

OSU GROW

GUIDED REFLECTION ON WORK



“Working for Celebrations Catering has shown me what it’s like to work in a flexible and inclusive environment. I get to meet and work with adults and students who enjoy their job and fellow coworkers. As a result, I always feel welcomed. I have learned how to lead others at my job and I am able to test my skills in communicating with others and becoming more confident in myself.”

—Lauren Williams
University Dining Services

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FOR QUESTIONS OR MORE INFORMATION
ABOUT OSU **GROW** VISIT THE WEBSITE:

studentaffairs.okstate.edu/assessment/

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DIVISION OF
STUDENT
AFFAIRS

OSU GROW

GUIDED REFLECTION ON WORK

The Division of Student Affairs's mission is to empower personal development and success through transformative experiences, services, and support. As the largest employer on campus, it is our goal to make student employment a high-impact activity, one that requires students to reflect on their learning and connect that learning to within and beyond the classroom, through OSU GROW.

OSU GROW (Guided Reflection on Work) uses brief, structured conversations between student employees and their supervisors to help make the learning that is occurring through student employment more visible to the student. Supervisors in the Division are expected to have two OSU GROW conversations (either individual or small group format) with student employees each semester.

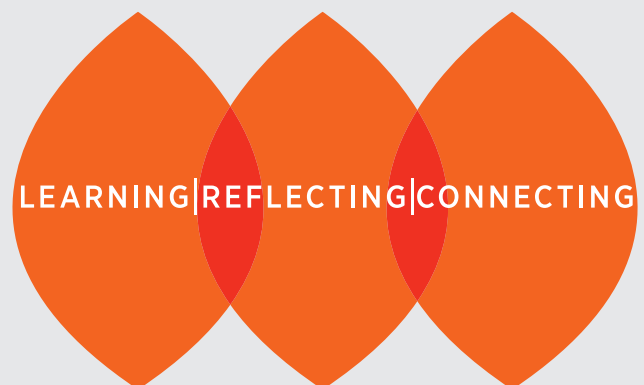
Students who participate in OSU GROW are expected to gain skills associated with the Division's five Student Learning Domains of Career Readiness, Critical Thinking, Intercultural and Global Fluency, Leadership, and Life Skills. Specifically, students are expected to:

- Improve their writing and verbal communication skills
- Gain multicultural competence
- Develop time management and conflict negotiation skills
- Use critical thinking skills to solve problems
- Learn about career options
- Gain the ability to see connections between work and academics

The nine outcomes of the student employment experience result in transferable skills (or competencies) that will benefit students both now and in the future. These are the nine outcomes we will measure each year in the survey of student employees.

Supervisors are very important assets in helping students recognize the skills they are developing through work and academics. The OSU GROW conversations are new for some supervisors, while others may have been having these types of interactions for a while. The OSU GROW program simply helps provide additional structure.

The Division of Student Affairs is a leader on campus in providing an impactful student employment experience. These resources are supplied to help support supervisors in having OSU GROW conversations with their student employees.



How does OSU GROW connect to the skills student employees gain?

The Division of Student Affairs has identified skills associated with the Division’s Student Learning Domains that we expect students to gain as a result of being an employee in the Division.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT SKILLS:

STUDENT EMPLOYEE SURVEY QUESTION:

1. writing	1. My job has helped me improve my writing skills.
2. verbal communication	2. My job has helped me improve my verbal communication skills.
3. diversity	3. Because of my job, I am able to work effectively with individuals with a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and cultures.
4. functioning independently	4. My job has helped me develop more effective time management skills.
5. conflict negotiation	5. My job has helped me develop conflict negotiation skills.
6. problem solving	6. My job has helped me use critical thinking skills to form opinions and solve problems.
7. preparation for real-world employment	7. My job has helped prepare me for the world of full-time employment.
8. learn about career options	8. My job has helped me learn more about career options.
9. see connections between work and academics	9. I can see connections between my job and my academic major/coursework.



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OSU GROW — How can you use the nine outcomes?

The nine outcomes of student employment listed above can be used in your conversations with students. You can use the outcomes to help prompt students when they are thinking about what they've learned in their job and how it connects to what they've learned in the classroom and vice versa.

For example:

Supervisor says, "What are you learning here that's helping you in school?"

Student says, "I don't know ..."

Supervisor says, "Well, what about time management? What have you learned about time management working here that you have used outside of work?"

For example:

Supervisor says, "What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?"

Student says, "Hmmm..."

Supervisor says, "You mentioned that you are taking a communications course. What have you learned about verbal communication in that course that you could use here?"

For example:

Supervisor says, "Can you give me a couple of examples of things you've learned here that you think you'll use in your chosen profession?"

Student says, "I haven't learned anything here that will be useful in my career."

Supervisor says, "What about working effectively with individuals from a variety of backgrounds and experiences? What have you learned about working with diverse others here that you could use in your future career?"

EMAIL OR MEMO TEMPLATES

WHAT IS THIS? Before having an OSU GROW conversation, supervisors should inform the student of the upcoming conversation through an email or memo.

Email Template: Conversation #1

Hello,

I just wanted to send out a quick reminder about our meeting next week and give you a little more information about our conversation. Across the Division of Student Affairs, we participate in a program called OSU GROW that is designed to help you make meaningful connections between what you're learning in the classroom and what you're learning on the job. Making these connections contributes to your overall academic and social success. Below is the list of questions that we will discuss during our conversation. Please take few moments to look over these questions and think about your answers prior to our meeting.

- How is this job fitting in with your academics?
- What are you learning here that's helping you in school?
- What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?
- Can you give me a couple of examples of things you've learned here that you think you'll use in your chosen profession?

See you next week!

Sincerely,

Email Template: Conversation #2

Hello,

I just wanted to send out a quick reminder about our meeting next week. We will be discussing what you are learning in the workplace and how this connects to your academics. Below is the list of questions that I will be asking you during our conversation. You may notice that these questions are the same ones we talked about last time. For this meeting think about anything new you have learned or noticed since we met last time.

- How is this job fitting in with your academics?
- What are you learning here that's helping you in school?
- What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?
- Can you give me a couple of examples of things you've learned here that you think you'll use in your chosen profession?

See you next week!

Sincerely,

NOTES TEMPLATE

WHAT IS THIS? Supervisors may find it useful to take notes during OSU GROW conversations. This document is a template for note taking.

Student's Name _____

Position Title _____

Date _____ Semester/Year _____

Semester Meeting one two

Department _____

Supervisor _____

1. How is this job fitting in with your academics?

2. What are you learning here at work that is helping you in school?

3. What are you learning in class that you can apply here at work?

4. Can you give me a couple examples of things you are learning here at work that you will use in your chosen profession?

Supervisor Comments:

FACILITATION TIPS

WHAT IS THIS? Supervisors have provided feedback that tips for having OSU GROW conversations would be a beneficial resource. Some tips for facilitating conversations are outlined in this document.

Utilizing facilitation skills can help your OSU GROW conversations flow better and be productive. Key facilitation skills are outlined below.

Tip #1: Ask open-ended questions. Ask questions in such a way that they can't be answered by yes, no, or a one-word answer. The OSU GROW questions are already phrased as open-ended, but make sure that any other questions you ask are open-ended as well.

Open-ended question: “What are you learning here that’s helping you in school?”

Not an open-ended question: “Have you learned anything here that’s helping you in school?”

Tip #2: Paraphrase. Paraphrasing means summing up what the other person says, in your own words. It’s a good way to show that you understood what the person is saying, and can also help you make connections to other points. In your OSU GROW conversations, paraphrasing can bring relevance back to the conversation or reiterate the connections students’ have made about their learning.

Examples:

“So it sounds like you are learning time management skills here at work and you’ve used these skills to ensure you are getting your homework and other tasks complete every week.”

“You mentioned that you have been sending emails to team members to answer questions and work on projects. That looks like a great way to use your writing and communication skills to get the job done.”

Tip #3: Use follow-up probes. Follow-up probes are questions you might add to help the student think more deeply. Probes are very helpful if the student doesn’t seem to be able to think of an answer to one of the questions.

They can be very simple:

“What’s an example of that?”

“How so?”

“Tell me more.”

Or more specific:

“Tell me about a way you’ve improved your time management skills.”

“As a part of this position you are developing customer service skills. Tell me how you’ve improved your customer service skills.”

Keep in Mind:

Students and supervisors benefit from reflection before the conversation.

- Sending out the questions before the conversation gives students an opportunity to think about their answers before you meet, leading to deeper and more authentic reflection.
- Reflecting on what students are learning as a result of working for you can help you prompt students about their learning during the conversation.

You are the air traffic controller, not the pilot.

- It can often be difficult to give students the space to reflect on their learning. During these conversations you are providing direction for reflection, but the student is responsible for driving the conversation. Your job isn't to provide the correct answer, but give students the space to reflect and make connections.

Make peace with silence.

- Give students the opportunity to reflect. Don't immediately ask and answer the question.
- It's not unusual for someone to need 15-30 seconds to think of an answer to a question.

Make sure to wrap up the conversation.

- Remind students why you had the OSU GROW conversation and that you will continue to talk about learning in the workplace. Frequent reminders create an environment where learning is a key aspect of the student employment experience.

FACILITATING OSU GROW GROUP MEETINGS

Here are some tips for facilitating group meetings:

- Keep groups at eight students or fewer so that everyone has a chance to speak.
- Make sure to provide questions beforehand so that students come ready to discuss.
- Encourage students to share with a partner what they are learning at work and how it connects with academics.
- After partners have shared, have them report back to the group on what they talked about.

Managing Group Dynamics:

Concern	Strategies
One person dominates the conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge their contributions, but ask, “What do others think?” • Call on other individuals to speak • Use a round-robin format so that each person gets to share
A student remains silent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask in a non-pressuring way if they would like to share • Use small-group discussions or partner sharing
A student keeps taking the conversation to a negative place	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledge their frustrations and offer to follow up with them later • Move on to others who are interested in sharing

OSU GROW QUICKSTART GUIDE

Most supervisors regularly chat with their student employees. However, we realize not every supervisor feels comfortable having OSU GROW conversations that focus on what students are learning on the job and in class.

This QuickStart guide is meant to help supervisors who:

1. Desire more structure for the OSU GROW conversation
2. Don't feel comfortable yet with the four main OSU GROW questions
3. Work in a high production unit such as dining services, where making time for the conversations may be more difficult

Students learn a lot from working on campus. They learn to do things like cook, clean, and provide customer service. But they also learn how to manage time, how to work as a part of a team, and how to handle disagreements or unhappy customers. We call these transferable skills because they transfer from one place (work) to other places (classes, student organizations).

OSU GROW helps students get important practice in talking about what they are learning in their campus job. We want them to think about transferable skills and how those might help them in other parts of their lives.

Your role as a supervisor for the OSU GROW conversation is actually pretty simple – you get to listen and support what your students are learning, and if you have ideas about what you think they are getting out of work that they don't think of, throw those into the conversation.

Student employees spend a lot of time in the workplace. Your role as a student supervisor means you are one of the caring adults that your students see nearly every day, and you serve as a great support for them. OSU GROW conversations are just another way for you to show that support.

As a start, try choosing one of these three skills to focus on for your conversation:

1. Time management
2. Working as a part of a team
3. Handling conflict or unhappy customers

Then, ask these three questions:

1. What have you learned about [time management/working as a part of a team/handling conflict] through your job here?
2. How do you think what you have learned about [time management/working as a part of a team/handling conflict] can help you in your classes?
3. How do you think what you have learned about [time management/working as a part of a team/handling conflict] can help you once you get done with college and start working full-time?

After some practice, you will be more comfortable asking the general OSU GROW questions, and that's great! By having these conversations, you are showing your students that you care, and that you want them to learn. Thank you for all you do to support our students!