Career Development Planning Guide



ONERED
RUTGERS EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

RUTGERS

Before You Begin

Career development can feel like a big, abstract idea — something you know you should be thinking about, but not always sure where to start. This workbook is specifically designed to address that ambiguity.

Think of it less as a formal exercise and more as a conversation with yourself. The reflection questions, activities, and planning tools within are designed to help you slow down, take stock of where you've been, and intentionally decide where you wish to head.

You don't need to have it all figured out before you begin. In fact, the workbook works best when you approach it with curiosity rather than pressure.

A few things to keep in mind:

- **This workbook is for you first** — complete it for yourself, then share whatever you feel comfortable discussing with your manager.
- There is no deadline and no grade.
- Return to it whenever it feels right.
- The best time to use it is before a development conversation with your manager, but any time is a good time to reflect

LinkedIn Learning: *Rutgers Single Sign-On grants you access to LinkedIn Learning's Career Hub, a new tool designed to empower you in your career. For more information on getting started, visit it.rutgers.edu/linkedin-learning/*

Managers*: a dedicated section for you is available in the appendix at the back*

RUTGERS

Table of Contents

01 **Know Yourself** — *Build self-awareness before jumping into development planning*

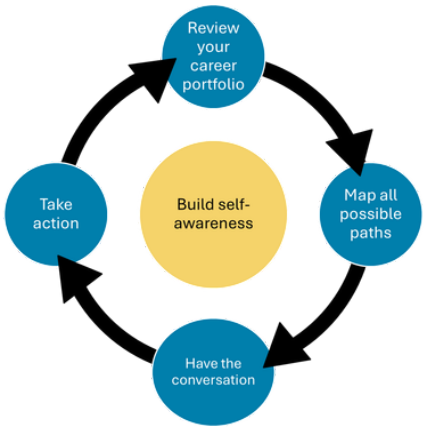
02 **Understand Your Journey** — *Reflect on where you have been so you can make more intentional choices about where you are going*

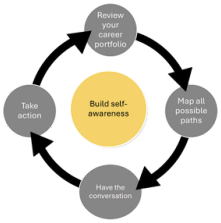
03 **Map All Possible Paths** — *Translate your self-awareness into concrete goals and a clear sense of what you are working toward*

04 **Have the Conversation** — *Equip you with the language and confidence to advocate for your own development with your manager*

05 **Take Action & Track Progress** — *Turn your goals and conversations into a living plan you will actually return to and use*

06 **Manager Appendix** — *Helpful resources to support managers in being Total Talent Developers*





Part 1:
Know Yourself

What does development look like at Rutgers?

At Rutgers, you have the opportunity to take the lead in your own development journey. This means that the direction of your development plan is entirely in your hands. Whether your goal is to enhance your job satisfaction, acquire new skills for your current position, or explore ways to prepare for your next career move, collaborating with your manager and creating an action plan can help you achieve your desired outcomes.

OneRED

One Rutgers Employee Development (OneRED) is the umbrella under which the university provides employees with a suite of programs and services to enable purposeful professional growth.

OneRED seeks to promote a culture of continuous learning and introspection that empowers employees to drive their development through the building of the Rutgers Competencies and impactful learning experiences so they can be successful, grow, and thrive at the university.

OneRED Principles

The below framework provides insight into what development at Rutgers truly entails.

1. Employees own their development.
2. As Total Talent Developers, managers must work with their direct reports to navigate development planning.
3. Development focuses on building Rutgers University's competencies for professional success.
4. Development is continuous and primarily gained through key experiences

Getting to know yourself

Before you dive in, take a moment to consider what makes you uniquely *you*. This exercise will help establish a strong foundation for your goals

Where does your energy go?

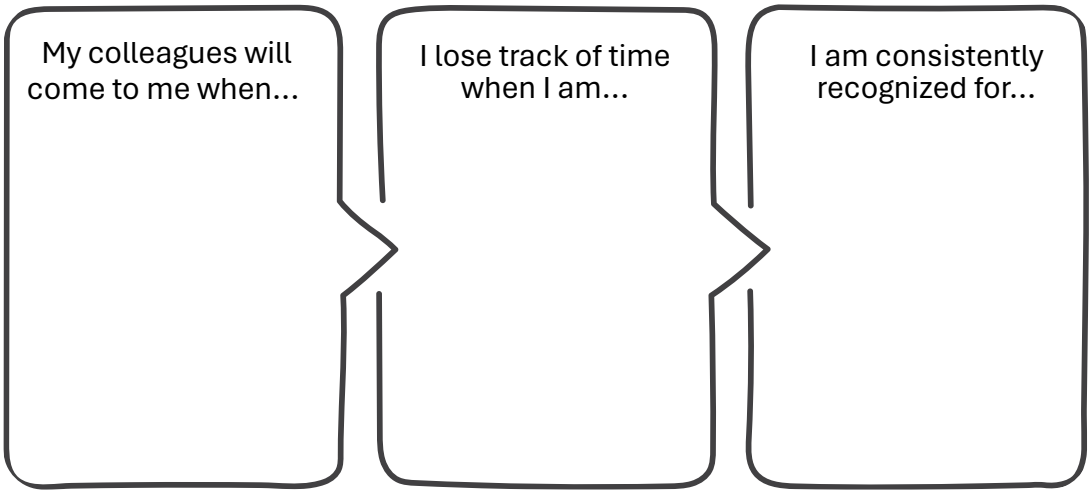
Think about your recent work experiences. Using the space provided, jot down tasks, interactions, or moments that consistently give you energy — and those that drain it.

Notice any patterns? Remember them when setting your development goals.

What Energizes Me	What Drains Me

What are your strengths?

Your strengths can be seen in the things you are "known for," but you might have hidden or untapped talent, as well. As quickly as you can, fill in the blanks with whatever comes to mind.



What do you value in your work?

Consider the list below and circle the three values that resonate most with you right now. If you find that what you value most is not listed, feel free to add it to this list.

Autonomy — Being Challenged — Belonging — Collaboration — Creativity — Doing Meaningful Work — Excellence — Fairness — Flexibility — Growth — Having Impact — Helping Others — Innovation — Learning — Leading Others — Making Decisions — Recognition — Relationships — Stability — Variety

Reflection checkpoint

What do these insights reveal about the type of work and environment in which you thrive best? Does anything feel misaligned in your current role?

Competency-based Skills Development

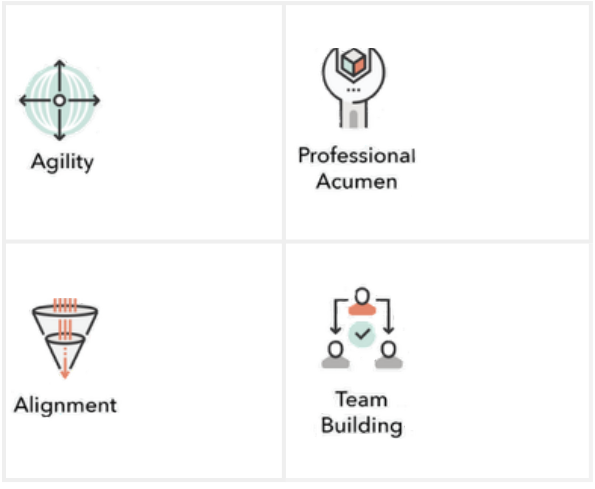
Gaining insights into your current abilities will facilitate meaningful self-reflection. The Rutgers Competencies provide a foundational framework for staff development, allowing employees to collaborate with their supervisors to assess, discuss, and cultivate the skills and behaviors essential for success. Furthermore, these competencies aim to empower all employees to take charge of their own professional growth.

For more information on the Rutgers Competency Model, visit uhr.rutgers.edu/organizational-and-talent-development/competencies.

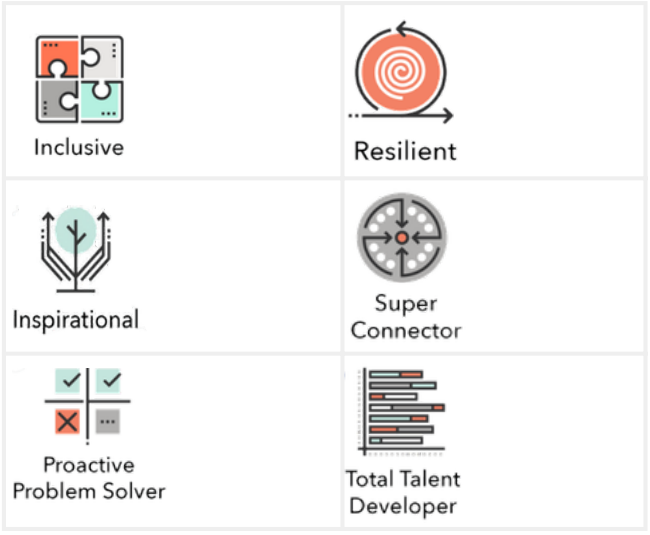
Development Challenge #1:

Complete the assessments and transcribe scores from the report that will be sent to your email in the space below. Your manager should also conduct an assessment on your behalf, allowing you both to collaborate in identifying strengths and areas for improvement.

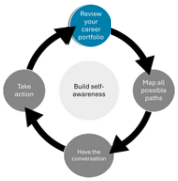
Professional Competencies Assessment



Leadership Competencies Assessment



RUTGERS



Part 2:
Understand Your Journey

Your Career Portfolio

Self-awareness is achieved through reflection activities, and it is a critical first step in building your development plan. By understanding the impact of where you have been in your career, you can identify what you need to move your goals forward.

- Your career is more complex than simply following a linear path. You may have heard of a career path, which is a singular pursuit (climb the ladder in one direction and focus on what is straight ahead); modern workplaces are more dynamic.
- You have been building a career portfolio for your entire life. Even before you began working, you have been developing a set of skills, experiences, and abilities unique to you.
- A career portfolio is a never-ending source of discovery and fulfillment. Career portfolios represent your vast and diverse professional journey, including the various twists and turns, whether made by choice or by circumstance.

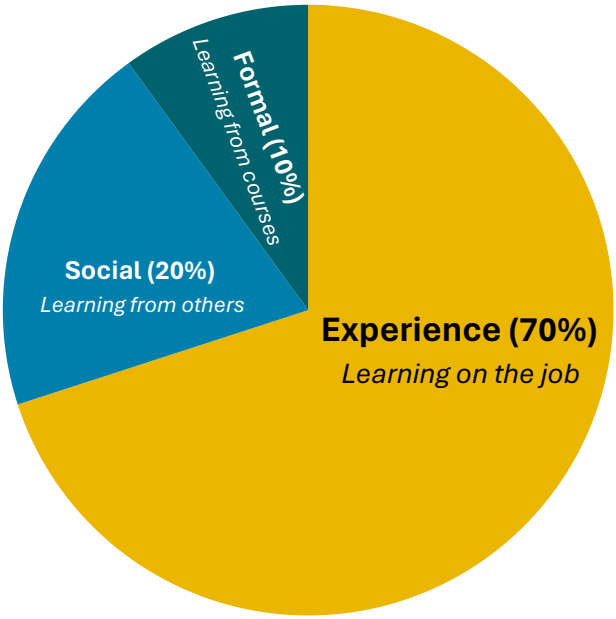
Development Challenge #2:

Experiences come in many forms. It could look like the multiyear systems project you led, or the presentation you delivered to leadership, or the difficult conversation you've had with your manager. You learn from experiences every day. Use the chart below to reflect on those impactful moments.

Past Experiences	**Experience #1**	**Experience #2**	**Experience #3**
List three challenging work experiences.			
What were the challenges you had to overcome?			
What did you learn?			

Learning happens all the time

In a thirty-year longitudinal study, the Center for Creative Leadership identified three primary sources of learning and their respective level of influence in one's development. This is known as the 70/20/10 model, which indicates that professional growth happens daily, often without your awareness. Ninety percent of your development comes from your experience and learning from others. Notably, traditional methods such as courses or training contribute to only 10% of an individual's overall development.



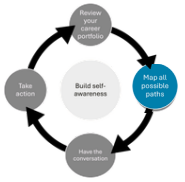
A shift in mindset is critical when we consider where to find development opportunities.

Where can I find development?

Below are just a few examples of where to find development at Rutgers that follow the Center for Creative Leadership's 70/20/10 model:

Experiential (70%)	Social (20%)	Formal (10%)
• Ask your manager if there are any opportunities for you to lead an initiative • Identify an area of improvement and develop a plan for implementation • Shadow a colleague who has a skillset you want to develop • Participate in a committee	• Connect with those in a similar field as you on LinkedIn professional groups • Attend networking events and solicit career advice • Become a mentor to a more junior employee • Find a colleague with an interesting career path and have a career conversation with them	• Look for functional and technical training opportunities offered by Rutgers • Enter your career goals in the LinkedIn Learning Career Hub to generate a custom learning plan • Use your tuition remission benefit

RUTGERS



Part 3:
Map All Possible Paths

Career Scenario Planning

Before you commit to a single goal, it helps to consider a few possible paths. While some may have a clear direction in mind, others might still be figuring it out. This activity invites you to sketch out three directions your career could take because exploring options helps you make more intentional decisions.

Use the table below to think through each possible path: growing in your current role, making a lateral shift to a different function/team/area, or a stretch goal for a long-term aspiration. Write in bullet points or short phrases. This is your thinking space, not a final answer.

Career Scenarios	**Grow in Role**	**Lateral Move**	**Stretch Goal**
What skills would this path require?			
What energizes or inspires you about this option?			
What concerns do you have about this path?			
Does this path align with my values?			

Development Challenge #3:

Use LinkedIn Learning's Role Guides to explore the skills and learning paths associated with roles that interest you.

How to write development goals

Once you have a sense of direction, the next step is turning it into a concrete, actionable goal.

- Start with your end-goal in mind, and reflect on your current skills to determine where there are gaps in your capabilities.
- Ask your manager and peers for constructive feedback, and actively listen to the feedback being delivered to you. Consider any patterns that come up.
- Break down the smallest steps needed to arrive at your end-goal.
- Consistently dedicate time to focus on your goal, whether that means blocking time on your calendar or setting up check-ins with an accountability partner!

Example: Skill-Deepening Goal (Lateral/Depth)

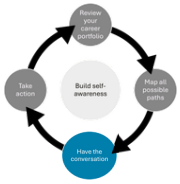
End Goal	Transition into a data and analytics role within the university
Current Skills	Strong communication, project coordination, familiarity with Excel.
Feedback Received	Build technical skills in data visualization and analysis tools
SMART Goal	Complete two LinkedIn Learning data analysis courses and one visualization course by end of semester to build foundational skills for a lateral move into an analytics-adjacent role.
70/20/10 Type	Formal (10%) — LinkedIn Learning Social (20%) — informational interview with a colleague in analytics

Development Challenge #4:

Take one of your three paths from the Career Scenario Planning activity and write your own goal using the template below. Be specific: the more concrete your goal, the easier it is to act on.

End Goal	
Current Skills	
Feedback Received	
SMART Goal	
70/20/10 Type	

RUTGERS



Part 4:
Have the Conversation

Finding Your Voice

Talking about your own career goals can feel uncomfortable, especially if you haven't done it before or if you're not sure how your manager will respond. Before you have the conversation, take a moment to get grounded. Use the prompts below to reflect before you sit down with your manager.

Before the Conversation: Ask Yourself

- What do I most want my manager to understand about where I am in my career right now?
- What has been energizing me in my work lately — and what has been draining me?
- What is one thing I wish I had more opportunity to do in my current role?
- What am I most proud of over the past year, and what does that tell me about what I value?
- If I could change one thing about my role to make it more fulfilling, what would it be?

Starting the Conversation with Your Manager

You own your development — which means you also own the initiation. Use the prompts below as a starting point. You don't need to use these word for word. Let them inspire your own language.

Opening the Conversation

- "I've been thinking about my development goals and would love to set aside some time to discuss them with you. Would you be open to a dedicated conversation?"
- "I recently worked through the OneRED Career Development Workbook and have some reflections I'd like to share. Can we find time to talk it through?"
- "I want to be more intentional about my growth this year. Can we make development a regular part of our one-on-ones?"

Discussing Your Goals

- "Based on my competency assessment, I'd like to focus on strengthening [skill]. Do you have suggestions for how I might develop that in my current role?"
- "I'm interested in moving toward [goal or role]. What do you think I would need to develop to get there?"
- "I want to make sure my development goals are aligned with what the team needs. What skills or competencies do you think are most important for me to build right now?"

Asking for Support and Opportunities

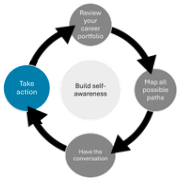
- “Are there any upcoming projects or initiatives where I could take on a stretch assignment or lead a piece of the work?”
- “Is there someone on campus whose work or career path you think I should learn more about? I’d love an introduction.”
- “Would you be willing to share feedback on [specific skill] so I know where to focus my development efforts?”

Keeping the Conversation Going

- “Can we check in on my development goals during our one-on-ones? Even a few minutes each month would be helpful.”
- “I’ve made progress on my goal to [specific action] — I’d love to share an update and get your thoughts on next steps.”
- “I want to make sure I’m taking advantage of the right opportunities. Can we revisit my development plan together before end of quarter?”

If the Conversation Feels Difficult

- “I appreciate you hearing me out. Even if there aren’t immediate opportunities, I’d love your guidance on what I can be doing now to prepare.”
- “I understand there may be limitations right now. Can we talk about what a realistic path might look like given those constraints?”
- “I want to make sure we’re aligned. Can you help me understand what success looks like for me in this role over the next year?”



Part 5:
Take Action & Track Progress

Development Planning Template

Think of this template as your whiteboard, as it can help inform your SMART Goals Worksheet completion. Write bullet points as it relates to the question prompt. The SMART Goals Worksheet will then help you take your goals from ideas on a page to actionable ways to grow.

What is your goal?	Why did you set this goal?	When will you achieve it?	How will you achieve it?	What will success look like?	70/20/10 type

Your Development Planning Checklist

Work through this checklist with your completed workbook in hand. Items are organized by timing to help you sequence your actions.

Before Your Manager Meeting

- ☐ Schedule a dedicated development conversation with your manager
  Use the conversation starters in Section 4 to prepare
- ☐ Take the Rutgers Competency assessment(s) and ask your manager to complete one on your behalf
- ☐ Log in to LinkedIn Learning Career Hub and familiarize yourself with the platform
  linkedin.com/learning — sign in with your university credentials
- ☐ Review your responses from this guide and identify 2–3 themes you want to discuss
  Bring this planning guide to your meeting or jot notes from it

After Your Manager Meeting

- ☐ Debrief together on your competency assessment results
  Identify both strengths and areas for growth
- ☐ Complete your Development Planning Template and write at least one SMART goal
- ☐ Identify at least one action from each of the three 70/20/10 learning types to include in your plan
  Not every plan needs all three — aim for a mix that fits your goals
- ☐ Share your development plan with your manager and agree on a check-in cadence
  Monthly or quarterly check-ins work well for most people
- ☐ Identify one person in your network — inside or outside Rutgers — who can support your goal as a mentor, peer, or thought partner

Ongoing

- ☐ Identify a peer learning partner and schedule an initial conversation
  Exchange goals, share resources, and hold each other accountable
- ☐ Explore a LinkedIn Learning course or learning path relevant to your SMART goal
  Use Role Guides and AI Coaching to find the right content
- ☐ Set a calendar reminder to revisit your development plan in 90 days
  Use the 90-Day Check-In page on the next page

RUTGERS

Part 6:
Manager Appendix

Manager's Responsibility in Employee Development

Staff development is critical to the achievement of university-wide goals. As a manager, it's up to you to…

Listen and stay informed. Listen to your employees when they talk about their interests and aspirations. Help them evaluate their skills based on the feedback and assessments they complete. Stay informed about what development opportunities are available and what skills and roles the university needs to be successful.

Use this information to form insights and connections and help support your team in creating a development plan. Make suggestions about opportunities to gain experience, exposure and education based on their aspirations and interests; help open doors for potential mentorships, trainings, project teams or stretch assignments. Be realistic about what development opportunities make sense based on individual aspirations and the business needs.

Regularly check in and provide ongoing coaching and feedback. Ongoing conversations will help you stay connected with your team, discuss progress, work through challenges and provide guidance and coaching needed as they grow and develop in their careers.

Tip: LinkedIn Learning now offers an AI Coaching tool to help you prepare for development conversations.

Developing for One Rutgers

Sometimes, even with thebestof encouragement and leadership, your direct reports will not be able to get the development they need in the role they are in –***that is a good thing!*** Do not get discouraged when you have already provided your direct reports with opportunities to help them advance in their skills and capabilities.

If you have a direct report who is still looking for more challenges, they might just be ready for their next career move. Instead of limiting their growth, help them find their next opportunity within the university. Connect them to your network and advocate for all the great work they have done for you. Everyone wins when we develop for One Rutgers.

Implementing a Development Plan

Manager's guide to supporting their direct reports

1. **Assess the proficiency of your direct reports using the Rutgers Competency assessment(s)**. It is important that you share with your direct report an external perspective of their proficiencies; they may be under- (or over-) estimating their abilities, and the assessment will act as an objective feedback tool.
2. **Set up time to discuss the results**. Your 1:1s do not have to be limited to status updates. Give enough advance notice to have a career development conversation with each of your direct reports.
3. **Provide feedback and ask open-ended questions.** Even after completing the reflection exercises, a two-way dialogue with thought provoking feedback about what they learned can unlock even more insights for them.
4. **Act accordingly.** Do not leave the conversation without tangible actions for you to take to help them develop – even if it just involves an introduction to a potential mentor. Follow up regularly on their progress.

Sample development conversation questions

- What do you like about your role?
- What don't you like about it?
- After completing the assessments, what have you learned about your competency strengths and weaknesses?
- What progress have you already made towards your goals?
- Which competencies do you want to improve immediately?
- How would you identify your current competency proficiency level?
- How do you think others would describe your proficiency level?
- What gaps do you see in your current proficiency and the ability to achieve your goals?
- What is getting in your way of enjoying what you do?
- How do you want to contribute to the team? To the university?
- What can I do to help you throughout your professional development pursuits?

Providing Feedback

Why do I need to provide feedback?

Feedback is a great place to start to help nurture your employee's development – but that is not the only reason to provide feedback and coaching. Feedback delivery is the most important tool in your toolkit because it helps you as a leader to manage expectations with your team. Honing your skill of providing feedback can take any intention you have of wanting your employee to succeed more apparent.

What makes feedback impactful?

Research shows that for feedback tobetaken seriously, a genuine desire to see the feedback receiver improve needs tobepresent. Make sure your feedback comes from a place of caring. To enable yourself togivethe most impactful, development-driven feedback, check out these resources:

- What is a feedback model? Benefits and common types (article)
- Delivering employee feedback (25 min)
- Building a Coaching Culture: Improving Performance Through Timely Feedback (1hr)
- Conversations Count: Coaching Guide for Managers (resource)

Identifying Development Opportunities

Think back to the 70/20/10 model of learning, which showed us that development can be found anywhere. As a manager, it is your responsibility to connect your direct reports to various development opportunities. Consider the examples below:

Experiential (70%)	Social (20%)	Formal (10%)
• When delegating, consider the direct reports you do not often assign a "project lead" role if their skill level and willingness is aligned appropriately. • Connect with your colleagues to see if there are any opportunities to take on a stretch assignment in their areas; review the development plans of your direct report(s) to see if there is alignment. • Ask a colleague who has a skillset your direct report wants to develop if they would be okay with shadowing	• Ask a colleague to be a guest speaker at your upcoming team meeting; this will provide your team exposure and an opportunity to better understand operations of other departments. • Share upcoming networking events with your team; offer to attend with them. • Connect a colleague with an interesting career path with a direct report who has similar interests.	• Look for functional and technical training opportunities • Recommend trainings through LinkedIn Learning. • Remind your team of their tuition remission benefit. • Allow time and space for your direct reports to attend webinars and workshops that will aid in their development goal achievement.