SDD DIALOGUE GUIDE TECHNICAL-ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Introduction

A good staff development dialogue (SDD) starts with being well-prepared. Before the dialogue, it is recommended that you read the 'Guide to SDD'. The dialogue guide is consultative, and the questions are intended as a source of inspiration, i.e. they do not necessarily all have to be answered, and other questions may certainly be asked, by both the manager and the employee. The idea is that it is a fluid dialogue with both the manager and employee asking the questions which come to them naturally. However, the dialogue should, as a minimum, address the three main themes around which the dialogue is structured. The three main themes are:

1. What has happened since the last SDD? – A good starting point for talking about the future
2. Well-being and job satisfaction
3. Future tasks and competence development

Each main theme comprises as many as five related questions. In addition, the dialogue starts with a reconciliation of expectations and desired outcome between manager and staff member and ends with a summary of the agreements made in an agreement form.

In this way, SDD is a mutual development dialogue with a forward-looking focus. SDD does not replace the ongoing daily dialogue and feedback between managers and staff members. Nor is SDD an occasion to focus exclusively on problems at which the manager or the staff member focuses on accumulated criticisms. Such issues must be handled in separate dialogues, if necessary with the involvement of the union representative and AU HR.

Introducing SDD: Expectations of the dialogue

The dialogue starts with the manager and staff member presenting and agreeing on which themes to prioritise. This increases the likelihood of a satisfactory outcome. The following procedure is recommended:

a. The manager outlines the dialogue framework, i.e. its duration, content and any priorities or special focus areas as well as the expected outcome of the dialogue.

b. The employee adds his/her expectations with respect to outcome and any special topics he/she would like to discuss.

c. Together, the topics are prioritised and time allocated to the individual themes.

Main theme 1: What has happened since the last SDD? – A good starting point for talking about the future

A dialogue about the work experiences and challenges over the past year can provide a shared understanding of what works and what may need to be done differently in the year ahead. Here, the intention is also for the manager and employee to give each other feedback on how successful they have been – in performing their tasks and in undertaking their managerial functions. See the 'Guide to SDD' for guidance on how to give constructive feedback.

a. Agreements resulting from last year's SDD dialogue – how have they been followed up on, what has the effect been?

b. Which professional and collaborative tasks and challenges have you undertaken and tackled in the past year?

c. How have you and your job developed as a result of these challenges?

d. The manager's feedback to the employee on the performance of tasks and development points
   Can be angled to focus on what you want more/less of.

e. The employee's feedback to the manager on the manager's leadership and development points
   Can be angled to focus on what you want more/less of.

Main theme 2: Well-being and job satisfaction

Well-being is a central theme in any SDD dialogue and is important for employees to be able to perform their work satisfactorily, develop and achieve their goals. It can be a good idea to base the dialogue on specific work situations to get a shared idea of how to enhance well-being. If there are any special personal or other factors which have a bearing on the work which the employee wants to discuss, it is a good idea to mention it here.

a. What motivates and inspires you at work?

b. To what extent are you thriving with your current tasks? Is there anything you would like more/less of?

c. How is your collaboration with your colleagues and other close partners?

d. In terms of my management, what would you like more/less of to improve your sense of well-being?

e. How is your collaboration with other units at Aarhus University? Do you have any suggestions for improvements?

Main theme 3: Future tasks and competence development

An important aspect of SDD is that together you set specific goals for the employee's competence development for the coming year based on the unit's most important tasks. The goals must be inspiring and realistic for the staff member. It is also necessary to agree on how these competences can actually be achieved in practice.

   a.   Which goals and tasks are important for you and the unit in the coming year?

   b.   What would you like to succeed in doing?

   c.   Which competences (professional, personal/social) are particularly important in relation to your tasks and the interaction with your colleagues to help achieve these goals?

   d.   Which particular competences do you need to focus on developing?

   e.   What ideas and wishes do you have in relation to your career and other development perspectives over the next 3-5 years?

Conclusion and agreement

At the end of the dialogue, it is necessary to agree on what to write in the agreement form, who will follow up on it and when. The member of staff then completes the agreement form in AUHRA, after which his or her manager approves the form (see IT guide).