

PREPARING FOR GROW CONVERSATIONS

WHAT IS THIS?

This resource helps supervisors prepare for Iowa GROW® conversations by reflecting in advance on how student employees might respond, where they may need support going deeper, and how you can use prompts to help them make meaningful connections between work, academics, and future goals. Pre-reflection by supervisors (and sharing questions with students ahead of time) supports deeper, more authentic conversation.

Student Perspective

Goal: Anticipate what student employees might say, so you're ready to validate, extend, and connect their responses

- **How might a student in your department respond to each of the four Iowa GROW® questions?**
 - Consider different student contexts: first year vs. senior, exploratory majors vs. declared majors, students working for finances vs. career preparation.
- **What kinds of academic connections do you think students are already making through their work?**

Depth of Response

Goal: Plan how you'll help students move from quick answers to reflective insight.

- **What would a surface-level response sound like? What would a deeper, more reflective response include?**
 - Examples of surface-level responses: "I'm learning customer service", "This job helps me be responsible"
 - Examples of deeper responses: specific examples, describing growth over time, naming strategies, connecting skills to a course/project, or identifying future applications.
- **How can you encourage students to move from simple answers to more thoughtful reflections?**
 - Shift from "what I did" to "what I learned, how I learned it, and where I'll use it"

Facilitating Reflection

Goal: Prepare prompts and follow-ups that help students elaborate and connect.

- **What prompts or follow-up questions could you use to help students elaborate on their answers?**
 - Simple prompts:
 - "Tell me more about that."
 - "What's an example of that?"
 - "How did you figure that out?"
 - "What changed for you over time?"
 - Specific prompts:
 - "Which part of the job helped you build that skill most?"
 - "Where have you seen that show up in class (or could it)?"
 - "How might that skill matter in your future role or major?"
- **How can you tailor the conversation to the student's role, major, or career interests?**

PREPARING FOR GROW CONVERSATIONS

WHAT IS THIS?

This resource helps supervisors prepare for Iowa GROW® conversations by reflecting in advance on how student employees might respond, where they may need support going deeper, and how you can use prompts to help them make meaningful connections between work, academics, and future goals. Pre-reflection by supervisors (and sharing questions with students ahead of time) supports deeper, more authentic conversation.

Barriers and Opportunities

Goal: Identify what might block connections and what you can change or highlight.

- **What might prevent a student from seeing the connection between their job and academics?**
 - Examples: repetitive tasks, limited context for “why,” low confidence, unclear learning goals, time pressure, or students seeing the job as “just work”
- **What opportunities exist in your department to make those connections more visible**
 - Examples: explaining the purpose of tasks, connecting work to service outcomes, rotating responsibilities, involving students in problem-solving, or offering small leadership moments.