Career development policy for VU support and management staff

Framework for professional growth



VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT AMSTERDAM

Inhoudsopgave

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Introduction

VU Amsterdam is an academic community in which students and staff work together towards a healthy, sustainable and just world. In doing so, VU Amsterdam takes as its starting point that every talent counts and that staff perform at their best when their qualities are deployed in the context of teams and organisational goals.
In the 2026–2030 strategic plan, developing and realising talent is a core value: *"Knowing who you are, what your strengths are and where you draw your strength from is essential in determining your course"* (p. 4). This ambition applies to our students and all staff, including support and management staff.

At the same time, we see that, in practice, career development is not yet always used to its full effect. Discussions with staff and supervisors show that opportunities for development and mobility are not always visible, that career conversations vary significantly from one team to another and that career development is sometimes associated primarily with a job change or an increase in salary scale. Workload, organisational boundaries and differences between units can also hinder career steps.

As a result, talent does not always fully come into its own, while the organisation also needs flexibility, employability and better use of the qualities already present.

With the career development policy for support and management staff, VU Amsterdam is changing this. The policy provides a clear and shared framework for career development, while allowing scope for tailored approaches within faculties and service departments. It supports staff in shaping their careers and helps supervisors to take a more strategic approach to development, employability and team composition.

Career development is not regarded as an end in itself, but as a means of making better use of talent and retaining it, keeping staff sustainably employable and enabling teams to contribute optimally to VU Amsterdam's ambitions. Strategic Personnel Planning (SPP) forms the foundation for this: the career development policy helps translate organisational goals into concrete development for staff and teams.

This career development policy provides a coherent, VU Amsterdam-wide framework for the career development of support and management staff.

It makes explicit what is expected of staff and supervisors, and structurally embeds career development in the HR cycle through SPP, staff review and development conversations, whether or not as part of the annual consultation.
The policy also broadens the concept of career development: not only progression to another job or a higher salary scale, but also deepening expertise within the current role, broadening duties and temporary deployment elsewhere are regarded as fully-fledged forms of development. This development is supported in practical terms through learning paths, conversation tools and the VU Amsterdam Career Network.
This shifts the focus from incidental career steps to continuous development and mobility as a natural part of work.

1. The VU Amsterdam employee: an outline of the future

In its 2026–2030 strategic plan, VU Amsterdam outlines a vision of the future that requires specific competencies and skills from its employees. This vision calls for VU Amsterdam employees who are curious and committed professionals, and who act in accordance with our core values: open, personal and responsible. It is not a job profile, but a guiding compass. It supports employees and supervisors, provides direction for conversations about development and helps shape careers in an organisation that continues to evolve in a changing context.

In an organisation that increasingly works in teams and networks, is data-driven and is constantly changing, these employees move with these developments. They use new technology that supports their work, work consciously and safely with data, and are attentive to ethical issues. They do so not as a formal requirement, but as part of professional and responsible conduct in an academic environment.
For these employees, collaboration is a matter of course. They actively seek connection across the boundaries of service departments and units, because they recognise that societal issues and challenges in education and research can never be solved from a single perspective. They contribute to an open and safe working culture in which diversity is valued and dialogue forms the basis for collaboration.

Employees take ownership of their work and development. Within clear frameworks and in coordination with supervisors, there is scope to take initiative, try out new roles and contribute to innovation. Not everyone follows the same path: some develop further in their professional expertise, while others explore new domains or take on project roles or coordinating roles. In teams and networks, employees fulfil different, complementary roles: sometimes as specialists, sometimes as connectors or coordinators.

What connects them is a learning attitude: a willingness to acquire new skills, reflect on their own actions and contribute to the wider whole of VU Amsterdam and society, while remaining attentive in their work to VU Amsterdam's societal context and, where relevant, the international environment in which we operate.
This mindset aligns with global citizenship as a fundamental attitude at VU Amsterdam: being attentive to the wider whole, to different perspectives and to the societal and international context in which we work.



2. **Concepts and principles**

The career development policy for support and management staff uses a number of concepts and principles to describe development within VU Amsterdam in a clear and unambiguous way.

Terms

Development within a job/job profile
Updating, deepening or broadening knowledge, skills and task performance within the current job or job profile, without a job change (for example keeping up to date, deepening expertise or shifting task emphases).

Promotion within a job profile (higher level, not a career step)
A formal step within the same job profile to a higher job level (such as policy officer 4 → 3 or executive secretary 3 → 2). The content of the job remains largely the same; the level of responsibility, complexity and independence increases. This is development, not a career step.

Career step
A move to a different job, meaning a different profile under the university job ranking system (UFO), whether or not at a higher level, within or outside VU Amsterdam.

Horizontal career step
A move to another job at the same job level (a different UFO profile, with the same salary scale range). Examples include moving from HR Advisor to policy officer, or from team leader to project manager.

Vertical career step
A move to another job (a different UFO profile), involving greater responsibility for managing people, processes or teams, and often also a higher job level.

Diagonal career step
A move to a different job in another team or unit and at a higher job level (for example from a faculty to a university-wide service department in a more senior job).

Career
The path you follow as an employee. This involves looking at your past (where you have come from), your present (where you are now) and your future (what you want and are able to do).

Learning path
An overview of relevant training courses, skills and knowledge for a role or job area, designed to support employees in their current work and in preparing for possible career steps.

Principles

Career development is a shared responsibility of the employee and the supervisor. Development may take place within the employee's own team or department, but where desirable or appropriate, opportunities elsewhere within VU Amsterdam may also be explored. Sometimes, a different place in the organisation is a better fit with a person's talent or ambition. We therefore expect both employees and supervisors, when exploring career opportunities, to actively consider what is available or possible more broadly within VU Amsterdam.

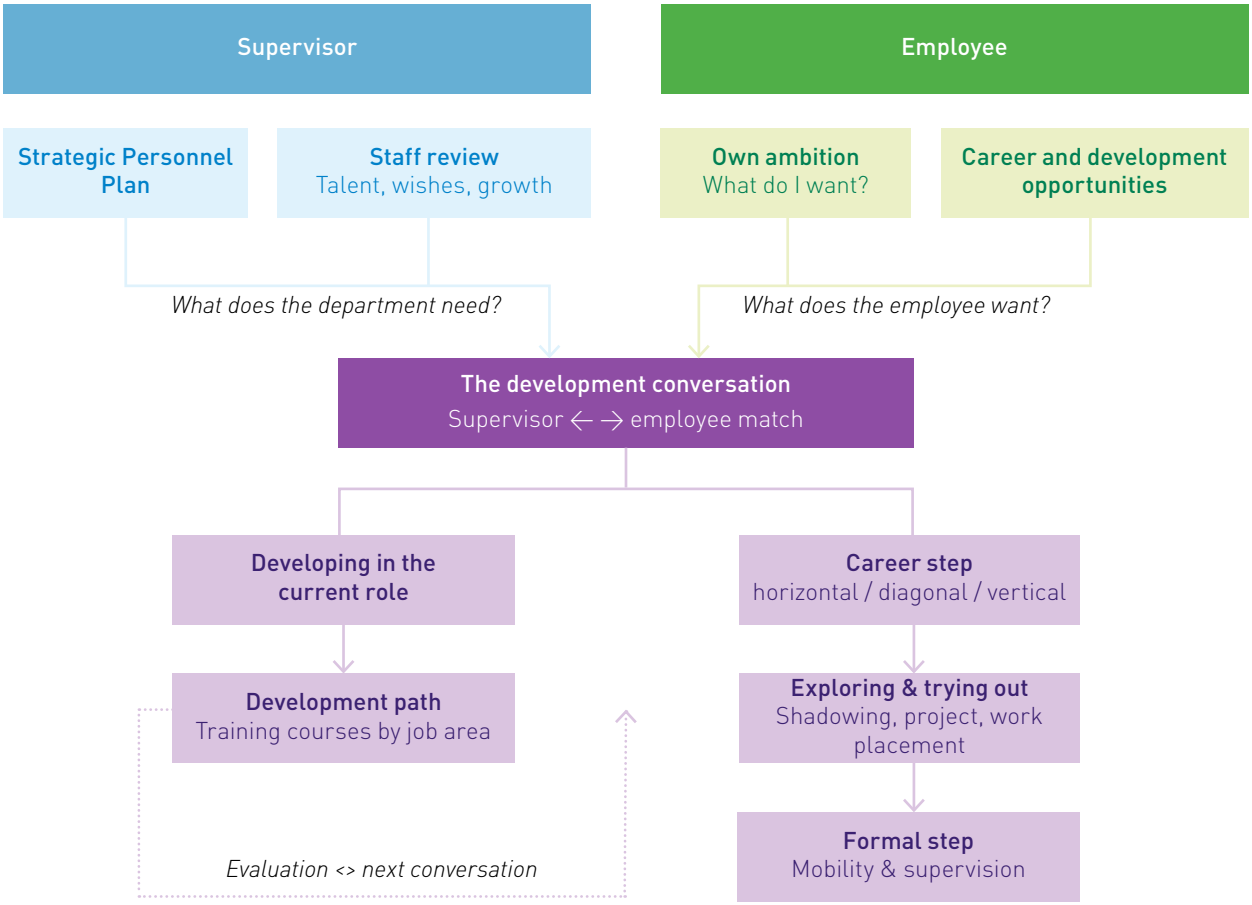
This policy is intended for all support and management staff, regardless of age, salary scale or career stage. Development does not look the same for everyone. For an employee at the start of their career, it may involve an ambitious move into a new job. For an experienced employee, it may involve keeping knowledge up to date, making better use of existing qualities or exploring a different set of tasks within the existing role. The policy allows scope for all these situations, and requires supervisors to enter into dialogue with this group too and provide tailored support.

A desired career step cannot always be taken, or cannot always be taken immediately. This requires the management of expectations on both sides and sometimes patience, while jointly exploring what development is possible.

Career development takes place, in principle, in the context of teams. Individual development never stands alone, but contributes to the direction in which the team and the organisation wish to move. Mobility is not an end in itself, but a means of giving talent the scope it needs, within the team or sometimes beyond it.
In some cases, a career step outside VU Amsterdam may be a better fit with the employee's talent, ambition or career stage. External mobility may then be an appropriate next step, alongside any internal development and mobility opportunities.

The policy is directional and supportive: it sets out frameworks and directions for development, and recognises that development can take different forms and progresses differently for different people.

3. How does career development work within VU Amsterdam?



Strategic Personnel Planning
Career development at VU Amsterdam can start in different ways: an employee may put forward a development wish themselves, or a supervisor may see, on the basis of the work, that certain development is necessary or desirable. Whatever the reason, the next step is always the same: jointly considering what fits with the direction and duties of the team and the organisation. That direction is determined through Strategic Personnel Planning (SPP), which sets out the ambitions of the department or team and the competencies and skills required to achieve them.

Staff review
To determine how the plans arising from SPP align with the current team composition, supervisors periodically map what is already available within the team by using the staff review. This makes visible which qualities are already present in the team, where employees can develop further or broaden their role, and where reinforcement is needed.

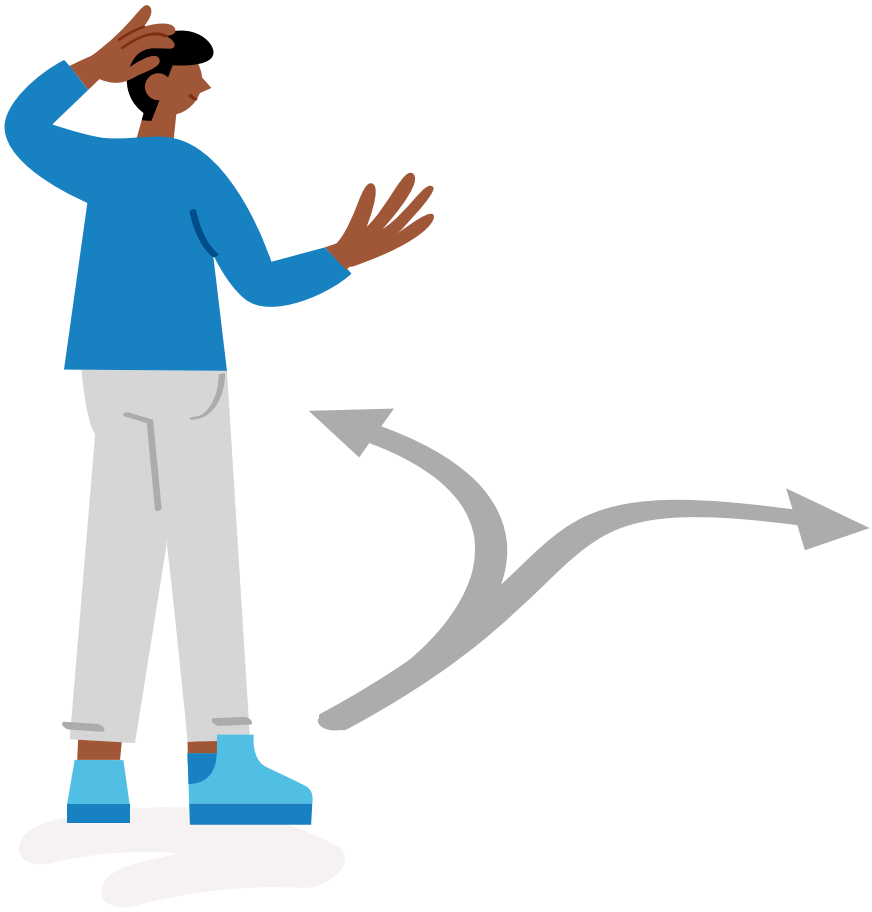
Coherence
SPP and the staff review complement each other. SPP looks ahead: what will the department need in the coming years? The staff review looks at the present: what do we already have in-house? Together, they give supervisors the guidance needed to have a meaningful conversation about development, based on a clear picture of the team and its future. This is also the starting point for the conversation with the individual employee.

What we expect of each other
Career development is a shared responsibility. The specific expectations for each role are set on the next page.

From the supervisor
You work with fellow supervisors on a Strategic Personnel Plan at departmental or unit level and translate the outcomes into your own team(s). You periodically contribute to a staff review, where appropriate together with other teams, in order to maintain insight into talent and development needs.
You hold a development conversation with each employee at least once a year, usually as part of the annual consultation, but possibly separately from it. You actively match employees' development wishes with the future structure of your team. You are open to mobility, even if this means that a good employee leaves the department. You support employees in exploring opportunities within, but also beyond, their own team.

From the employee
You familiarise yourself with career opportunities within and outside VU Amsterdam and with the requirements and competencies associated with the jobs that appeal to you. You can use the UFO profiles for this purpose. You actively reflect on your own development and bring your wishes into the conversation. If you wish to remain in your current position, we expect you to be willing to keep your knowledge and skills up to date and to move with developments in your field and the organisation. If you wish to take a step, you also look beyond your own department where necessary: the whole of VU Amsterdam is the field of opportunity. You are willing to explore a direction first through a shadowing opportunity or trial assignment before taking a formal step. In both cases, the following applies: you take ownership of your career; your supervisor provides support, but you are in the lead.

From the HR Advisor
The HR Advisor supports supervisors in drawing up and implementing SPP. The HR Advisor guides employees and supervisors through mobility processes and more complex career questions. HR monitors progress and identifies where the policy encounters obstacles in practice.



4. Career opportunities

There are several ways in which employees can develop professionally. The opportunities are divided into a number of directions. This classification helps employees and supervisors make choices that align both with the employee's ambitions and with the team's tasks and challenges. At the same time, there may be no scope within a team for a next step. In that case, the employee and supervisor focus on feasible development within the current role and agree when they will review again what options are available, internally or possibly externally.

The career opportunities described focus primarily on development and mobility within VU Amsterdam. In some situations, however, a career step outside VU Amsterdam may be an appropriate next step, for example where internal opportunities are lacking or where the employee's ambitions are better served elsewhere.

Staying and keeping up to date
Not all development requires a different job or a step up in level. For some employees, remaining well placed in their current job is the best choice. Even then, development remains important: keeping up to date in the job, periodically updating knowledge and skills through training or e-learning, and aligning duties with a person's talent within the existing job and team.

Promotion within the job profile
Sometimes an employee develops within the same job, with the content of the work remaining broadly the same but the complexity or level of independence increasing. This is a formal step up in job level, such as from policy officer 4 to policy officer 3. Promotion within the job profile is only appropriate where these more demanding duties are a structural part of the role and fit within the team's staff cohort and development direction, as set out in Strategic Personnel Planning, and where the employee has also demonstrated that they can actually perform the duties at that more demanding level.
Although this is not a career step in the sense of moving into different work, it is a form of professional growth that suits employees who demonstrate deeper expertise within their domain and are able to take on increasing responsibility.
In supporting this development, supervisors take account of the applicable UFO rules so that this growth is properly recognised.

Horizontal development
Horizontal development may consist of deepening expertise at the same level, for example by developing into an expert within a particular professional field. In such roles, the emphasis is on deepening knowledge and substantive expertise, without a formal job change. This form of development takes place within the existing job and is part of regular work. Examples include roles such as data analyst or privacy expert, where knowledge and responsibility deepen but the job profile remains the same.

Horizontal steps
A horizontal step means that an employee develops by broadening their experience: different work or a different context, but at the same job level. This can be achieved by performing the same job within another team, another department or another unit. A move to a different job at the same level can also be a horizontal step, for example from academic advisor 1 to policy officer 4, where an employee wishes to develop in a new professional field.

Vertical steps
A vertical step means that an employee progresses to a job with greater responsibility for managing people, processes or teams. The focus shifts from carrying out work to coordinating and providing direction. Examples include progression from coordinator to team leader, or from team leader to head of department. A move into a role such as project manager, where the employee becomes responsible for the coordination, planning and results of a project team, can also be a vertical career step.

Diagonal steps
A diagonal step means that an employee moves to another domain or organisational unit and progresses to a job at a higher level. This is appropriate where no further step of greater weight is available within the employee's own team or faculty. University-wide service departments more often offer jobs at a higher level because of their broader scope and complexity.
Examples include a move from a faculty to a role as senior policy advisor or strategic advisor within a service department, or a move into project management in a university-wide programme. In all these cases, the field of work changes and the level of responsibility demonstrably increases.

Exploring and trying out

Before an employee takes a formal career step, it may be worth exploring that direction in practice first. VU Amsterdam offers a number of opportunities for this. Through a shadowing or observation opportunity, an employee can briefly explore another job or team, without any further obligations. A small trial assignment or a defined project in another task area offers the opportunity to experience in practice whether a direction is a good fit. In the case of temporary deployment, an employee works for an agreed period in another unit or team, for example to provide cover or to broaden their experience. The mobility guidelines will provide the framework for this: they will set out standard agreements on the contract form, any transition allowance, the guarantee of return and how leave and illness are arranged during the period of deployment.

Illustration: what does this look like in practice?

Within a unit, career development starts with Strategic Personnel Planning. The MT or Faculty Board considers the tasks and challenges for the coming years and the knowledge, skills and expertise required to address them. On that basis, it is determined which specific expertise needs to be present or strengthened within the unit in order for the work to be carried out effectively.

This analysis is compared with the current team composition through the staff review. This reveals which expertise is already present in the team, where development potential lies and in which areas additional deepening or broadening is needed. On this basis, specific areas of expertise are identified within the unit that are important for the functioning of the team and in which employees can deepen their expertise within their existing job.

The outcomes of SPP and the staff review form the starting point for the annual consultation and development conversations. In these conversations, employees and supervisors explore together the extent to which their interests, qualities and development wishes align with the expertise needed within the unit, and what development would be appropriate for this.

Different types of learning paths can be used to support this development. Examples include:

- **Policy learning path,** where development is aimed, at least in part, at policy work or advisory work.
- **Project skills learning path,** where development focuses on project-based working or leading projects.
- **Expert learning paths,** where the focus is on deepening expertise and specialised knowledge within a specific professional field, such as AI, data / intelligence or management support.

The learning paths used will differ by employee and by unit. They provide guidance for development, while following the substantive needs identified within the unit.

Illustration: Data / Intelligence learning path

Within various VU Amsterdam faculties and service departments, employees work on data and intelligence issues. This includes duties such as analysing and making data accessible, producing management reports, supporting decision-making and strengthening data-driven working. These duties are carried out in a range of units, such as the University Library, Corporate Real Estate and Facilities (FCO), Student & Educational Affairs (SOZ) and HR & HSE.

In practice, these duties often appear to be fragmented across the organisation. Employees work under different UFO profiles and salary scales, with varying job titles, while the core of the work shows significant overlap. VU-wide, there is no coherent development pathway. There is little uniformity in what may be expected of employees at different levels, which skills are associated with those levels and how employees can continue to develop in this domain.

For individual employees, it is therefore not always clear how they can develop further within this field of work: which expertise belongs to which level, how this work relates to other data and intelligence roles within VU Amsterdam, and which next steps would be logical within or outside their own unit.

A VU Amsterdam-wide Data / Intelligence learning path can provide guidance in situations of this kind. Such a learning path shows which knowledge, skills and competencies are relevant within this domain, how they relate to different job levels and which development directions are possible.

Illustration: Management support learning path

Within VU Amsterdam, employees work in roles such as management assistant, department secretary and executive secretary. They support supervisors and teams in organising and coordinating duties, for example through diary management, meeting support and streamlining information flows.

These jobs occur in many parts of the organisation and are performed in different ways, depending on the context and the organisational level.

At the same time, there is no coherent VU Amsterdam-wide learning path for this job group. There is little guidance on what development opportunities are available and how employees can strengthen their skills within this field of work.

As a result, it is not always clear to employees which training courses or development opportunities are appropriate, or how they can continue to develop in a targeted way in their role.

A VU Amsterdam-wide management support learning path provides an overview by bringing together relevant training opportunities for this job group and making them more visible.

5. The development conversation

The development conversation may take place as part of the annual consultation, but may also be held separately, at the initiative of either the employee or the supervisor. The purpose of these conversations is to ensure that deliberate attention is given to development, talent and career, either within or alongside the annual consultation, tailored to the employee's situation and needs. A development conversation may have different emphases, depending on the stage the employee is at, the development question and the context of the team. The description below gives examples of themes and perspectives that may be addressed in development conversations and can therefore provide guidance in conducting them.

In all conversations, the employee's development wishes are always weighed against the ambitions, composition and possibilities of the team, as set out in the Strategic Personnel Plan.

In any event, the development conversation focuses on discussing development wishes, both those of the employee and those of the supervisor, and on jointly determining which development within the role is appropriate and feasible in the period ahead. It forms the basis for all career conversations and takes place at least once a year as part of the annual consultation, and possibly in the interim where there is reason to do so because of changes in work, duties or ambition.

The supervisor discusses what development or strengthening is needed in the role, is open to the employee's ambitions and wishes, and helps make choices that fit within the role, the team and the time available. The employee brings in their own interests, ambitions and development needs and indicates what form of support is needed.

Depending on the situation, a development conversation may also place greater emphasis on growth and additional challenge. This is the case where the supervisor sees that the employee is capable of more than the current role requires, or where the employee themselves indicates that they would like more responsibility, deeper expertise or greater visibility. In that case, the conversation explores what appropriate challenge may be possible, for example by broadening the role, taking on an expert role or carrying out a trial assignment. Where possible, the supervisor opens doors to participation in projects or temporary deployment elsewhere, and refers the employee to any relevant learning paths or training courses. The employee brings in their own ambitions and makes a concrete proposal for role enrichment or assignments that make good use of their talent.

In other situations, a development conversation may mainly focus on career direction. This applies where the current job no longer aligns with the ambitions, interests or needs of the employee or the team. Together, the employee and supervisor explore whether a career step is realistic and appropriate and, if so, what kind of step, whether within or outside the employee's own unit, elsewhere within VU Amsterdam or beyond VU Amsterdam. The supervisor discusses what direction may be realistic, helps find a mentor, arranges a shadowing opportunity or trial assignment where feasible, and refers the employee to career coaching where additional supervision is desirable. The employee brings in their own preferred directions, explores relevant learning paths and actively participates in orientation activities.

6. What VU Amsterdam offers

The basis: rights under the collective labour agreement
The rights below apply to every employee, regardless of job, experience or ambition.

Every employee is entitled to at least three development days each year, intended for education, training or other learning activities. You decide together with your supervisor how to use them. Unused days expire at the end of the year, unless you agree in writing in advance that they will be carried over.
Collective Labour Agreement, Article 6.10

At least once a year, you have a conversation with your supervisor about how things are going, what you have achieved and where you want to go. Agreements on development are recorded in writing. If you wish to agree multi-year goals, these are set out in a personal development plan.
Collective Labour Agreement, Article 6.7

Once every five years, you are entitled to a career advice conversation with an external expert, aimed at providing concrete advice on your career development. If you have a temporary contract of two years or more, you are also entitled to career advice focused on your opportunities in the internal or external job market.
Collective Labour Agreement, Article 6.5

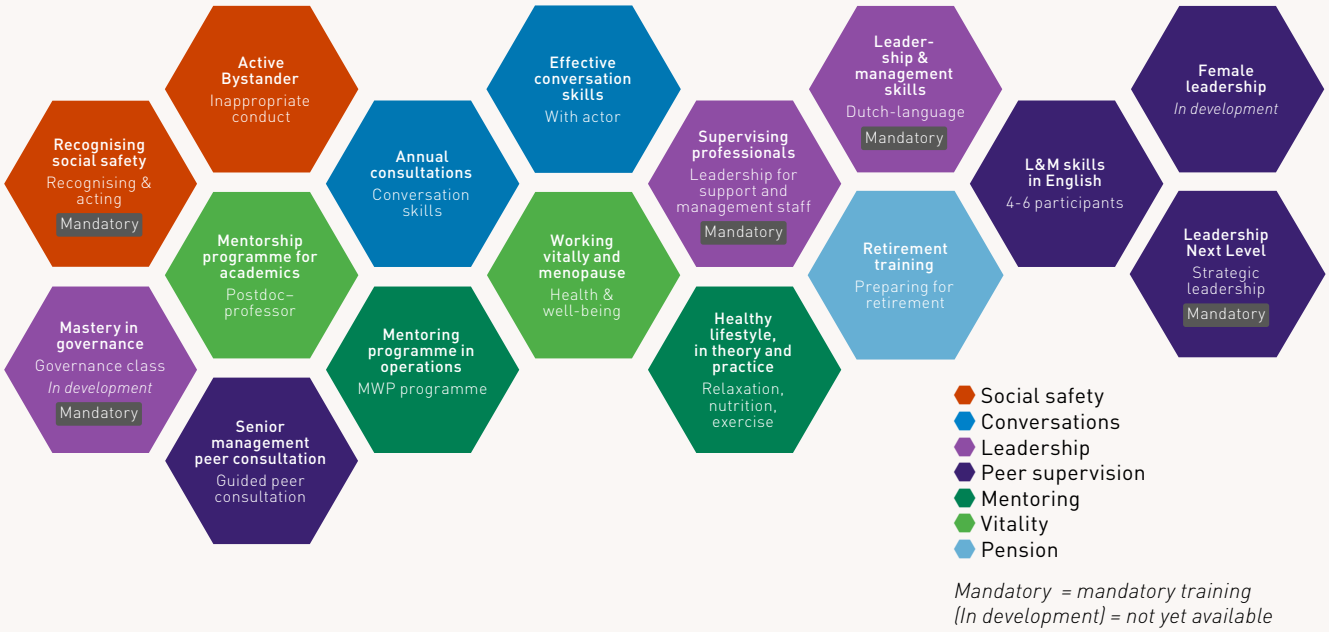
You are entitled to facilities for education and training, especially where these are aimed at your current job or career development. In the case of job-related education or training, study costs and travel time are reimbursed and no repayment obligation applies.
Collective Labour Agreement, Article 6.10

The full text of the relevant articles of the collective labour agreement is included in Appendix 1.



Learning and development

HR L&D training provision for support and management staff
Training provision for supervisors and employees – VU Amsterdam



VU Amsterdam organises learning and development at two levels. At VU Amsterdam-wide level, learning paths are developed for a number of generic job areas and/or areas of expertise. In addition, training plans are drawn up at unit or department level as part of the SPP cycle.

Learning paths

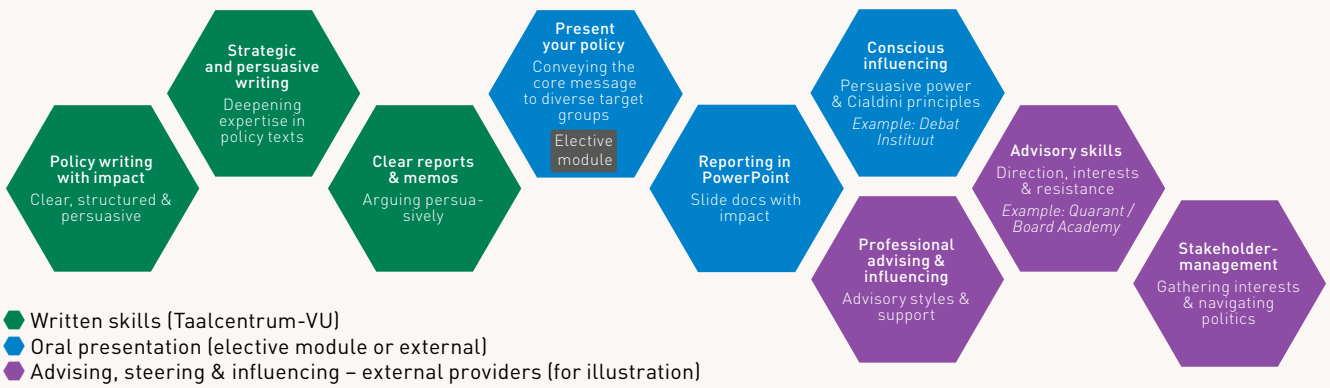
Learning paths provide guidance for professional development. For each job area, such as policy, project management and generic areas of expertise still to be further defined, they show which training courses (both internal and external) are relevant to performing the current job effectively and which training courses are appropriate for further deepening or broadening. The learning paths will be developed in more detail in the coming period.

Training plans

A training plan is drawn up by the unit or department itself as part of the SPP cycle. It connects the strategic plan and the staff review with concrete learning objectives, training courses and planning, and describes which training courses are needed when, who provides them and how progress is monitored.

Example elaboration of the Policy development path – support and management staff, VU Amsterdam
For illustration – not yet established – requires further alignment and supplementation

⚠ This is an example elaboration to show what a Policy development path could look like. It is expressly not a definitive offer. The writing courses (green) are existing training provision from Taalcentrum-VU. The oral and advisory skills training courses (blue/purple) are examples of possible directions based on external training provision – these have not yet been assessed, selected or included in VU Amsterdam's formal training provision. This path still needs to be developed further, aligned and supplemented.



Support for employees

Annual consultation
Every employee has an annual consultation with their supervisor once a year.

Development conversations
The development conversation may take place as part of the annual consultation, but may also be held separately, at the initiative of either the employee or the supervisor. The aims of a development conversation may include helping the employee keep up to date in their job, creating more challenge or role enrichment, or exploring another direction.

360-degree feedback
Can be used to sharpen insight into strengths and development points, particularly when exploring a next step. See 360-degree feedback for employees.

Digital Feedback Instrument (DiFI)
DiFI is an online feedback instrument for the competencies associated with the current, new or aspired-to job. It gathers feedback from others, provides insight into behaviour and results in a professional report with development tips for each competency, which can be used in development conversations and in the annual consultation.

UFO Ranking tool
The UFO Ranking tool contains all UFO profiles and the associated key result areas and competencies.

Coaching
Sounding out an external person on the organisation of work or on organising collaboration and decision-making more effectively. See coaching.

Career guidance
Guidance from a career advisor in exploring career opportunities and possible next steps, based on talents, drivers and ambitions, within or outside VU Amsterdam. See Career guidance.

Mentoring programme
Employees who wish to prepare for a next step in their career can draw on the experience of a senior colleague from another faculty or service department who is available as a mentor. See mentoring programme for talented professionals.

Training courses via the Learning Management System (LMS)
The Learning Management System (LMS) contains the full range of L&D and CTL training courses. Employees can register directly for the desired training course through the LMS.

Online training courses
VU Amsterdam has an agreement with GoodHabitz. More than 150 free training courses and masterclasses are available to all VU Amsterdam employees.

Training for employees: rules and reimbursements
This page provides an overview of facilities, rules and reimbursements relating to training for employees. See Training for employees: rules and reimbursements.

Work-to-work counselling
VU Amsterdam offers work-to-work counselling to employees whose temporary employment contract is coming to an end. See Work-to-work counselling.

VU Career Network (pilot)
The VU Career Network is a digital network in which employees can voluntarily make themselves visible to others in connection with exploring career options, conversations and possible projects. Employees can add their competencies or development wishes, and/or what they have to offer, to their profile in SuccessFactors (via their supervisor), for example their willingness to share experiences or participate in a trial assignment. The network supports employees who wish to explore other roles or fields of work within VU Amsterdam, and makes it easier to connect with colleagues about this. The career network is being tested as a pilot within a number of units before possibly being rolled out VU Amsterdam-wide.

Support for supervisors

Leadership framework
The leadership framework provides insight into the tasks, responsibilities and development of supervisors at VU Amsterdam.

HR guidance for supervisors
This web page brings together practical information for supervisors to help them properly fulfil their HR responsibilities, in line with VU Amsterdam's ambition to be a good employer.

Strategic Personnel Planning
Strategic Personnel Planning (SPP) is a tool for steering towards optimal staffing of a department or team. SPP maps out the team's ambitions and the competencies and skills required, and translates these into actions to enable the team to develop in line with future developments.
See Strategic Personnel Planning.

Annual consultation
Every employee has an annual consultation with their supervisor once a year. See The annual consultation for supervisors.

Development conversations
The development conversation may take place as part of the annual consultation, but may also be held separately, at the initiative of either the employee or the supervisor. The aims of a development conversation may include helping the employee keep up to date in their job, creating more challenge or role enrichment, or exploring another direction.

360-degree feedback
Can be used to sharpen insight into strengths and development points, particularly when employees are exploring a next step. See 360-degree feedback for employees.

Coaching
Sounding out an external person on the organisation of work or on organising collaboration and decision-making more effectively. See coaching.

Mentoring programme
Employees who wish to prepare for a next step in their career can draw on the experience of a senior colleague from another faculty or service department who is available as a mentor. See mentoring programme for talented professionals.

Team coaching
A team coach supports teams in creating clarity about shared goals and improving collaboration, role distribution and working agreements. Where there are tensions, cultural differences or reduced mutual trust, team coaching can help get a team back on track. See Team coaching.

TeamUp workshop
The TeamUp workshop helps teams to examine their collaboration and communication. The aim is to strengthen connection, work together more effectively and enjoyably, and reach shared, practical agreements on how the team wants to function. See TeamUp workshop.

Training courses for supervisors
VU Amsterdam offers various training courses for supervisors:

- Supervising professionals
- Leadership and management skills
- Annual consultations for new supervisors
- Leadership Next Level
- Mastery in governance (in development)
- Recognizing social safety
- Effective dialogues

See: https://vu.nl/en/employee/leadership/management-and-training

7. Implementation and embedding

Following the adoption of this policy, a number of actions will be initiated. A landing page will be set up as a central place where all information, instruments and learning paths can be found. In addition, conversation cards will be developed as practical support for development conversations, for both employees and supervisors.

Furthermore, the VU Career Network in SuccessFactors will be piloted. Employees can use it to make themselves visible for possible projects, career conversations and orientation. See Chapter 6 for a description.
In addition, it will be explored whether a more structured way of making projects and temporary assignments visible (for example in the form of a 'project bank' or assignments noticeboard) can contribute to development opportunities and internal mobility. The further design of this will take place in phases, depending on the resources and capacity available.

This career development policy provides a VU-wide framework. During the implementation phase, this framework will be given further concrete form within faculties and service departments. Units will work out which roles and expertise are relevant in their context, in connection with their Strategic Personnel Planning and team composition, and develop these further. This may include different types of expert roles, aligned with the tasks and challenges of the unit.

HR will monitor these developments and, in cooperation with the units, consider which roles and areas of expertise extend across multiple units. On this basis, VU Amsterdam-wide learning paths will be developed. These will include learning paths in areas such as policy, project-based working and expert development in areas yet to be determined.

The expert development learning path has several variants, depending on the professional field in which deeper expertise is needed. This may include expertise in areas such as AI, data analysis or management support. These learning paths provide guidance for professional development, both within the current job and in preparation for possible career steps.

Mobility guidelines will also be drawn up. These guidelines will contain standard agreements for situations in which an employee is deployed elsewhere within VU Amsterdam, on a temporary or longer-term basis. In any event, they will cover the applicable contract form, agreements on any transition allowance, the guarantee of return in the case of temporary deployment and how leave and illness are arranged during the mobility period. The guidelines provide support for supervisors and employees and ensure that comparable situations are dealt with in a comparable way, regardless of the unit.

The introduction of this policy requires not only instruments, but also and above all a cultural shift. Discussions with employees and supervisors show that mobility is sometimes held back by habit, close-knit team relationships or unfamiliarity with what is available elsewhere within VU Amsterdam. Supervisors play a key role in this: they can facilitate mobility or, consciously or unconsciously, hinder it. Making supervisors aware of their role in encouraging mobility, even where this means that a good employee leaves the department or VU Amsterdam, is therefore an explicit part of the implementation.

Embedding will take place through the existing SPP cycle: Strategic Personnel Plan, staff review, development conversation, agreements, evaluation, and then the cycle starts again. Supervisors are responsible for conducting the conversations and recording agreements. HR supports implementation and monitors progress.

Following adoption, the policy will be evaluated periodically, in consultation with employees, supervisors and employee participation bodies. Evaluation dates will be agreed during implementation.

Appendix 1 **Relevant collective labour agreement provisions**

Article 6.5 Career development

1. The social policy of the institutions will focus on promoting development opportunities and career prospects. The continued employability of employees is a point of attention in this respect. Mobility both within and outside the employee's own institution is essential in this regard.
2. The employer will adopt a career policy.
3. Every employee with a temporary employment contract of two years or more will be given the opportunity to obtain career advice from a professional organisation. The costs of this advice will be borne by the employer. This opportunity will be offered at such a time that the advice can be used for an individual counselling programme aimed at increasing the employee's opportunities on the internal or external labour market.
4. Every employee with a permanent employment contract is entitled, at least once every five years, to a career advice conversation with an expert in this field, to be concluded, where possible, with advice on career development.

Article 6.7 Annual consultation

1. The employee is entitled, subject to any rules to be laid down by the employer, to a conversation with their immediate supervisor at least once a year about the manner in which, taking into account their performance in the past period, the employee will perform their job or continue their career during a future period to be agreed, and the conditions under which this should take place.

   The annual consultation will address, among other things:
   a. the employee's well-being (including aspects of physical and mental health). The topic of a 'realistic task assignment' will also be discussed during the annual consultation: what duties have been assigned and do they fit within the employee's contracted hours? If this is not the case, the employer will, after consultation with the employee, make choices in order to prevent overtime, including structural overtime, and excessive workload;
   b. employability, including knowledge and skills, assessed against future needs, the anticipated career and personal development and the necessary training, as well as the time frames within which these will be achieved; and
   c. motivation.
2. These conversations will take place in an open atmosphere with equal input from both parties; any agreements made will be recorded in writing and evaluated.
3. Multi-year career development objectives and agreements will be recorded in a personal development plan. These agreements and objectives will be recorded in writing and evaluated.

Article 6.8 Assessment

1. An assessment will be drawn up periodically of the way in which the employee has performed their job and of their conduct while performing that job.
2. The employer sets the rules governing assessments.
3. The employee is required to sign the assessment in acknowledgement of having seen it.

Article 6.10 Training and development

1. In order to align the employee's knowledge and skills with the employer's needs, and to maintain and, where possible, strengthen the employee's opportunities on the job market, both within and outside the university sector, continued attention to the employee's knowledge and experience is essential. Maintaining and developing this knowledge and experience are a shared responsibility and obligation of the employer and the employee. Each year, the employee will have at their disposal at least three development days for development and training in the context of Recognition & Rewards and/or sustainable employability.
   Development days may be carried over on the basis of a written agreement between the employer and the employee made before the end of the year. If no agreement as referred to in the previous sentence has been made, unused development days lapse at the end of the calendar year. Development days do not constitute holiday leave and cannot be converted into payment. Unused development days lapse at the end of the employment contract. The use of the days may be recorded in the employee's portfolio.
2. The employer may require the employee to undertake a study or training programme if this is necessary for the proper performance of the current or a future job. The employer will provide the necessary facilities, such as reimbursement of study costs and travel expenses. Undertaking the study or training programme counts as working time and, where possible, takes place during working hours.
3. The employee is entitled to training and may, on that basis, request the employer to provide facilities for undertaking a study or training programme.

4. If the request referred to in paragraph 3 concerns a job-related study or training programme, the employer will provide the necessary facilities, such as reimbursement of study costs and travel expenses. Undertaking the study or training programme counts as working time and, where possible, takes place during working hours.
5. If the study or training programme contributes to the employee's career development, the employer will provide facilities to the employee, even if there is only a limited connection between the study or training programme and the current or a future job.
6. No repayment obligation applies to compulsory study or training programmes or to job-related study or training programmes, and no conditions may be attached to the facilities to be provided. Only in the other cases referred to in paragraph 5 may the employer impose a repayment obligation and/or attach conditions to the facilities to be provided. The employer may establish further rules on the provision of facilities as referred to in paragraph 5.
7. Article 10.8 applies to the (further) rules referred to in paragraph 6.

Article 6.11 Mobility and sustainable employability of support and management staff

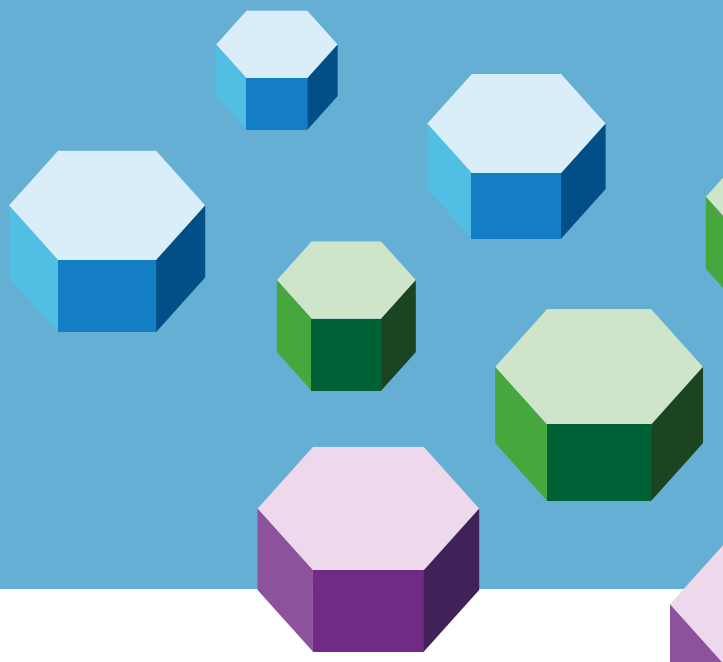
'Lifelong learning' – the sustainable development of support and management staff jobs is explicitly embedded in the collective labour agreement. In this context, it is important that employees are enabled to take charge of their own sustainable development. To this end, each year the employee undertakes selected activities aimed at professional development and/or a career step, supported by the supervisor/organisation.

1. In principle, every employee undertakes a number of development initiatives each year and discusses these with their supervisor. Agreement is then reached, in consultation, on the (substantive) direction in which the employee wishes to develop, the route proposed for this, the time frame and the resources needed to achieve this.
2. The employer facilitates the development process in determining the direction and in its implementation. This includes, among other things, outlining a future scenario for the employee's own unit and/or institution, providing support in designing and carrying out the development activities and making sufficient financial resources available. The development days referred to in Article 6.10 may be used for this purpose.
3. Working on one's own development is not optional; it is a normal part of performance and forms part of the assessment criteria. The development initiatives are a fixed part of the annual consultation and are determined again each year and discussed regularly. Discussing development initiatives with employees is part of the supervisors' duties.
4. If the employee takes up another job within their own university, the salary scale is retained, unless the employer and the employee have made an agreement as referred to in Article 7.5 (1). In that case, the salary scale corresponding to the lower job level will apply to the employee. The phasing-out arrangement in Article 7.5 applies if the relevant conditions are met. If the employee progresses to a higher-level job, they will receive the salary scale associated with that job.

Want to know more?

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