

## Growing Across

Up isn't the only way to move! Lateral moves offer much-needed breadth of experience. Taking a lateral move means applying current experience in a new job at the same level, but with different duties or challenges. Moving across can diversify and strengthen your skills and ignite new interests. Of course, should you want to move up in the future, previous lateral moves can also establish your reputation with a broader network, deepen your understanding of the organization, and expand your strengths for new positions.

You can grow across haphazardly or deliberately. Here are some questions to keep in mind when planning a lateral career move:

**1. Do you have a plan?** If you are considering growing across, conduct a self-review to identify your reason for a change and what transferable strengths you can leverage. Conduct informational interviews to learn more about roles that interest you and find out how your skills, qualifications and experiences measure up. This is a great reality check and necessary for planning.

**2. Do you want more visibility?** Do you hope to get exposure to new people and new parts of McMaster? Consider who you'll interact with on a regular basis, and whether your work will include the sort of projects and programs that will raise your profile.

**3. Do you want more responsibility?** You could take a position at the same level that involves a different set of responsibilities – perhaps the chance to supervise student staff, build consensus, be responsible for some budget allocation, be the go-to person for an area of knowledge, or the main driver of a project. If you manage your career path strategically, every lateral move can be like a promotion in responsibility.

**4. Who do you want to work with?** Maybe there are stakeholder groups you want the chance to work with: students, government or industry partners, a certain faculty or department, or even a specific supervisor. Look at your career as an educational opportunity, and ask yourself who has the most interesting and useful things to teach you.

**5. What comes next?** A successful career is usually a series of steps. If you know where you want to go long term, then you can review what lateral moves are necessary to get you there. What job (or jobs) might you want after this one? Is the position in question preparing you for that next move?

**6. Is the next job better aligned with your strengths, interests or values?** You don't need to achieve all things in each job. But if a lateral move would be more energizing or would provide a better fit in terms of strengths, interests or values, take that into consideration.