



Procedure: Succession planning

Purpose

To establish the procedure for succession planning as provided for under the Developing a sustainable workforce policy.

Procedure

1. Succession planning is part of the overall process of developing a sustainable workforce which requires a:

- workforce plan that identifies broad current and future workforce needs; and
- succession plans to identify specific replacement strategies at an individual staff or group level.

1. Succession planning should be undertaken for key positions or groups of staff, including:

- University leadership;
- College leadership (College Deans/Directors, Deputy/Associate Deans, and College General Managers);
- academic leaders in research;
- academic leaders in education;
- professional staff leaders;
- technical specialists; and/or
- other groups identified in workforce plans

2. Succession planning involves the systematic identification and development of internal replacement strategies for key positions or groups of positions.

3. Key positions are those that are critical to meeting the research, education and service objectives of the University, and where a delay in filling a vacancy would have significant adverse effect on the operation of the University.

4. Succession planning helps sustain the future of research, education and service by:

- identifying key positions;

- identifying high potential staff capable of advancement to those key positions; and
- identifying and initiating development plans and actions to support high potential staff.

5. Succession planning does not replace the University's merit based recruitment and appointment processes, it seeks to ensure the University has a strong internal field of candidates to be considered for key positions in the future.

Developing a College / Division succession plan

6. Succession plans should be developed from College/Division workforce plans in accordance with the [Workforce Planning Procedure](#) which are integrated and aligned with the College/Division strategic and operational plans, including but not limited to:

- the ANU Strategic Plan;
- College/Division strategic plans;
- Research Committee and Education Committee priorities;
- annual executive planning priorities; and/or
- marketing and development priorities;

7. When developing succession plans, Colleges and Divisions should ensure that they consider:

- the future direction of the College's research, education and service disciplines;
- the future direction of the Division in supporting the College's research, education and service disciplines;
- continuity risks or areas where significant disruption may be felt if key staff left;
- age profiles and retirement plans of key staff; and
- performance assessments of senior staff.

Step 1: Identifying key positions

8. Identify the specific positions in each area of the College/Division where planned replacement action is essential. It is not normally intended that this process maps potential replacements for every position.

9. Obtain general background on the present incumbent of each key position and complete the profile template at [Succession Planning Position Profile](#).

10. Assess the likelihood, and possible timing, of the need to fill the position due to possible departure of the present incumbent. A guide to identifying the likelihood that key

staff may leave can include the amount of time an incumbent has been in their position; their age in relation to possible retirement intentions; and any other information that may be provided by staff during their Career and Performance Development discussions.

Step 2: Identifying potential successors

11. Consider the possible successors that might be suitable to fill the position within a range of timeframes such as:

- immediately;
- within 1 year; and
- within 2-3 years.

12. Depending on the potential successors identified, determine the urgency and nature of development or targeted recruitment action required:

- If no successors, then external recruitment may be required. If the availability of external candidates is low, then a specific recruitment replacement strategy should be developed for the position.
- If potential successors require considerable development, then an accelerated development plan, linked to the individual's Performance Development Review, should be developed.
- If a full range of short and long term successors are identified then no specific actions may be required - monitor the situation in case it changes.

13. A College/Division succession plan does not replace individual performance planning and discussions, or budgeting and financial planning. Workforce and succession plans support the College/Division strategic objectives and resource decisions to ensure that future staffing arrangements are sustainable and integrated.

Step 3: Identifying relevant development strategies

14. Development strategies for 'potential' successors may include:

- formal leadership/management or technical skills training;
- opportunities to act in the role or other similar roles;
- working on identified projects;
- mentoring or coaching;
- provision of additional responsibilities to build skills/confidence; and/or
- planned 'on-the-job' training.

Linking to the performance and development review

15. Development plans for individuals should be included in their Performance and Development Review.

16. Care must be taken to ensure that potential 'successors' are not given the expectation that they will be appointed to a key position. The normal competitive and merit-based selection and appointment processes will apply.

Reviewing and evaluating

17. The Human Resources Division will evaluate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the University succession planning framework.

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