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Human Resources Directorate

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1. Background Information

This change management policy has been developed to assist ACU, its organisational and functional units, managers and staff effectively manage and participate in change management processes at the University.

2. Policy Statement

The University and staff recognise that change will occur as the University evolves over time and as circumstances require. Many changes that take place in the workplace can be relatively minor and, as a consequence, are readily addressed at the immediate workplace level through direct localised discussion and consultation with individual staff and/or the work group. These changes do not need to adhere to the broad parameters outlined in this policy as they would normally be considered excessive in the circumstances.

The University and its staff will pursue ongoing improvements in the quality of University structures, programs and support services, and in support of the University's strategic objectives.

The principles underpinning workplace change at ACU are:

- The approach to change should be transparent and involve staff affected by the change.
- There should be timely communication and consultation with relevant staff throughout the change process.
- Where the change is likely to adversely affect staff, the University will treat them fairly, sensitively and with respect.
- Staff will be consulted on measures to mitigate any negative consequences of change that may affect them.

3. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to ensure that change management processes at ACU provide opportunities for staff to express themselves in relation to change issues. This is to ensure that processes of change achieve the University's strategic objectives. The processes outlined within this policy, therefore, are indicative only. They are not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive. The processes outlined within this policy embody the principle of consultation about change programs. Some change management projects will be best undertaken by using the processes contained in this policy. Others may require other processes to allow satisfactory consultation to occur.

4. Application of Policy

This policy applies to all staff of the University.

5. Change Management Procedures

5.1 Responsibilities of Management

The responsibilities and obligations which are required of University management with regard to institutional policy or discretion include but are not limited to:

- the Mission of the University;
- the strategic direction of the University;
- organisational structure;
- staffing levels;
- technological innovation;
- budget and resource allocations; and,
- employment and management of staff.

These responsibilities are integral to the role of management, representing areas crucial to the ongoing operation, viability and effectiveness of the University. In this context, amongst other objectives, organisational and technological change will be directed to the achievement of enhanced quality, efficiency, productivity, effectiveness and economy of University operations, and the important values that underpin ACU as a Catholic institution.

5.2 Responsibilities of Staff

The responsibilities and obligations which are required of staff and their representatives include, but are not limited to:

- assisting the University adjust to changing circumstances;
- enhancing efficiency and productivity;
- better servicing the needs of students, clients and customers;
- strengthening the quality of service delivery;
- achieving economy of operations;
- effectively utilising the benefits of technology
- supporting action to achieve legislative compliance;
- appropriately utilising financial resources; and,
- facilitating income generation.

A staff member may choose to seek advice or assistance from a person of their choice, including a staff representative, throughout the course of discussions on such changes provided that person is not currently a practicing solicitor or barrister.

6 Consultation throughout the Change Management Process

Appropriate consultations as broadly outlined in this Policy will be conducted where a change may have a significant effect as defined.

Significant effects include termination of employment, major changes in the composition, operation or size of the University's workforce or in the skills required; the elimination or diminution of job opportunities, promotion opportunities or job tenure; the alteration of hours of work; the need for retraining or transfer of its staff to other work locations; and the restructuring of jobs.

Consultation means providing the individual staff member or other relevant person(s) with a bona fide opportunity to influence the decision maker. Consultation is not perfunctory advice on what is to happen, this is a common misconception. Consultation is not a joint decision making process or even a negative or frustrating barrier to the prerogative of management to make decisions. Consultation allows the decision making process to be informed.

The University acknowledges that the sound management of workplace change is enhanced by the involvement of the people who will be affected by that change. The University seeks to manage change in a proactive, transparent and constructive manner, which minimises any adverse effects on the University workplace community while ensuring that the University is able to adapt appropriately to changing circumstances.

6.1 Preparing a Change Management Proposal

A well conceptualised and considered change proposal will help reassure the University community and provide potentially affected staff with a sense of confidence in the soundness and viability of the proposed change.

Practical initiatives that may be taken by a manager that may help in the preparation of a change management proposal include:

- Researching the matter, possibly by considering the way similar activities or processes are handled elsewhere at ACU, in the higher education sector or further afield. This might involve review of relevant literature or reports, site visits and /or discussions with experts and colleagues.
- Commissioning a panel or an expert to review existing practices and modes of service or other delivery and provide recommendations for consideration.
- Taking advice and consulting privately with relevant in-house specialist or service groups that may be needed to support any ultimate changes. This might include Human Resources, Finance, Student Administration, Information Technology, Library, etc.
- Discussing the emerging change concept with the senior manager who is responsible for the area in which change is being contemplated. This will be beneficial to obtain her/his support and advice, both in relation to the proposal, and strategies for implementation, communication and consultation with affected staff.
- Giving thorough consideration to the potential logistical and resourcing implications of the change such as its financial, service, equipment, program delivery, facilities/accommodation, technology requirements along with any associated cost savings, efficiencies or costs.
- Giving serious consideration to the potential impact on staff and work patterns/organisation. Especially to issues such as the:
 - mix, location and number of staff;
 - any new supervisory and/or organisational structure issues or needs;
 - any altered skill, competency, capability, qualification or specialisation needs;
 - any impact on career paths along with possible retraining or upskilling needs and strategies; and,
 - any issues to be considered in developing possible staff placement processes.

The value of considered and thorough preparation of a change proposal, especially at this early stage, is that many possible difficulties and initially unseen benefits and implications can be addressed in preparation for positive discussions and consultations with staff. It is important that the person preparing the change proposal remain open-minded to enable consideration and inclusion of any useful and viable refinements in the course of subsequent consultations.

It is important to note, however, that effective consultation is not dependent on all or any of the above actions having been undertaken. Only those required to lay foundations for a particular change process should be taken.

The University will consult with the affected staff as soon as feasible and normally not later than the point at which the University officer or body has made an in principle decision to consider a change which is likely to have a significant affect on staff.

6.2 Stage 1 – Initial Consultation on the Change Proposal

When a manager decides to advance an “in-principle” significant change proposal, which is likely to impact on staff, consultation with the affected staff will take place as soon as possible. Such consultation may be informal or formal. However, the manager should endeavour to ensure that affected staff members have an opportunity to reflect on and ask questions about the proposed change.

As part of the consultation process the manager will provide relevant information on the change concept to the affected staff in order to outline its implications. This will normally take the form of a Draft Change Management Proposal which is released to the directly affected and other relevant staff. The draft Change Proposal will cover the following matters:

- the rationale for the change;
- potential benefits or adverse effects in relation to staff;
- suggestions for avoiding or mitigating any potential adverse effects;
- whether a post implementation review is appropriate;
- where necessary a placement process,
- identify the impact on tasks identified for transfer to another organisational or functional area,
- advise whether the creation or removal of a role in a particular organisational unit will have a flow on effect to a role or roles located in another organisational unit, and
- where the proposed change is significant in nature, the University or an affected staff member(s) may place the matter on the agenda of the ACUSCC.

Staff will be provided with an opportunity to discuss the affect of the proposed changes as they might impact on them personally. Staff may put forward comments, either verbally or in writing, for improving the change proposal or for averting or mitigating any potential adverse effects. Managers are encouraged to keep a record of the feedback received from staff, including advice of their consideration of the issues raised.

6.3 Deciding to Further Proceed with a Change Proposal

Following consideration of any input received in the initial consultation stage, the change proposal can then be finalised for discussion with the Executive Planning Group Member responsible for the area in which the change is proposed (ie. the Executive Dean or Director). Once endorsed the change proposal may be advanced for approval to further proceed to the Vice-Chancellor, the relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor and/or a specific Board or Committee of the University. Depending upon the nature of the change proposal and the extent of its anticipated impact, the University may seek the views of staff through consultative forums and/or focus groups. Once a decision to proceed is made, the proposal progresses to the next consultation phase.

If the Change Management Proposal has not previously been submitted to the ACU Staff Consultative Committee as a draft, the University will place the Proposal on the agenda for the next meeting of the ACUSCC.

Once formally advised, the ACU Staff Consultative Committee may seek additional information about the proposed change and its institutional benefits and may suggest ways for improving the change proposal or for averting or mitigating any potential adverse effects.

6.4 Stage 2 – Consultation Following a Decision to Further Proceed

Once the University has made a decision to further proceed with the change proposal, and a comprehensive implementation proposal has been prepared, the affected staff will be formally advised. The University will discuss the implications of the change with affected staff as quickly as possible after a decision is made to further advance the change process. Specifically the University will discuss with the affected staff, issues which include:

- the introduction of the change;
- any effects the change is likely to have on staff;
- measures to avert or mitigate any possible adverse effects on staff;
- mechanisms for equitably accessing any benefits that might attend the change;
- proposals for placing staff in positions in as part of the implementation of a restructure; and,
- processes for monitoring/reporting on the change process implementation.

7 Evaluation of Consultation Outcomes

The University will consider any input from the University workplace community or where a member of staff chooses to be assisted by a person of their choice who may be a staff representative that person, provided she/he is not a practising barrister or solicitor, when considering change proposals and when deciding whether to proceed with the proposed change either in its original or revised form.

8 Approval to Proceed

Following the consideration and evaluation of the consultation outcomes (including through the ACUSCC), the relevant Executive Planning Group member will submit the final Change Management Proposal to the Vice-Chancellor for approval to proceed to implementation.

9 Implementing Change

If the University does decide to proceed with the proposed change in either its original or a revised form, then the University will consult with the affected staff and establish, publish and communicate strategies and time lines for:

- (i) the implementation of change; and
- (ii) if appropriate, a subsequent review of the process or change.

A review of the implementation may lead to an Addendum to the Change Management Proposal being issued in order to address any issues which may have arisen throughout the implementation.

10 Assistance for Staff

A staff member may seek advice or assistance from a person of their choice, including a staff representative, throughout the course of discussions and consultation on a change management proposal or process. Such a person must not be a practising solicitor or barrister.

Staff will also be reminded that they are able to use the University's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which may be of benefit in providing independent support.

11 Policy Review

The University may make changes to the Change Management Policy from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about the Change Management Policy may forward their suggestions to the Director, Human Resources.

12 Further Assistance

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding the Change Management Policy should first consult their nominated supervisor, who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in their work area. Should further advice be needed, they should contact the Human Resources Consultant responsible for their campus.

13 Related Policies:

General Staff Job Redesign Policy
Position Classification for General Staff Policy
Redeployment, Redundancy and Voluntary Early Retirement Policy

Attachment 1: Key Steps in Managing Significant Change Processes

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The following indicative steps are provided to assist change management at the University. In providing this guidance it is recognised that variations from this process will be needed to facilitate the effective advancement of differing change management processes at ACU.

