

Supervisor's Pre-Interview Worksheet

Complete this worksheet before conducting the retention interview, then use the "Supervisor's Interview Form" to conduct the interview and record your notes.

The retention interview can be a very valuable tool for both you and your staff member. Make this a time to get to know the person better and get real ideas about how you can help him or her have a better experience on the job now and stronger career growth in the future.

This interview is also designed to help you retain a valuable staff member. Conducting it well will be rewarding in many ways, especially if you take a few minutes to prepare.

Here are a few things you should make sure you do before conducting each interview:

Get the Facts Right. One thing you want to get across in this interview is that you know and value the interviewee. For supervisors, especially, who are responsible for a lot of staff, it is easy to forget or get confused about some of those simple facts that, if mistaken, give the staff member the idea that you don't even know him/her. So do some checking first:

1. Name: (Is there any question about how his/her name is pronounced and what s/he likes to be called?) _____
2. How long has this staff member worked in this unit? _____
3. What are his/her present job responsibilities? _____
4. When was his/her last job or project change? _____
5. What does this person do well that can be used to his/her advantage? _____

6. What are some areas for improvement? And what opportunities can I provide that will help develop these areas? _____

7. What key things do I need to know about this person? _____

Use this Opportunity Well. If you don't feel you have enough recent information to answer the questions below, ask someone who would know.

1. What are some things this person might be most proud of about his/her performance this year?
2. Why do you think this person's continued employment is valuable to your unit?
3. How has this person grown over the time you have known him/her? (New skills? More expertise? Accepted greater responsibility? Greater leadership abilities? Higher performance? Better quality?)
4. Has this person been disappointed in this job in the past about promises/expectations that were not fulfilled? If so, without rehashing that history, is there a way for you to rebuild trust in this interview and in its follow-up?
5. What is the next logical step in this person's career track? What are some ways this person could grow to fill that or another more challenging position? (Assignments? Training? Other?) You might also check out the University's Career Navigator at <http://careernavigator.umjobs.org/> for career track options.

Make the Interview Productive. The primary purpose of these interviews is to help you identify what must be done to keep your key staff members on the job (or at the University), in light of the risk of losing them to other employers. A secondary purpose is to identify ways in which you can help the interviewee find greater job satisfaction in your department or unit. If you achieve these two purposes, you will probably also fulfill the third as well – to develop a richer, more collaborative relationship with your staff member.

Make the setting for this interview comfortable and see yourself as a host, inviting someone into your office to get to know them a little better. That might mean offering coffee or a beverage. Or meeting where there are comfortable chairs rather than across your desk. It almost certainly means treating the interviewee respectfully, using his or her name, and listening more than talking.

Acknowledge the person's growth and refer to his/her accomplishments in your conversation as examples in your questions, perhaps, or in illustrating your points. The relationships your interviewee has with other team members is also an important key to their retention, but tread

carefully here. If there are problems, it may be difficult for him/her to talk about them. And your interviewee will probably want assurances that you will not share their concerns with others. You may only be able to make suggestions about how he or she can address any problems themselves.

Ask questions to help you understand what this person wants most on the job, what s/he feels is lacking, and what might make them leave for another position. Your questions and, especially, your careful listening, will demonstrate a real interest in his/her success.

Try to focus on what he or she wants now and in the future—and identify how you might be able to help. Some employees may raise issues from the past that you feel are no longer relevant or resolvable. While you need to hear them out, you often can avoid getting embroiled in the old issue by acknowledging the feelings expressed and asking how the two of you can work together to make sure that the kind of situation that happened in the past never happens again.

You will occasionally be told of unrealistic hopes or be asked to do more than you can reasonably do. In such situations, you can simply say something like, “Let me tell you what I think I may be able to help you.” (You will find questions on your **Supervisor’s Interview Form** that will give you ideas about how you can help this interviewee by providing things like coaching, mentoring, opportunities for development, job enhancement, and guidance in maximizing career growth.)