

Name of Policy	General Staff Performance Development Program Policy	
Description of Policy	<i>This policy covers the nature, purpose, requirements and procedures of the Performance Development Program for General Staff at ACU.</i>	
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Description of Revision		

Human Resources Directorate

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Table of Contents

1.	Background Information	2
2.	Policy Statement	2
3.	Policy Purpose	2
4.	Application of Policy	2
5.	Procedures	2
6.	Policy Review	8
7.	Further Assistance	8
8.	Attachment 1 Links to Other University Policies and Processes	8

1. Background Information

Australian Catholic University recognises the need to strive for excellence and quality in all areas of its activities and operations and that these goals are achievable only if staff have a clear understanding of their role and their effectiveness within it. The Performance Development Program (PDP) for General Staff has been developed in line with the aspirations of the ACU Strategic Plan 1999 – 2008. It is recognised that General Staff have a need to know what is expected of them and what skills they need to develop in order to carry out their role as well as to receive feedback on how they are performing in relation to those expectations.

2. Policy Statement

The Performance Development Program for General Staff is designed to support effective two-way communication between General Staff members and their supervisor so that all staff members have a clear understanding of their role and what level of performance is expected of them as well as the learning and development activities they need to enhance their performance in the workplace.

3. Policy Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to assist General Staff and their nominated supervisors to implement the PDP effectively in order to optimise the benefit of the program both for the University and its staff.

4. Application of Policy

The PDP applies to all General Staff who are employed on a continuing or fixed term basis for a period greater than 6 months. The PDP is an important tool for planning and monitoring performance. It provides a means for evaluating and developing the work performance of General Staff to ensure that:

- the University Mission and ethos are upheld; strategic goals are achieved; operations are enhanced; and effective customer service is delivered;
- a mechanism is established for assisting the communication and discussion of University strategic and other organisational or functional unit plans;
- General Staff have a clear and agreed sense of their work role and their individual performance strategies and how these fit within the overall quality planning framework of the University;
- a process is set in place for reviewing the achievement of individual staff against performance objectives and for providing feedback on performance; and,
- a better focus is placed on personal and corporate learning and their associated development strategies so as to assist in clarifying career aspirations.

The program is linked directly to incremental progression and to recognising and rewarding excellence. To either advance incrementally and/or be eligible for bonus, a General Staff member is expected to demonstrate that she/he has met or exceeded the necessary performance requirements as assessed by the nominated supervisor following a performance review carried out in accordance with the PDP.

5. Procedures

5.1 The ACU Planning Context

There are various levels of planning within ACU, all of which have the University's Mission as their essential point of reference. At the University level, there is an overarching University Strategic Plan. At the organisational unit level, there is an organisational unit strategic implementation plan. In some cases, organisational units

further develop functional unit management plans as mechanisms for assisting subordinate units to achieve their more immediate and localised objectives.

5.2 The Annual Planning and Review Cycle

The Annual Planning and Review Cycle is a two stage process: the first stage is the prospective establishment of work-related action plans and a Learning and Development Plan for the individual staff member – known as the **Performance Plan**. The second stage is a retrospective review of the staff member's work performance and development outcomes for the review period – known as the **Annual Review**. The Performance Plan and the Annual Review are recorded on the one form, the "Annual Performance Planning and Review" form (see Attachment 1).

5.3 Timing

The Annual Planning and Review Cycle is normally twelve months in duration.

All Performance Plans and Annual Reviews for General Staff are required to be completed during the 12 week period that represents Semester 1 each year (February to May) – known as the PDP window.

New General Staff who are eligible to participate in the PDP must have their first Individual Performance Plan completed within three months of commencing employment at ACU.

To ensure that new staff fit into the annual planning and review cycle in the next appropriate PDP window, the initial Plan for a new staff member may be for a period of between 6 months and 14 months in length. The second and subsequent Planning and Review cycle will then fall into the normal 12 month PDP window.

5.4 Performance Planning

In the context of the organisational unit quality management plan and the functional unit management plan (where used), the nominated supervisor is required to develop a Performance Plan for each eligible General Staff member. Consultation with the staff member is expected. **The Performance Plan** (PP) is comprised of two parts. The:

- Individual Work Performance Plan which documents the individual staff member's Key Responsibilities and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) (Section B of Attachment 1) ; and,
- Individual Learning and Development Plan which documents the individual staff member's learning and development needs (Section C of Attachment 1).

There are a number of steps involved in the development and review of the Performance Plan. These are outlined below.

5.4.1 Step 1: Initial Discussion

The nominated supervisor and the individual General Staff member meet and consider the existing position description, the appropriate organisational or functional unit planning documents, the proposed Key Performance Indicators and the individual development needs of the staff member.

5.4.2 Step 2: Developing the Performance Plan

By reference to the Key Result Areas (KRAs) endorsed by the member of the University Executive responsible for the management of the functional unit, the nominated supervisor and individual staff member jointly work to develop the staff member's Individual Work Performance Plan which is made up of two key sections:

- Key Responsibilities and their associated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are jointly defined and agreed and that represent deliverables expected of the individual staff member in their job for the one-year review period; and,
- the Individual Learning and Development Plan which is based on the premise that staff learning and development is a shared responsibility jointly held by nominated supervisors and individual staff.

These are noted on the Individual Work Performance Plan (See Sections B and C of Attachment 1) and endorsed by the staff member and the nominated supervisor.

Once these plans are completed, they are signed by the staff member and the nominated supervisor and distributed in the following way:

- The nominated supervisor forwards the original to the Executive Staff Member for endorsement;
- Where the Plan has been prepared by an Assistant Supervisor, they sign the form and send it to the Nominated Supervisor for review and signature;
- The Executive Staff Member signs the form and returns it to the nominated supervisor;
- The nominated supervisor/assistant supervisor retains a copy and provides the staff member with a copy;
- The original is forwarded to the Learning and Development Unit for analysis of the Learning and Development Plan; and
- It is then placed on the staff member's personnel file.

5.4.3 Step 3: Providing Informal Feedback and Support

It is a requirement of the PDP that a formal review of the staff member's progress and performance takes place at the end of the PDP cycle – this is the Annual Review. It is also important that informal advice and feedback be provided regularly throughout the cycle.

5.4.4 Step 4: Modifying and Adjusting the Performance Plan

The University's planning processes at all levels are time-bound and necessarily subject to review.

At all levels, the University's planning procedures need to be able to respond flexibly to changing circumstances when needed. Where circumstances require change during the Planning and Review period, the individual Performance Plan may be modified accordingly in consultation with the staff member. In such cases, the variation is signed by both the supervisor and the staff member and dated and then appended to the original Performance Plan.

5.5 The Annual Review

5.5.1 Reviewing Performance, Development and Achievements

A formal annual performance review is conducted by the nominated supervisor (or the assistant supervisor if she/he is assisting in the preparation of a recommendation) at the conclusion of the current Planning and Review period. The Annual Review primarily focuses on the staff member's performance during the Planning and Review period. It should also consider any developmental achievements in the review period.

The Annual Review of performance is intended to evaluate objectively each individual staff member's work performance. Although needs change or evolve, every work role is integral to the operation and effective work performance of ACU.

The Annual Review of performance will provide a process through which to assess suitability for incremental progression and/or an Annual Performance Bonus.

5.5.2 The Annual Review Process

There are four distinct stages in the Annual Review process:

1. preparing for the discussion;
2. conducting the discussion;
3. overall assessment and level achieved; and,
4. preparation of recommendation (where necessary) and sign off.

5.5.3 Preparing for the discussion

Both the nominated (or assistant) supervisor conducting the review and the staff member being reviewed, need to prepare for the performance review discussion. They need to re-acquaint themselves with the agreed KPIs for the performance review period and any documented variations to them; identify any achievements or areas of concern; consider any extenuating circumstances that may have applied during the review period and consider progress in relation to any learning and development proposals made at the beginning of the PDP cycle.

5.5.4 Assessing Performance

When assessing the performance of the staff member, the nominated (or assistant) supervisor should focus on overall performance across the range of areas highlighted in the KPIs for the review period. If necessary, they should also take into consideration any modifications to the Performance Plan which were agreed and documented during the period. It is important that comments on the staff member's performance relate to the review period and be factual, relevant, valid and fair.

In order to assess performance, it is necessary to:

- Assess achievements for each KPI by indicating whether the KPI registered in the Individual Work Performance Plan has been 'achieved' or 'not achieved' during the review period; and,
- Indicate the overall level of performance achieved by taking into consideration all assessments made for the range of KPIs and other relevant work-related factors that may have impacted on the staff member's performance during the review period. These performance levels are described below:

PERFORMANCE LEVELS
<u>Consistently exceeds expectations</u> Has consistently exceeded all expectations for the review period and has made outstanding contributions in the role.
<u>Exceeds expectations</u> Has exceeded most expectations for the review period and has made valued and recognised contributions in the role.
<u>Meets expectations</u> Has satisfied expectations in the review period and made satisfactory contributions in the role.
<u>Some, but not all expectations met</u> Has satisfied some of the expectations for the review period and needs improvements in some areas.
<u>Does not meet expectations</u> Has not satisfied expectations for the review period and needs improvement to meet required standards in the role.

On completion of the assessment, the nominated/assistant supervisor summarises the overall performance on the Annual Performance Planning and Review form (Section A of Attachment 1).

5.5.5 Conducting the Discussion

The Annual Review of performance discussion should focus on:

- the performance expectations as previously agreed in the KPIs;
- extenuating or other circumstances that may have impacted on performance;
- identifying those areas where KPIs were achieved or not achieved;
- consideration of other relevant work-related factors that may have impacted on the staff member's overall performance outcomes;
- reflecting on any challenges impacting on performance during the planning and review cycle;
- addressing matters pertaining to personal work behaviours or attitudes if they are seen to have affected performance;
- providing the staff member with an opportunity to comment on progress towards the achievement of each KPI;
- reviewing progress in relation to the learning and development aspirations included in the current Individual Learning and Development Plan; and,
- exploring areas of potential improvement and support.

5.5.6 Reviewer's Overall Performance Assessment and Summary

The overall assessment section in the Annual Performance Planning and Review form enables the nominated supervisor (or assistant supervisor) to summarise the outcomes of the performance review discussion. (See: Section A of the PDP Form)

In arriving at an overall performance level, the nominated supervisor should:

- assess the staff member's achievements in respect of the range of KPIs;
- take into consideration other relevant work-related factors that may have impacted on the overall performance outcomes;
- take into consideration the staff member's own self-assessment provided at the discussion meeting; and,
- make every effort to ensure that the overall assessment in her/his judgement correctly reflects the staff member's contribution.

The assessment of the overall performance should be indicated in the Annual Review of Performance form against one of the levels listed in Sub-section 5.5.4 above.

The nominated/assistant supervisor is also required to provide a summary of the conclusions that have been drawn in relation to the overall performance and contribution of the staff member during the preceding performance appraisal cycle.

To finalise the Annual Review, the nominated/assistant supervisor:

- completes the Overall Performance Assessment and Summary (Section A);
- provides the staff member with the opportunity to provide comment on this assessment in the section provided for 'Staff Member's Comments'; and
- completes the Review of the Individual Learning and Development Plan.

At this stage the form is retained by the nominated/assistant supervisor so that a new Work Performance and Learning and Development Plan can be prepared for the next PDP Cycle (Sections B and C of the PDP Form).

5.5.7 Performance Bonus

Where the overall performance of a staff member is assessed as “consistently exceeding expectations” in the context of the Annual Review, the nominated supervisor may recommend that a Performance Bonus or up to 2.5% of the staff member’s substantive gross annual salary (not including allowances). (Refer to the **Rewarding Excellence in Performance for General Staff Policy** for details and forms.)

5.6 Preparing for the Next Step

Prior to the nominated supervisor and staff member finalising performance expectations for the coming performance review period, the nominated supervisor may (if this has not already been obtained) need to obtain from the Executive Staff member responsible for the functional unit, approval for the Key Result Areas that are to apply for the next year. The supervisor and the staff member may then meet and develop a new Performance Plan taking into account:

- areas requiring improvement;
- any changes to the “Key Result Areas” of the functional unit; and,
- any apparent learning and development needs.

5.6.1 A New Performance Plan

The new Individual Work Performance Plan for the next planning and review cycle for each individual General Staff member establishes new:

- responsibilities and KPIs; and,
- the learning and development focus for the coming period.

The new Performance Plan for the coming period must be completed at the same time as the Annual Review of the preceding period is conducted. The outcomes of both discussions are recorded on the Annual Performance Planning and Review form (See the PDP Form).

5.6.2 New Outcomes

Where communication is effective, the meeting provides a planning opportunity for the nominated supervisor (or the assistant supervisor) and the individual staff member. At its end, they should both have a clear understanding of:

- the performance expectations held in relation to the staff member; and,
- the assistance and support that may be needed from the nominated supervisor.

The overall intention being that through focused discussion and dialogue:

- workplace efficiency, University operations and customer service will be enhanced; and,
- each staff member will feel secure in relation to the performance expectations placed on her/him at the beginning of the process of review and thereafter throughout the performance planning and review cycle.

5.7 Record Keeping and Privacy

All matters relating to the Performance Development Program for General Staff process are strictly confidential. Care, therefore, should be exercised when forwarding performance review documents between campuses and offices. Such documentation should be marked ‘Confidential’.

A copy of the completed and signed Annual Performance Planning and Review document should be retained by the staff member and by the nominated supervisor (or the assistant supervisor if this person will be supervising the staff member during the review period).

Completed and signed original Annual Performance Planning and Review forms should be forwarded to the Organisational Learning and Development Unit where details of the learning and development needs are recorded in PayGlobal. The forms are then placed on the relevant staff member's personal file.

6. Policy Review

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

7. Further Assistance

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

8. Attachments

1. PDP – Links to other Policies

Attachment 1: Links to Other University Policies and Processes

1. Equal Opportunity

The PDP supports non-discriminatory decision-making in relation to performance assessment and planning and the provision of learning and development activities.

2. Career Progression

Documentation associated with the PDP from a University standpoint is confidential. Staff may, however, choose to use the PDP material to support an application for promotion within the University or for other advertised positions. The nominated /assistant supervisor may consult PDP documentation when preparing a reference.

3. General Staff Organisational Learning and Development Policy

The PDP informs directly individual learning and development planning processes for general staff and supports individual staff career development in line with the intent of the General Staff Learning and Development Policy.

4. Incremental Progression

The PDP is linked directly to incremental progression in that the nominated supervisor is required to certify that an Annual Review has been conducted with the staff member and that the staff member has demonstrated that she/he has met the necessary performance requirements as assessed by the nominated supervisor.

5. Rewarding Excellence in Performance for General Staff

The PDP also links to the policy on Rewarding Excellence in Performance for General Staff in that a performance bonus can only be recommended following performance assessment as part of the Annual Review of performance under this Policy.

6. Managing Performance

The procedure for managing the performance of a general staff member, where a supervisor is of the view that the performance is unsatisfactory, is detailed in the Managing Staff Performance Guidelines. The procedure is separate to the PDP but may need to be referred to in cases where performance is considered by the supervisor to be less than satisfactory.

7. Position Classification Policy and Procedures

The PDP is informed partly by the University position classification policy and procedures and relies on the content of the Position Information Questionnaire (PIQ's) for assisting clarification of the position role and duties information.

8. Privacy and Confidentiality

Documentation associated with the PDP shall only be available to the staff member, and the nominated/assistant supervisor, Executive Staff member responsible for the functional unit in which the staff member works, the Human Resources and the Vice-Chancellor or nominee.

9. Study Support Policy

Where outcomes indicate that staff development can be supported through an approved part-time course of study, the University provides time release and financial assistance to general staff in accordance with the Study Support Policy for General Staff.