations moving forward. It's important to ask questions that will help you both build a mutually agreed upon plan that will cover any potential obstacles for either of you during this process. Additionally, coming into the meeting with possible solutions for any potential obstacles you see can help save time and show initiative.

Providing your supervisor with access to the Career Mobility website, the timeline of the program (located on the website), and any other materials with program specifics is helpful to have during this meeting. Success is a team effort and with good questions, the right attitude, and a bit of time and intention, you and your supervisor can help create a path for continued excellence within your agency.

5.) Follow Up.

Once you've had your initial meeting with your supervisor, make sure that you schedule a 1:1 meeting with them weekly or bi-weekly to check in about your progress in the program. Update them about any major events that may be coming up, like a quarterly mid-term meet up (once a term the whole cohort will meet to build support and discuss ideas/needs) or finals week, and what if any additional support may be needed during this time. Remember to give ample notice of any absence that will be required so that your supervisor has adequate time to prepare for your vacancy for that day/shift. If you already have a regularly scheduled 1:1 meeting, your progress in the program can comprise one item on its agenda to ensure that your goals are being discussed, expectations are being met, and that the plan you created together is still working or if it needs to be modified. Following up regularly will ensure that the lines of communication stay open throughout this process, providing a better experience for everyone.

Additional Materials:

Below is a sample script to get you started in talking with your supervisor about your participation in the Career Mobility Program, along with a list of possible guided questions for this meeting. Feel free to use it and make it your own or use your own list and script. Either way, trust yourself. YOU GOT THIS!

Sample Script:

"I am preparing to take part in the new Career Mobility Accounting Program being offered for state workers. Participating in this program will allow me to meet the minimum qualifications for Accounting 1 & 2 positions and I'm excited about the prospects this offers me on my career path. This is a yearlong program, and I will be taking classes online through Western Oregon University for four consecutive terms throughout the year. This will mean that I will have coursework each week to complete but it's mostly on my own schedule. However, there will be work time that I need each week to study, complete my work, and attend meetings each quarter. I'd like to discuss a plan that works within this structure and that helps ensure success both for me and this department. I'm open to ideas and have brought a few of my own.

Guided Questions:

- What questions do you have about the structure of the program?
- What do you foresee as being the biggest challenge to my needing time to complete my coursework and attend quarterly meetings?
- What are your expectations of me and my work during this time given the hours that may be needed for my coursework and meetings?



For more information: <https://www.upliftoregon.org/overview/>