

WiGROW SUPERVISOR HANDBOOK

2021 - 2022

University of Wisconsin-Madison



Guided Reflection On Work

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INTRODUCTION TO WiGROW

Purpose & Vision of WiGROW

- To advocate for student-employment as an educational experience
- To enhance student learning in the workplace by providing opportunities for reflection and professional development
- To support and engage supervisors of student-employees in their role as mentors and teachers of students

WiGROW is an initiative of the Vice Chancellor for Finance and Administration, the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, and the Vice Provost for Enrollment Management at the University of Wisconsin—Madison. It was adopted and modified from the IOWA GROW™ program at the University of Iowa. Administrative support for WiGROW is provided by the Office of Human Resources and the Office of Student Financial Aid.

What is WiGROW?

Student-employees learn and grow through their on-campus jobs. As a supervisor of students, you are their teacher and mentor, helping them identify, refine, and communicate their skills.

WiGROW contains three components, each of them designed to support student learning and your role as a teacher and mentor of students. These three components are 1) WiGROW conversations between supervisors and students, 2) professional development for supervisors of student-employees, and 3) professional development for student-employees.



Specifically, WiGROW is designed to help students reflect on how the things they are learning in their on-campus job 1) enrich their college experience here and now, and 2) will allow them achieve their career goals in the future.

For example, a student might be developing essential time management skills, customer service skills, and a strong work ethic. They might be learning to work with people who are different than them, to navigate workplace conflict, and to find solutions to problems. All of these skills will benefit them in both work and life for years to come!

How does WiGROW work?

Students learn by doing and by reflecting. They learn more when these activities are combined.

As a supervisor of student-employees, you make this happen! Each semester, you will have WiGROW conversations with your student-employees about what they are experiencing and learning in the workplace. These conversations prompt reflection and allow your students to make connections between their on-campus job, their college experience, and their career goals.

WiGROW conversations are neutral (not an evaluation), prioritizing students' reflection over conversations about performance. This takes pressure off of the student and the supervisor and lets the student explore their experiences without fear of judgement. Conversations happen on the following schedule:

- Initial Conversation: You will have the first WiGROW conversation with a student within 45 days of them being hired. This allows students to view their job as an important learning experience from the beginning.
- Semester Conversations: You will then have a conversation with students once-per-semester, which will encourage continued reflection on their experiences and deepen their learning.

WiGROW conversations can be customized to your workspace and the student. Adapt the program to what offers your student-employees the right balance of challenge and support, and to what makes WiGROW work for you.

- Conversation Styles: Within WiGROW, there are three conversation styles – one-to-one away from daily work, one-to-one while working, and group. See page 7.
- Question Alternatives: Based on your own style and the particular experiences and priorities of the student you are speaking with, you can choose one of the alternative questions provided on the WiGROW question list. See page 10.

WiGROW conversations of all styles lead to continued learning through both organic reflection-in-action, which in turn allow students to continue recognizing and developing transferable skills.



Why WiGROW?

Because it works! The key factor in whether students have positive things to say about WiGROW and their job on campus is feeling supported by their supervisor. You make the difference.

Providing a High Impact Practice: Our student-employees are active and engaged learners who deserve opportunities to grow. Students who chose to work may have less time for other impactful activities, and, by implementing WiGROW, you support students' access to high-impact practices.

Teaching Active Reflection: Through the WiGROW conversations you facilitate, students are able to actively reflect on their own learning, their work, and themselves. They practice seeking and receiving feedback. They solidify the skills they are already learning at work.

Retaining Students: Students feel more engaged in their jobs, and departments have reported that WiGROW helps them retain and promote great student-employees.

Supporting Key WiGROW and Student Employment Learning Outcomes: At UW-Madison, students who participate in WiGROW have shared that their on campus job has helped them...

- Reflect on how the skills learned and used in their job transfer to a future career (86%)
- Reflect on how the skills learned and used in their job impact their college experience (83%)
- Learn to work with people who are different than themselves (93%)
- Feel a greater sense of belonging at UW-Madison (80%)

Students in WiGROW also report feeling supported by their on campus supervisor (90%) and feeling engaged in their job (88%).

Following the Research: Research supports guided reflection on work as a practice correlating with other positive outcomes as well! Students who participate in GROW indicate greater levels of the following:

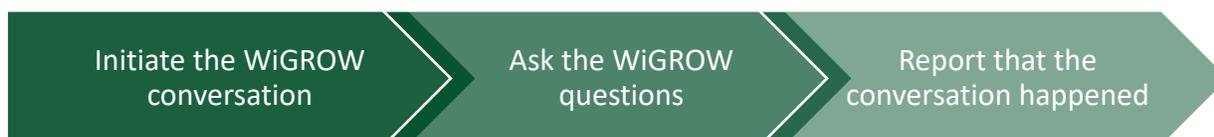
- Humanitarian and civic engagement (Halper, 2020)
- Critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Halper, 2020)
- Practical competence (Halper, 2020)
- Self-efficacy (Hansen, 2019)
- Desire to do a good job (Hansen, 2019)

WiGROW CONVERSATIONS

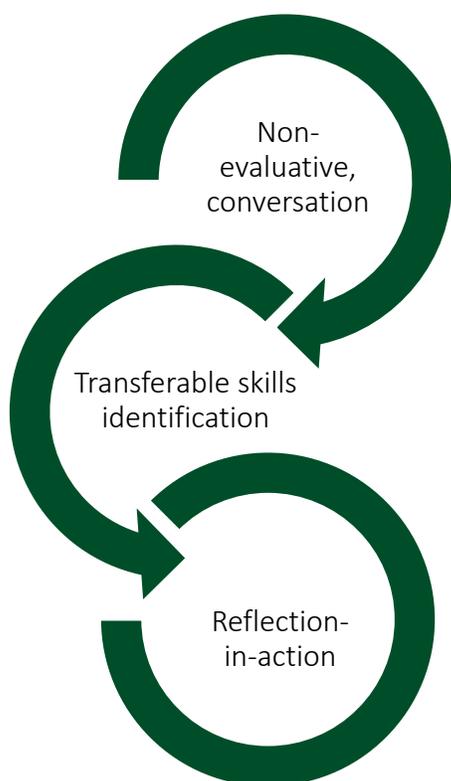
Having a WiGROW Conversation

WiGROW conversations are particular to the employment context and individual student, varying in setting and style. Conversations help students reflect on their work experiences, what they are learning, and how it might connect to their college experience (academics, student organizations, friendships, etc.) and their career goals.

Your responsibilities as a supervisor are to initiate the conversation, ask the WiGROW questions, and report that the conversation happened.



There are three key features of WiGROW conversations outlined below. Keep these in mind as you initiate the conversation and ask the WiGROW questions.



WiGROW conversations are neutral and non-evaluative. Engaging in reflective conversations with their supervisors, separately from performance-related feedback, allows students to approach work as a learning opportunity.

WiGROW conversations identify transferable skills. Student-employees develop a broad range of skills in their on-campus jobs. In WiGROW conversations, students and supervisors name these skills and build upon them.

WiGROW conversations encourage reflection-in-action. Having these conversations can spark further reflection as students work, helping students to continue making connections between their on-campus job, their college experience, and their career goals.

Conversation Timeline

You will have multiple WiGROW conversations with each student per year. In the first 45 days after a student is hired, have an initial conversation to talk through the core WiGROW questions. This allows students to view their job as a learning experience from the beginning. Then, have one WiGROW conversation with a student for each semester they work for you. Consider using alternative questions as you decide they are appropriate for the particular student.



Conversation Styles

WiGROW conversations are adaptable. They will look different based on your department, your own preferred style, and the needs of your students. The three styles of WiGROW conversations are outlined below. In each style, the supervisor who facilitates the conversation may be either a professional staff member or a student who serves in a supervisory role. No matter what style,

STYLE 1) One-to-One, Away from Work

- One-to-one supervisor and student conversation
- Away from daily work in an office, conference room, or other quiet space
- Usually the preferred option if resources allow since it builds more rapport between the supervisor and student, there are fewer distractions, and it ensures that the student reflects on each question

STYLE 2) One-to-One, While Working

- One-to-one supervisor and student conversation
- Within workspace, while working
- A good option if your work is more physical in nature, you have a quiet enough workplace to carry a conversation comfortably, and the student you are talking too has an easier time reflecting while doing something with their hands

STYLE 3) In a Small Group, Away from Work

- Small group conversation facilitated by supervisor, involving 3 - 6 students
- Away from daily work, in a quiet space
- A good option if students are comfortable with one another, if you have some experience in facilitating group discussions, and if students have an easier time engaging with their peers

the main priority and focus during a WiGROW conversation is always student reflection. Advice for conducting these conversations virtually or socially distant can be found on page 10.

Learning Outcomes

Students learn a lot on the job, from technical skills that help them perform their daily tasks to transferable skills like communication, time management, and the ability to work with people who have different backgrounds and perspectives.

Through on-the-job learning, a supportive relationship with you, and reflective conversations about their learning, students will naturally achieve the following learning outcomes:



Virtual and Socially Distant Conversation Tips

In all WiGROW conversations this school year, spend extra time checking in as people to both overcome some of the awkwardness presented by screens and masks/distance, and to make sure students have a chance to share their experiences. Offer an opportunity for students to follow up with you after the conversation. For socially distant conversations, be sure to follow the latest safety protocols.

STYLE 1: ONE TO ONE, AWAY FROM WORK



Virtual Work:

- Opportunity to write down ideas first/use the chat
- Suggest cameras on
- Set your camera far enough away that student can see your body language



Socially Distant Work:

- Masks on, distant
 - Take care with location because of volume/privacy
 - “I’m hearing you say...” Listen responsively and confirm understanding
-

STYLE 2: ONE TO ONE, WHILE WORKING



Virtual Work:

- It is unlikely that work done remotely will allow for productive conversations to take place as you work.
- To get moving during the conversation, take a walk and call each other on the phone



Socially Distant Work:

- Take care with location and volume
 - Listen responsively and confirm understanding
 - Be prepared to pause the work or pause the conversation and revisit
-

STYLE 3: IN A GROUP OF 3-6



Virtual Work:

- Use the chat function
- Set guidelines for discussion
- Suggest cameras on, introductions so folks know who is “in the room”
- Have students opt into a group setting



Socially Distant Work:

- Use a dedicated room that allows space for social distancing
- Set guidelines and offer reminders of the importance of safety regulations

Questions for WiGROW Conversations

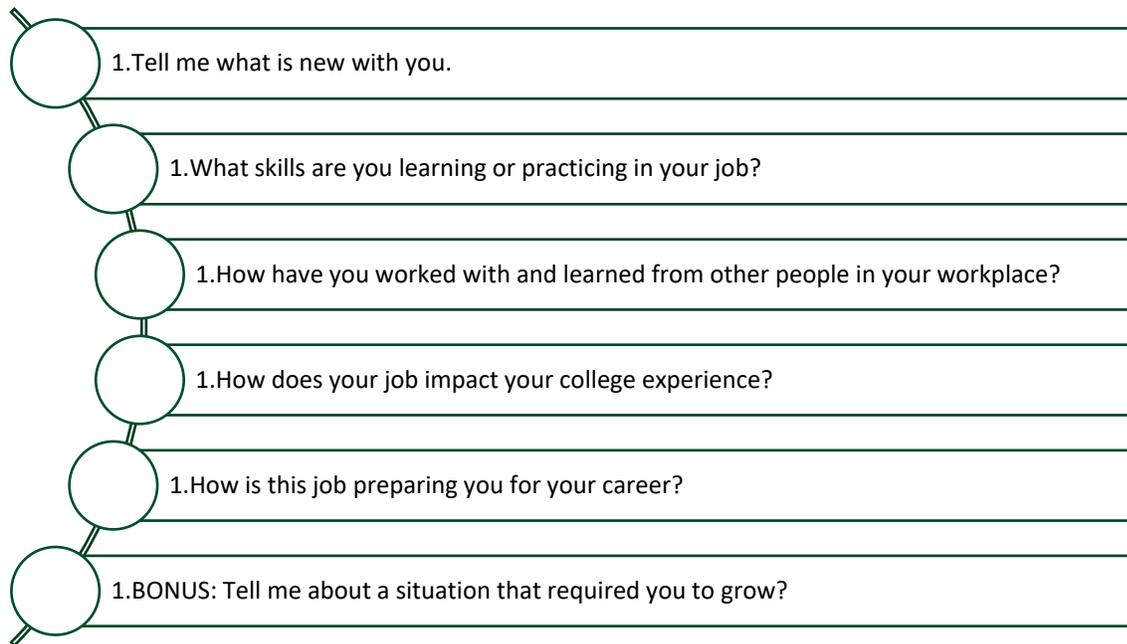
WiGROW questions are designed to be conversational, flexible, and lead students towards reflection about the skills they are learning and using in the workplace.

There are five core WiGROW questions, with a bonus question to use as time allows. You should ask all five core questions (or a listed alternative) in each WiGROW conversation.

QUICK TIP...

If students haven't been mentored in the workplace before, they may feel like this conversation is an interview or a test. They may rely on you to set a more conversational tone.

Be curious and ask follow-up questions to go deeper. Offer reassurance and encouragement.

- 
1. Tell me what is new with you.
 1. What skills are you learning or practicing in your job?
 1. How have you worked with and learned from other people in your workplace?
 1. How does your job impact your college experience?
 1. How is this job preparing you for your career?
 1. BONUS: Tell me about a situation that required you to grow?

To make sure you have the flexibility needed for conversations to be meaningful and adapted to the student, each core question comes with a list of alternatives that you can use. As you conduct conversations, you might decide that a student is ready for a more specific or advanced question. If conducting a lot of WiGROW conversations, you may also find that it is easier for you to remain engaged when you ask a wider variety of questions.

The question alternatives listed on the following page are in order from more introductory (for students new to the job or earlier in their college career) to more advanced (for students with more work experience, in leadership roles, or nearing graduation).

1) Tell me what's new with you.

- What has been the highlight of your day? What has been a low?
- How are you today? What is something you've done to relax/unwind this week?
- I've been thinking about you lately. How are you?
- Tell me about your experience getting used to our new normal. What is going well? What is tough?
- RESOURCES FOR BASIC NEEDS: <https://financialaid.wisc.edu/success/basic-needs-resources/>

2) What skills are you learning or practicing in your job?

- What have you learned about navigating change during this pandemic and after?
- What have you learned about your workstyle in this job?
- How have you demonstrated {workplace skills} in your work or classes?
- What is a skill you bring with you to work? How does it make you better at your job?

3) How have you worked with and learned from other people in your workplace?

- Who do you admire? What qualities of theirs would help you thrive in our workplace?
- Tell me about a time when you had to communicate with someone who has a different background to you. What went well? What would you do differently?
- Think about someone on our team that you have a harder time understanding. What can you do in the next week/month to learn more about where they are coming from?
- Is there anyone who is being unheard or overlooked in our workplace? How can you and I advocate for their perspective?

4) How does your job impact your college experience?

- Tell me about your work-life balance. How is your job fitting into the rest of your college schedule?
- When you look back at this year of college, what do you think will stand out in your memory? Why?
- We've talked about skills you use in your job here. How do you use those skills in other parts of your college experience and life? (with your roommate, in classes, in student orgs, among friends...)
- How has your job impacted your sense of belonging on campus?

5) How is this job preparing you for your career?

- What responsibilities are you interested in taking on in the future, and what skills will help you be prepared for those roles?
- If this was a job interview, and I asked you about your job, how would you describe what you do?
- What have you learned in this job about the type of work environment you want to find after college?
- Tell me about a time when you had to lead a coworker. How might these skills help you in your career?

BONUS: Tell me about a situation that required you to grow.

- What have you done so far this semester that you are proud of?
- What advice would you give to a new student employee to help them succeed in our workplace?
- How do you want to grow as an employee/person in the next semester? What support or accountability do you need to make this happen?
- What are your goals in learning about equity and inclusion? How do those connect to your work?

Why Do We Ask These Questions?

Curious minds want to know! We're careful to use questions that lead to meaningful conversations and help students reflect on their job. The reason for asking each question is outlined below.

As a supervisor who is conducting these conversations, you will learn what works and what doesn't. We rely on your feedback to keep improving these questions. If you have suggestions for questions that should be added to this list, let us know through the form on our supervisor webpage.

1. Tell me what's new with you.

We ask this because we care about how students are doing. Real conversations are personal, and starting this way helps you develop a meaningful relationship with each student.

2. What skills are you learning or practicing in your job?

We ask this because this question lets students start reflecting on something concrete (their day to day experiences) before talking more broadly. It's a good warm-up and lays the foundation for the other questions.

3. How have you worked with and learned from other people in your workplace?

We ask this because we care about equity and inclusion in the workplace. This question requires students to recognize what other people are contributing and reflect on their relationship with coworkers who have different strengths, identities, and experiences.

4. How does your job impact your college experience?

We ask this because the skills your student-employees are learning in the workplace can help them grow as students, roommates, and community members. Seeing how their job impacts their experiences on student organizations, with friends and families, and in their classes makes work more meaningful and reinforces their on-the-job learning.

5. How is this job preparing you for your career?

We ask this because linking their current work experience to their future work experience helps them express their job skills on a resume, in a cover letter and at an interview. Seeing how their current experiences contribute to their goals can help student-employees see the value their work and feel empowered as employees who are contributing in important ways every day.

6. BONUS: Tell me about a situation that required you to grow.

We ask this because zooming in onto one experience can help students reflect in a more deep and personal way. It's saved for the end because this question requires more vulnerability and engagement.

Tips for Successful Conversations

What if a student is having trouble with basic needs?

- Listen with empathy. The student is always more important than the agenda/list of questions.
- Connect students to resources and, as you see appropriate, offer to be there with them as they reach out. Resource can be found on the second page of the question document or the OSFA website.
- Consider reporting a student-of-concern to the Dean of Student's office so that they can follow up with personal support.

What if one of my students is splitting time with another department because of COVID?

- Communicate with the other department to determine who will be having the WiGROW conversation.
- If this is not possible, assume that you are having the WiGROW conversation with anyone your department has hired or anyone who is spending the majority of their work hours in your department.
- These students are getting a crash course in learning on-the-job and being flexible. Consider reflecting on this and how students can represent it on their resume during your WiGROW conversations.

How do we have socially distant or virtual conversations in a meaningful way?

- Spend more time on the first question and catching up. Be prepared to have students arrive to the conversation with additional stress this year.
- Pay special attention to nonverbals. Whether wearing masks or talking through screens, it will be harder to pick up on these naturally.
- Confirm understanding by saying things like, "I'm hearing you say..." or "Am I understanding you correctly that you're saying..." Our words can easily become muffled or be misheard.
- Offer an opportunity for students to follow up if they have additional thoughts or want to continue the conversation later.

What if a student doesn't want to talk?

- Give them time. These questions require deep thinking. If you're not sure how long to wait, count to 30 in your head, and then ask if they'd like time to think, for you to repeat the question, or to move onto another question and come back to it.
- Acknowledge it. "You seem quiet today. How are you?"
- Make sure the space you're in is one where students feel safe and comfortable.
- Try a different question. There is a whole list of alternatives!

What if a student isn't sure of how they're learning?

- Its best if students identify the skills rather than us suggesting them. Ask them about a time when they had to ask for help, were unsure of what to do and figured it out, or did something well. Then ask what skills they used in those situations.
- If students really struggle, suggest a skill that you have seen them display, or that other students often cite as one they learn on the job.
- Ask specifically about skills like time-management, relationship development, quality control, sense of humor, empathy, communication, or other skills.

What if I'm already having these conversations?

- That's great news! WiGROW will come naturally to you. If you are already having non-evaluative conversations at dedicated times with your studnets, keep doing so and simply incorporate the WiGROW questions.
- If the conversations you are having are similar, but are more focused on daily work than learning or are not neutral, add in WiGROW conversations at a dedicated time. The relationships you've developed through these other conversations will make your WiGROW conversations even more meaningful.

What if I don't have enough time?

- Approach your department about allowing group conversations (to speak with 3 - 6 students at the same time) or to allow conversations while conducting daily work. Remember to prioritize the student's reflection over efficiency.
- Train students who are supervisors to conduct WiGROW conversations.
- If there are other staff who assist with daily supervision or mentorship of students and would be well suited to having this conversation, ask your department if they can conduct some WiGROW conversations.

How do I have a group WiGROW conversation well?

- Plan to spend more time in a group conversation than you would on an individual conversation (Instead of 15 minutes, plan for 30).
- Ask the group to each introduce/reintroduce themselves.
- Ask one question at a time.
- Consider using "think, pair, share", having students think about the question, pair up with a partner to talk, and then share one observation with the group.
- If having students answer in pairs, give them a timelimit and prompt them to switch and half way.
- If having all students share with the large group, make sure each student replies to the question or builds off another students' answer.
- If a student doesn't have an answer to the question, ask them a follow up question like "Did you hear someone answer in a way that felt true for you too? How come?".
- If a student seems disengaged, they might not be comfortable with the group. Follow up with them after one-to-one.

Where should I have WiGROW conversations?

- Look for a space with minimal distractions (quieter and less activity is better).
- Some students may be more comfortable in a space that is familiar. A corner of a larger room where they work could lead to richer conversations than a conference room that feels foreign.
- Some students may want privacy. Some students may be more comfortable with other people around. Give the student options and ask them where they might like to meet.
- If you're meeting in a separate room, let the student decide if the door is open or closed.

We rely on your experience and wisdom to keep improving the program. We're always looking to hear what you have learned.

If you have advice to share with other supervisors, or if you would be willing to help train other supervisors at WiGROW events, we'd love to have you complete our supervisor feedback form on the supervisor website!

Reporting WiGROW Numbers

The time you dedicate to WiGROW is best spent in conversation with students. For this reason, we do not require extensive paperwork. We do need confirmation that conversations are happening with students.

You will report having your WiGROW conversations within your department.

Ask your supervisor what your internal process is for recording that WiGROW conversations have happened. Some departments may request that supervisors take notes on the content of conversations or may have you report your WiGROW conversations along with other student employee development information.

Your department as a whole will then report three sets of numbers through your WiGROW steering committee member.

Student Engagement:	How many student-employees were hired?
First 45 Days	How many of these student-employees had an introductory WiGROW conversation in the first 45 days?
Student Engagement:	How many student-employees worked in your department?
Semester	How many of them had a WiGROW conversation this semester?
Supervisor Engagement:	How many people supervised student-employees in your department?
Semester	How many of these supervisors had a WiGROW conversation this semester?

WEBSITE AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Website for Supervisors

hr.wisc.edu/managers-and-supervisors/wigrow/

Website for Student-employees

studentjobs.wisc.edu/aboutwigrow

WiGROW Email Address

wigrow@ohr.wisc.edu

This email address will reach the WiGROW administrative team in the Office of Human Resources and the Office of Student Financial Aid. You can also email the below individuals directly.

WiGROW Administrators

Brenda Salvo
OHR Learning & Talent Development
bsalvo@wisc.edu

Devin Deegan
Office of Student Financial Aid
ddeegan@wisc.edu