



Chart Your Career

Pathways for Development



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Pathways for Development

Bringing the Two Criteria Together

Pathways describe an individual's career journey over time, grounded in the belief that careers evolve through the work we do, how we do it, and the learning and growth that emerge. Throughout the year, someone's career may move through different pathways as circumstances and development shift. While we assess accomplishments continuously, the annual review captures a snapshot—selecting one pathway as the cumulative landing place for the moment. This approach offers concrete actions for sustained growth and career development.



Presenting the Pathways for Development

While the pathways bring our two evaluation criteria's together, each of the nine pathways is informing us of our current location and orienting us towards a set of unique possibilities.

Once a Pathway for Development has been identified, reference the selected pathway to create high-level goals. Use the provided prompts to help reflect on where someone needs or wants to be and what actions might help you get there.

The "if, then" structure highlights the relationship between desired development and tangible actions. It is important to note that examples are illustrative and not exhaustive.

Please consult with your Human Resources Business Partner for additional guidance on interpreting Pathways for Development, identifying appropriate next steps, and/or determining what supports may be helpful in a specific situation.

[Click here](#) to find a glossary of terms.

[Click here](#) to explore reflection prompts for both the employee and manager.

Presenting Each Box Separately

Progression Path



Exceeding on both Results & Core Competencies

Identify pathways that align with career interests and institutional needs. Grow scope and visibility to prepare for their next role, people leader or technical leader.

IF your career interest is a **people leadership path**, consider the readiness gap, which might be experience or competency related, **THEN** identify a suitable stretch assignment.

Example: *IF seeking exposure to management/leading a team, THEN consider a project team or participating in a project with multiple levels of leadership.*

IF your career interest is to **expand your scope** and functions/responsibilities of the expanded scope are least familiar, **THEN** participate in a stretch assignment that includes those responsibilities or functions.

Example: *IF leading work that includes components that are across domains - for instance, a staff in internal communications, **THEN** consider leading work that includes components of public relations.*

IF your career interest is to **pivot out of current domain**, identify specific learning goals, **THEN** participate in a stretch assignment that within that new domain.

Example: *Participate in a project or work team within the new domain or interest, For instance, someone in communications might participate in a project within Finance.*

Development & Career Growth



Exceeding on Results & Demonstrating Core Competencies– Strong performers, deepening organizational behaviors.

IF your career interest is to **explore a different department or function**, **THEN** participate in a stretch assignment.

Example: *Support team members to maintain team norms during a manager's leave of absence.*

Meeting Results & Exceeding on Core Competencies – Strong on values/behaviors; developing technical or role-specific skills.

IF your career interest lie in **leading others**, **THEN** create a specific, time-bound stretch assignment.

Example: *Onboard a new team member, mentor a peer or junior colleague, and/or cross-train a colleague.*

Meeting Results & Demonstrating Core Competencies – Steady performers, ready for growth or needing engagement.

IF an employee is here, they may be satisfied with where they are, **THEN** invitation is simply to think of development as continuous learning.

Continuous learning may look like:

- **Experience** — Apply what you know in a new situation or with a new audience. For example, leading a communications project for a different audience group or supporting an initiative launch through a committee role.
- **Education** — Deepen knowledge or build skills in a technical, domain, or competency area through targeted training or a relevant certification.
- **Exploration** — Investigate a new or expanded scope of work through mentor relationships and intentional networking. For example, if the interest is in moving from internal communications to public relations, find a mentor who has made that journey.

These three directions are not mutually exclusive — the most effective development plans often draw from more than one.

Development with Improvement



Exceeding Results & Not Demonstrating Core Competencies – High achiever with problematic behavior.

Managers and employees can contact their assigned HR Business Partner for further guidance on interpreting pathways or determining appropriate next steps.

IF the goal is to increase Customer Service, **THEN** discuss the current and desired behaviors. This may include maintaining composure, proactively finding alternatives when the original solution or require cannot be met, and anticipating customer needs consistent with the team's values. Make a plan with clear expectations and a timeline for review.

Not Meeting Results & Exceeding on Core Competencies – Embodies core competencies, behaviors and values, but not meeting performance.

Managers and employees can contact their assigned HR Business Partner for further guidance on interpreting pathways or determining appropriate next steps.

IF you want to increase the response rate for tickets, **THEN** discuss the current results and desired expectations. This may include clarifying responsibilities, steps, and timelines. Make a plan with clear expectations and a timeline for review

Support with Improvement Focus



Not Meeting Results & Demonstrating Core Competencies – Struggling with results; demonstrating behavioral competencies.

Managers and employees can contact their assigned HR Business Partner for further guidance on interpreting pathways or determining appropriate next steps.

If this is the pathway where someone has landed. Take this opportunity to acknowledge the core competencies that are being demonstrated and use the format above to address the gap.

IF *(result not being met)*, **THEN** *(current result and desired result)*.

Meeting Results & Not Demonstrating Core Competencies – Not demonstrating core competencies; meeting some results.

Managers and employees can contact their assigned HR Business Partner for further guidance on interpreting pathways or determining appropriate next steps.

If this is the pathway where someone has landed. Take this opportunity to acknowledge the results that being met and use the format above to address the gap.

IF *(Core Competencies not being met)*, **THEN** *(current behavior and desired behavior)*.

Improvement



Not Meeting Results & Not Demonstrating Core Competencies

Managers and employees can contact their assigned HR Business Partner for further guidance on interpreting pathways or determining appropriate next steps.

If this is the pathway that someone is landing on, both the manager and employee should continue to have discussions about progress made against any improvement plan that has been made.



GLOSSARY

Language often shapes the reality it describes. As we work to shift our performance process, we have introduced new language and definitions to help orient us towards the behaviors and practices that will nurture and sustain our new performance principles - wholistic lens towards measuring performance, partnership model guided by mutual goals and purpose and shared governance. We have categorized the new language as process words and words that are specifically helping us to make the cultural shift. We hope they serve to add clarity and intention to your practice.

Term	Definition
Chart Your Career Words	
Annual Start	A once-a-year kickoff that sets priorities, confirms role expectations, and launches the year's goals and development plan.
Quarterly Connect	A brief, focused touchpoint held once every three months to review progress, surface issues, and confirm the next steps. This conversation is often informal and recurring.
Shared Language	Common terminology and definitions used consistently across Boston University to ensure that managers and employees share mutual understanding and alignment.
Shared Documentation	A common repository or space where managers and employees collaboratively create, store, and update records of work responsibilities, milestones, accomplishments, and decision points. This supports shared accountability and enables both to remember what has been discussed.
Shared Governance	A model of ownership where managers and employees share responsibility for investment in performance expectations and development, holding one another accountable for learning and success.
Annual Performance Review	A once a year evaluation of an employee's performance against pre-established <i>Outcomes & Results</i> and <i>Core Competencies</i> , used to summarize cumulative achievements, provide feedback, and inform actions for ongoing learning and development over the reporting period.
Check In	A brief, structured practice at the start of a meeting where every participant responds or says, "pass" to a given prompt. Allowing one person to share briefly without interruption or discussion sets the tone that every voice is valued before diving into the agenda.





Term	Definition
Outcomes and Results	
Outcomes & Results	The measurable, observable end states produced by work, <i>what was achieved (outcomes)</i> and the concrete <i>outputs or deliverables produced (results)</i>. Outcomes describe the impact or change achieved. Results are the specific products, metrics, or evidence that demonstrate that impact.
Goal Status	The current state of progress towards achieving a pre-established goal. Not Started – Work on a goal that has not yet begun. Meeting – Progress is on track; the goal is being achieved as intended. Not Meeting – Progress is off track; the goal is at risk or unlikely to be achieved as stated. Exceeding – Progress surpasses the goal; performance is above the target or has delivered unanticipated positive outcomes or innovation. Adjusted – The goal has been modified, paused, or redirected due to changing circumstances, priorities, or new information.
Performance Goals	Expectations for essential functions – the core responsibilities and outcomes required for success in a role. They define what must be delivered and how success will be measured.
Professional Development Goals	Continuous improvements to strengthen current performance and/or build skills aligned with career interests and growth. They focus on continuous learning, capacity building, and readiness for future opportunities.
Core Competency Framework	
Core Competency Framework	A structured, behavior-based tool designed to support meaningful conversation about performance and growth through shared language. The framework anchors performance specific, observable behaviors that can be seen, discussed, and developed over time. Within each core competency, baseline behaviors define key categories or dimensions of that competency. Examples of behaviors happening, not happening, and happening well illustrate how performance can be recognized and discussed for greater clarity and consistent performance. This framework is not a scoring tool, but rather a conversation tool to help managers and employees talk openly about what's working, what could be better, and how to grow together.
Competency	Knowledge, skills, abilities, and observable behaviors that describe <i>how</i> we work.
Observable Behavior	Any action of an individual that can be directly seen, heard, and measured.





Term	Definition
Baseline Behavior	The key, repeatable behaviors that drive success in a role or culture (e.g., collaboration, accountability, customer focus) — the “must-do” actions we expect from everyone.
When Baseline is Happening	Core expectations and essential behaviors are being met consistently. Work is reliable: tasks are completed on time, basic quality standards are maintained, and the person manages routine responsibilities without needing frequent intervention. This is the expected, steady performance foundation.
When Baseline is Not Happening	Observable behaviors that indicate when core behavior is not yet occurring. This provides a clear, shared starting point for managers and employees to review the competency, discuss what they are observing, and make a plan.
Beyond Baseline	Observable behaviors that indicate when core behaviors are happening with high independence and/or consistency. This provides clear, shared reference points to name and recognize what growth and excellence looks like in practice.
Continuous Mastery	An ongoing commitment to ongoing, lifelong practice of learning, refining skills, and pursuing growth and development without a final endpoint. Continuous mastery describes a journey rather than a destination.
Communication	Clearly sharing information and ideas so others understand you—speaking, writing, and listening in ways that fit the audience and purpose.
Teamwork & Collaboration	Working well with others toward shared goals—cooperating, sharing responsibility, and contributing constructively to group decisions.
Customer Service	Anticipating and responding to the needs of those you serve—delivering helpful, timely, and respectful support that solves problems and builds trust.
Accountability	Taking ownership for your commitments and results—following through, being reliable, and owning mistakes with a plan to fix them.
Problem Solving	Identifying issues, evaluating options, and choosing practical solutions—using data and judgment to make decisions that move work forward.
Learning & Continuous Improvement	Actively seeking feedback and new knowledge to get better—adapting practices, trying small experiments, and applying lessons to improve outcomes.





Term	Definition
Illustrative Development Actions (Not Exhaustive)	
Committee Work	Participation in a formal group that makes decisions, advises, or delivers work for the organization; contributes time, expertise, and agreed deliverables.
Stretch Assignment	A timebound project or task given to an employee that is deliberately beyond their current skill set, knowledge level, or comfort zone. Stretch assignments can enhance skill development, demonstrate readiness for expanded scopes, and/or bolster employee engagement.
Coaching	A structured, one-on-one developmental relationship within which a coach uses inquiry-based techniques and reflection to guide the individual to set goals, practice new behaviors, and monitor progress. This relationship is established through a coaching agreement that defines expectations, roles and responsibilities of each party, and a defined timeframe. Coaching can increase self-awareness, confidence, and applied skills.
Certification/Accreditation	Formal recognition that someone meets defined standards or competencies, often requiring assessment and renewal.
Training	Structured learning focused on building specific skills or knowledge with defined objectives and outcomes. Examples of training include a workshop, eLearning course, and/or leadership development program.
Leadership Development Program	A multi-module, cohort-based training designed to build leadership mindsets, behaviors, and skills through a blend of learning experiences, peer dialogue, and applied practice across a defined timeframe. Leadership development programs can serve as a catalyst at pivotal milestones in a leader's journey, including stepping into a new role, expanding scope, or readiness to transition to a higher level of leadership.
Counsel	Targeted guidance or expert opinion offered to support decision-making or behavior, often from a senior or subject-matter expert.
Advice	An opinion, suggestion, or recommendation from someone.
Job Rotation	Temporary moves across roles or teams. Job rotation exposes employees to different functions, builds transferable skills, and broadens employee understanding of the department/organization.





Term	Definition
Job Shadowing	Short-term, observational learning experience in which someone follows and observes someone in their normal workday without performing the work. Job shadowing supports employees exploring a career path, build new skills, cross-training, and connecting with others in a field of interest.
Conference	A formal, large-scale meeting where people gather to talk about a specific topic, share new ideas, and learn together. Attendance at conferences can support employees to learn the latest practices, hear from experts, build their network, and bring back ideas and/or connections to the organization.
Informational Interview	A short, informal conversation with someone in a role or field of interest to learn about their work, career path, and practical advice (not a job interview). Informational interviews support employees who are exploring career paths, learning about a role or industry, and building their network.
Networking	Purposeful relationship building to expand professional connections, visibility, and opportunity pathways. Networking can help employees gain knowledge, increase visibility, and/or open doorways for mentoring or job opportunities.





Planning Pathways for Development

Reflection prompts to discuss with your manager.

1

Where am I?

- How am I performing against the two evaluation criteria?
- What patterns do I notice in the feedback I've received?
- What accomplishments am I most proud of?



Where do I want to go?

- What values or beliefs shape the direction I want to grow?
- What does continuous learning look like?
- Where do my aspirations connect with BU's priorities?

2

3

How do I get there?

- What specific actions will build the knowledge, skills, and/or experience I need?
- How might I apply my strengths to this development action?
- What milestones will help me assess progress?



What support do I need?

- Who needs to be part of my journey?
- How might I get connected with these individuals?
- What tools, resources or opportunities will support my growth?

4

