



CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR INDIVIDUALS

Using the Finance Capability Framework for career development conversations

The Finance Capability Framework is not a formal tool for performance management – ie, it should not be used to make a formal assessment of an employee’s performance.

Rather, the Capability Framework should be used for growing finance professionals’ capabilities by defining what ‘good’ looks like across diverse spheres of their work. The first steps towards this involves self-reflection and capability-based conversations, followed by targeted Learning & Development. This Guide will help staff and managers to have these development-focused conversations, both in the context of their current role and their possible future career pathways.

When having a discussion on capabilities, the ‘**Know - Do - Be**’ model (Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes) may be helpful to guide your thinking. For example:

- What are my current strengths in the ‘Know - Do - Be’ aspects of my current capabilities?
- Where do I need development?

Before talking with your people leader and/or mentor:

Take some time to review the [Finance Capability Framework](#). You may find it helpful to consider these points:

- Which capabilities are the most relevant to my *current* role?
- At what level do I feel my current capabilities are at (eg, at the ‘Practising’ level, or at the ‘Leading’ level)?
- What are some work examples that support my thinking on this – that I can discuss with my people leader/mentor when we meet?

For example: I am at the ‘practising’ level of financial processes and reporting. I think this because: I have sound knowledge of the financial processes I use; I regularly produce accurate, timely, and useful financial reports; and I have also identified changes to relevant processes that I feel will improve these.

Also ask yourself:

- What sort of roles would I like to do *in the future* – what do I aspire to?
- What type of work might I be interested in pursuing, and which capabilities will contribute to my being able to do this? Or, conversely,
- Which capabilities am I interested in developing – and how might these open career opportunities to me?
 - How might I identify these?
- Are these opportunities available to me within my current workplace?

When talking with your people leader and/or mentor

Consider asking questions that focus on 'stretching' your thinking and your approach to your work, and that allow you to look from different perspectives.

For example, during current role conversations:

- Which capabilities do I think are my strengths, and can I share some examples of this? Which capabilities could I develop further for my *current* role?
- How could I develop these? – eg, with more on-the-job training, by spending time with a counterpart or peer in my workplace or another agency, or, say, by way of specific training courses?
 - What support might be available at my workplace for accessing these learning opportunities?

Ask your people leader to review your self-assessment of your capabilities and levels. Where there may be differences (with their perspectives), discuss the reasons why you have arrived at each level, give work examples that are relevant to or that demonstrate the chosen levels, and discuss how any gaps could be bridged.

Discuss with your people leader any short or longer-term career goals you may like to share.

For example:

- What type of roles you have interest in for the future, and what the pathway to those might look like?
- Which capabilities should I initially focus on to achieve my goals?
 - How can I develop these capabilities – eg, within my current role, perhaps via another role at my workplace, or potentially a secondment, joining a 'community of practice' or similar, or attending some specific training?
- To progress towards your longer-term career goals within your current workplace, what are the levels of capability you may need to demonstrate?
 - What types of roles and what type of organisation – including the one you are in now – would help you develop your capabilities to achieve your short and longer-term career goals?



CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR PEOPLE LEADERS

Using the Finance Capability Framework for career development conversations

When having a discussion on capabilities, the 'Know - Do - Be' model (Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes) – on which the Framework is based – may be helpful to guiding your thinking. For example:

- What are my peoples' current strengths in the 'Know - Do - Be' aspects of their current capabilities?
- Where do their capabilities need development?
- Where are the capability gaps in my team, and how can I develop these with the people I currently have in my team?

Suggestions for finance-related people leaders to consider before meeting with team members

As a leader, your role is to guide your team members on opportunities for enhancing their capabilities, although you are not expected to be a capability expert. During the process of guiding your team members, you may feel a little unsure or even vulnerable, depending on how much experience you have with this. Some of your team members may feel this way too.

As the focus is on development and growth, it's important to approach questions you may yourself have – or those your team members may raise – with a 'growth mindset'.

Creating a safe and mutually respectful space for developmental conversations, and working in a way that is consistent with your organisation's values will help with ensuring your people can get the most from their development sessions with you. You can also seek guidance when you're unsure about how to best hold these conversations – from, perhaps, your peers, other leaders, or from your HR colleagues. Mutually supporting one another can be helpful both to ourselves and to our team members.

A 'capability conversation' is, in principle, the same as other coaching-oriented conversations – you can approach these as you would approach regular developmental conversations with your team members. Remember: an effective coaching session should be two-way – asking questions of your team members that can encourage and support them with thinking through a challenge or an issue, and the options for responding.

Before holding developmental conversations with your people, you may find it helpful to review the Finance Capability Framework – consider the capabilities at each level that are required for each of the roles you manage, and prepare examples of how these capabilities could be ably demonstrated if they are not already.

When talking with your people

Consider asking these types of questions, which focus on active listening, learning about the person and supporting with input only when needed:

- I notice you excel at [type of work or situations] – do you enjoy this? What are the capabilities you feel these display?
- What capabilities, and at which level (eg, at the ‘practising’ level, or at an ‘leading’ level etc), do you feel that you currently have?
 - For each of these, try to link the conversation to the ‘Know - Do - Be’ aspects to see where your team members’ strengths lie within each capability.
 - Discuss any differences – between your people’s view and yours – of their capabilities. Ask for their thoughts on, and give examples of, the different capabilities relevant to the work of the role being discussed. It is ok to have different views, and to explore the reasons there may be for these.
- Some suggestions to consider:
 - If your people rate their capabilities as being lower than your view of these, they may benefit from some confidence-building.
 - When your people complete work that demonstrates certain levels of capability, look for how you can link these to the Framework – this may come in handy for the next developmental conversations you have with them.

Remember that none of these conversations should be judgmental or punitive. A correlation should not be drawn between the employee’s capability self-assessment/their manager’s assessment and the employee’s **formal performance rating**.

The focus of these coaching conversations is solely on the development or growth of the employee. It is expected that over time, capability discussions, self-reflection, coaching/mentoring and targeted Learning & Development will result in a lift in performance. However, this is an organic, people development process and not a formal HR process.

Additional questions to consider asking your people:

- Which capabilities and aspects of a capability do you think have helped you in your work?
- What have you learned over the last [time period] and which capabilities does this relate to, do you feel?
 - Did you develop these capabilities ‘on-the-job’, from a colleague, a peer, via training (eg, on our LMS or externally) or another way – or by way of a combination of these?
- What focus have you set for yourself for the next [time period], which capabilities would you like to further develop, and how are you planning towards this?
- How can I support you to develop the capabilities you have identified?
- What do you feel I could start/stop/continue to help with enabling us to get the most from developmental opportunities for you?
- Do you feel like you understand the different capabilities, and how they link to both your current role and your longer-term career aspirations?
- Can I suggest that we invite someone (internal to our workplace, or from outside) to our team hui – to learn more about how the Capability Framework can help you with your career development and the pathway you would like to pursue?
- What formal training (online or face-to-face) can you access – other than options I may have already suggested for you?
- Other than options I may have already suggested for you, what informal learning opportunities might there be - eg, videos, TED Talks, articles, books, or podcasts. Might there be conference or seminar opportunities we could consider together for you?