

Academic Performance Review and Planning: Conversation Guide for Staff

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About this guide

This guide assists Academic Staff members undertaking the Annual Performance Review and Planning Process using the following tools:

- Career Conversation Model
- Staff member Checklist
- The [Academic Performance Matrices and Evidence Framework](#)
- The [Capability Development Framework](#)
- Examples of SMART performance objectives (incorporating the APME Framework, the CDF and suggested strategic links)

Revised by:

Human Resources Directorate
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Introduction

The Performance Review and Planning (PRP) process provides a framework for:

- (a) managing and communicating about a staff member's work performance and development;
- (b) aligning staff member's probation criteria to the systemic performance review process, ensuring that the staff member's development and work align with the strategic objectives of the University and Faculty/School/Institute/Centre/Directorate/Portfolio, and
- (c) planning a staff member's development to contribute to the quality of their working life and future career.

The PRP process is most effective when there have been regular informal meetings between the nominated supervisor and the staff member during the year to:

- track progress against performance objectives and probation criteria where they apply;
- acknowledge successes;
- identify factors that may be hindering meeting performance objectives; and
- discuss professional development activities.

The PRP process is important as it provides a mechanism to align staff performance and development with University's strategic priorities. The involvement of all staff members is a key contributor to the University performing against new and emerging quality standards. The PRP process benefits staff by providing an opportunity to reflect and receive feedback on work achievements. It is also a prompt for staff members to consider their future career aspirations, and their career and professional development priorities. It also provides the opportunity for the nominated supervisor to provide guidance and support regarding the staff member's career aspirations.

The University places a strong focus on teaching and research quality through the Learning for Life Frameworks and the Research Intensification Strategy.

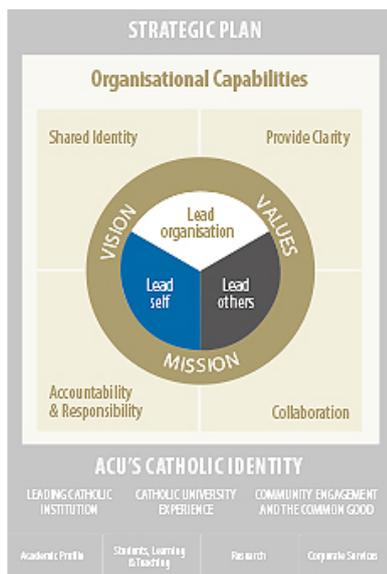
Academic working arrangements enabled by the ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2013-2017 will inform your preparation for the PRP conversation with your nominated supervisor. This includes changes to the requirements in relation to Academic Career Paths (ACPs) as follows:

- *Teaching-focussed academics* are not required to hold a research workload allocation, and
- *Research-only academics* are not required to hold a teaching workload allocation.

The outcome of the research workload allocation from the Research Performance Review and Plan (RPRP) process will influence the PRP conversation and provide a focus to developing performance objectives and professional development activities.

The [Academic Performance Matrices and Evidence \(APME\) Framework](#) comprehensively outlines performance standards, general requirements and evidence requirements in all areas of academic activity relevant to each Academic Career Pathway (ACP). The [APME Framework](#) is used across people management processes involving academic staff, setting performance objective, and planning development.

The ACU Capability Development Framework



The PRP process incorporates ACU's [Capability Development Framework](http://www.acu.edu.au/cdf) (CDF), which describes the essential competencies that are needed in all ACU staff to achieve our strategy and support our Mission. It supports conversations between you and your supervisor in identifying competencies that are most needed in your current role, and the identification of professional development goals and activities. The CDF Core Competencies assist in both in strengthening capability in the current role and understanding expectations of potential future roles. For further information about the CDF and the 10 Core Competencies, go to www.acu.edu.au/cdf

The Annual Performance Review and Planning Form has two parts:

Part A – Annual Performance Review

Section 1: You report on your achievements against the objectives identified in the previous year's plan. Copies of supporting documents are required as evidence of achievements. Your nominated supervisor comments on your achievements against the objectives.

Section 2: Your nominated supervisor provides an evaluation of your performance which also includes an assessment of behavioural competencies.

Part B – Annual Performance Plan

You are encouraged to provide your input to this section in draft form prior to meeting with your nominated supervisor to aid the discussion. You and your nominated supervisor should work together to finalise the six sections of the plan:

Section 1: Main duties and priorities for the next year

Section 2: Career planning

Section 3: Performance Objectives (with reference to the APME Framework and linked where necessary to probationary criteria)

Section 4: Confirmation of ACP

Section 5: Leave Management

Section 6: Professional and career development plans.

Staff on Probation

Staff will normally work with their supervisors to complete Part B of the PRP form within three months of their commencement with ACU. This is because the annual PRP process is used to monitor a staff member's progress during their probationary period by incorporating probation criteria into the staff member's performance objectives. This provides a prompt for the discussion between the staff member and nominated supervisor regarding;

- progress in meeting the probation criteria;
- identification of any potential risks to the probation criteria not being met, and/or
- amendments to probation criteria required due to a change in ACP.

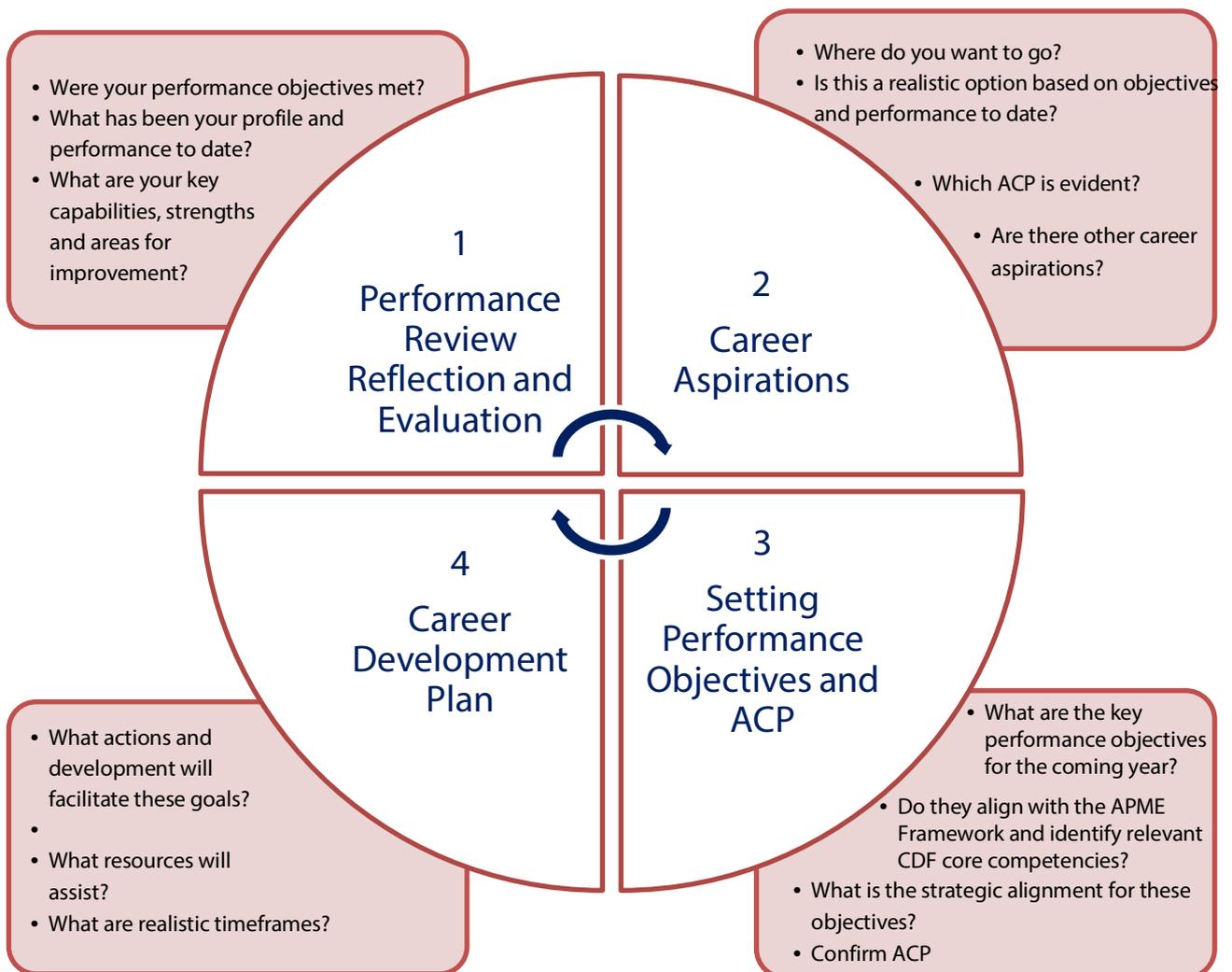
See the ACU [Managing for Performance site](#) for more information about probation for academic staff.

The Career Conversation Model

The Career Conversation Model illustrates the cycle of the PRP process. In quadrant 1, performance is reviewed against previously set objectives, which sets the scene for quadrants 2 and 3, where the focus is on future career aspirations and performance objectives. Quadrant 4 provides prompts for the career development planning discussion. All four elements of the model are significant and will need to be addressed in the career conversation between you and your nominated supervisor.

The Career Conversation Model interfaces with the *Annual Performance Review and Planning Form for Academic Staff* and the *Academic Staff Checklist* (see page 6).

Figure 1: The Career Conversation Model



Academic Staff Checklist

The Academic Staff Checklist will help you in preparing for your annual PRP meeting with your nominated supervisor. It contains prompts, reflections and questions to ensure that the meeting achieves its purpose. You should work through this checklist and the *Annual Performance Review and Planning for Academic Staff Form* together, section by section, before you begin planning the annual PRP meeting/s with your nominated supervisor.

ACADEMIC STAFF CHECKLIST-Preparing for the PRP conversation	Tick when complete ✓
General preparation	
Agree on a time to meet with your nominated supervisor for your PRP conversation.	
<p>You will need to refer to the following documents in preparing for your review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Performance Review and Planning for Academic Staff: Policy and Form • The APME Framework • The CDF • The Academic Workload Policy • If you are on probation, the Academic Staff Probation Policy • Staff who received an X3 workload allocation this year or will be seeking an X3 allocation next year should also review the Research Performance Review and Plan Guidelines 	
Review University, Faculty/Institute/Centre/Directorate/Portfolio strategic priorities and ensure that you understand how they apply to your objectives.	
Draft your input into Part A Section 1 and into Part B Sections 1 to 3 and 6a, 6b and 6c of the <i>Annual Performance Review and Planning Program for Academic Staff form</i> , including associated evidence (refer to the APME Framework Evidence document for examples of evidence). Work through the rest of the checklist as you complete parts A and B of the form. Your nominated supervisor will also require a copy of your RPRP (if applicable).	
Part A: Annual Performance Review	
<p>Section 1– In preparing for the review conversation, reflect on how you will use the discussion to share information with your nominated supervisor about your achievements in relation to your performance objectives and any other achievements or key activities of note;</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your progress toward meeting your shorter and long-term career goals; • changes to your short or long-term career goals, including consideration of a change in your ACP; • your key capabilities and achievements; • your progress in meeting your probationary criteria (where applicable); • your understanding of the CDF core competencies that apply to your performance and career development; • any factors that impacted on achieving your goals and objectives; • your behaviour, cooperation, collaboration and communication at work; • ideas you have for improvement and innovations; and • how you are feeling about your role (e.g. the level of autonomy, responsibility, the variety and complexity provided, and the systems/processes/procedures in place to support your work). <p>Your nominated supervisor will provide feedback about the year, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what went well – highlighting achievements; 	

ACADEMIC STAFF CHECKLIST-Preparing for the PRP conversation	Tick when complete ✓
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • what could be improved; and • your progress in meeting your short and long-term career goals. <p>Take time to be prepared to consider this feedback in a professional and constructive way.</p>	
<p>Section 2 – Your nominated supervisor will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review your workload profile and discuss whether it meets or does not meet the requirements of your ACP; • consider any issues that have impacted on your workload and whether a change to ACP or adjustment of workload may be required; • provide feedback on your behaviour, cooperation, collaboration and communication at work (take time over the review period to consider this feedback in a professional and constructive way); and • provide you with an overall rating, considering your achievements in relation to performance objectives, workload profile, behavioural competencies and supporting evidence provided. <p>You will be given the opportunity to respond verbally and in writing prior to signing that the review process has been completed.</p>	
Part B: Annual Performance Plan	
<p>Section 1 – Consider your main duties and priorities for the next 12 months, in the context of your ACP, Academic Probation Criteria, RPRP (if applicable), APME Framework for your academic level, relevant CDF Core Competencies and University and Faculty/School/Institute/Centre/Directorate/Portfolio strategic priorities.</p>	
<p>Section 2 – Consider your shorter and long-term career planning goals and prepare a draft of these for discussion with your nominated supervisor.</p> <div data-bbox="204 1290 316 1402" style="float: left; margin-right: 10px;"> </div> <p>In preparation for this discussion, reflect on your strengths and areas for development and what roles or direction/focus you aspire to in the future. The career planning conversation is where you and your nominated supervisor discuss your career aspirations. Be prepared to receive realistic feedback from your nominated supervisor that will assist you to clarify your readiness for career advancement, and identify activities that will assist you in working towards achieving your goals.</p> <p>Your aspirations may include academic promotion, which is a significant career planning activity that will in most cases require at least two years of preparation.</p>	
<div data-bbox="213 1666 325 1778" style="float: left; margin-right: 10px;"> </div> <p>Section 3 – Prepare to discuss your performance objectives for the next review period with your nominated supervisor. When setting work objectives, identify the key priorities for the Faculty/School/Institute/Centre/Directorate/Portfolio that relate to your position and ACP (See section 4) and consider the alignment of objectives with strategic priorities of the University and the Faculty/School/Institute/Centre/Directorate/Portfolio.</p> <p>The APME Framework outlines performance standards, evidence and general requirements and should inform performance objectives.</p> <p>In addition, CDF core competencies relevant to the achievement level of your role should be identified for your performance objectives prior to the discussion with your supervisor. Refer to the ACU CDF website for more information.</p>	

Note:

1. Probation criteria will need to be incorporated into performance objectives where applicable to monitor the progress of staff towards meeting the University’s probationary requirements.
2. Where there has been a change in ACP this will need to be reflected in the performance objectives.

Use the SMART Principles to assist you with setting objectives.

Setting objectives: The SMART principle

Specific	Does the objective explain precisely what has to be achieved? Does the objective clearly explain the level/standard of expected outcome? <i>Choose words that describe the objective in action oriented terms, e.g. increase, reduce, provide, establish, eliminate, complete, etc.</i> <i>Objectives may or may not have specific measures attached, depending on the objective</i>
Measurable	Does the objective indicate how the results will be measured? <i>Each objective must have at least one measure so everyone is clear on how success will be assessed.</i>
Achievable	Is the objective challenging, yet achievable? <i>Are there appropriate resources (including time, money, and people) to enable its achievement?</i>
Relevant	Is it clear why the objective is important and how it contributes to short and/or longer-term goals? <i>Does it align to University and Faculty/School/Institute/Centre/Directorate/Portfolio strategic objectives?</i>
Time framed	Does the work objective clearly state when it needs to be achieved by? <i>Timeframes must be realistic.</i>

Note: Examples of SMART performance objectives that incorporate the performance standards and expectations in the APMs and Evidence and links to relevant CDF core Competencies are provided in the Appendix for demonstration purposes only.

Section 4 – There will be a confirmation of your ACP. You may have started this discussion with your nominated supervisor already during the review process. The ACP is recorded on the PRP form.

Section 5 – Prepare to discuss or provide details of your leave plans for the next 12 months, including annual and long-service leave, leave associated with the Research Study Program (or equivalent), and/or any other work related leave. Leave arrangements will be considered in the context of organisational needs.

This discussion will include your plans to utilise annual leave each year as part of annual workload. If annual leave is not taken in the year it accrues, it results in the allocation of

ACADEMIC STAFF CHECKLIST-Preparing for the PRP conversation	Tick when complete ✓
<p>additional academic workload. Note that excess annual or long service leave can be managed by the University, in line with the Leave Management Strategy. (Refer to the ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2013-2017, Sections 3.11.5 and 3.8.3 for more information on annual leave and long service leave management).</p>	
<p>Section 6 – It is important for you and your nominated supervisor to consider the professional development that will assist you to meet your performance objectives and to achieve your career goals. You should consider:</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • your performance objectives, and your current career goals and ambitions; • the performance standards set out in the APME Framework which have been provided for each academic career pathway and academic level; • the goals/objectives in the RPRP (where applicable); • the skills and knowledge that will facilitate achieving these goals; • the skills and knowledge you already have; • the actions and resources you need to acquire further skills/knowledge; • realistic timeframes to undertake development activities; and • areas identified for development in relation to the CDF in discussion with your nominated supervisor (see below for more information). <p>In the context of performance objectives and career goals, your professional development could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>specialist skills</i> – skills related to your discipline; • <i>general academic skills</i> – writing applications for grants, research planning, research supervision, curriculum development; • <i>technical skills</i> – information and communication technology for academic purposes; • <i>Core Competencies at your achievement level in the CDF</i>- the essential competencies that are needed in all ACU staff to achieve our strategy and support our Mission • <i>transferable skills</i> – can be applied across work contexts or tasks (e.g. communication, team work, negotiation and leadership skills); <p>After identifying your current strengths, skills and knowledge, focus on your development needs and plans for the future. The professional and career discussion with your nominated supervisor is an opportunity to examine your identified strengths and understand any areas for further development. The outcomes of the discussion should contribute to a meaningful and relevant plan for the short, medium to long term and include activities that ACU will support to further your professional development and career aspirations.</p>	
<p>After completing the form</p>	
<p>Once you have completed the relevant sections of the form, email the form and attached supporting documents (if the latter are not electronic provide a hard copy) to your nominated supervisor normally at least one week prior to the meeting. This will give your nominated supervisor sufficient time to review the form and complete the nominated supervisor comments.</p> <p>Bring your copies to your scheduled meeting with your nominated supervisor.</p>	

Appendix

Developing SMART Performance Objectives

The [APME Framework](#) provides guidance and informs the development of SMART performance objectives. The Evidence document includes examples of evidence which are used to demonstrate achievement in relation to the SMART performance objectives.

Refer to the [CDF](#) to identify core competencies that align with your performance objectives.

The following questions should be considered in the development of performance objectives:

- Should the performance objectives be aspirational and consider incorporating performance standards at the next academic level? (E.g. to support future applications for promotion or other forms of career progression);
- Are you on academic probation? If so, probation criteria must be incorporated into the performance objectives;
- What is the focus of your work for the review period? This may impact on the APM areas of academic activity addressed in the performance objectives. (Refer to the Introduction to the [APME Framework](#) for more information).
- Have you consulted the Evidence document of the [APME Framework](#) to inform the evidence section of the performance objectives?
- Which CDF core competencies will support achievement of your performance objectives and career goals?

Examples of SMART objectives that:

- incorporate the performance standards in the [APME Framework](#),
- identify relevant CDF Core Competencies, and
- provide links to the Strategic Plan are provided below.

These examples are provided for demonstration purposes only.

Teaching, Curriculum Development and Scholarship of Teaching

- a) Reflect on feedback from student evaluations of teaching and incorporate improvements into teaching practice by (date) where constructive and relevant as part of continuous improvement. Record reflections and subsequent actions accordingly.

CDF Core Competencies: Deliver Stakeholder Centric Service, Be Responsible and Accountable for Achieving Excellence

Strategic Link: UPI 2.2 Quality Learning and Teaching Experiences.

- b) Maintain a high quality of teaching as evidenced by a mean score of x or higher, and relevant student comments in SELT data during the review period.

CDF Core Competencies: Communicate with Impact, Deliver Stakeholder Centric Service, Be Responsible and Accountable for Achieving Excellence

Strategic Link: UPI 2.2 Quality Learning and Teaching Experiences

- c) Take a lead role in the development of lectures, tutorials, practicals, LEO site and teaching guides for unit X by Y Date, which includes consultation with appropriate Faculty staff by X date.

CDF Core Competencies: Coach and Develop, Collaborate Effectively, Be Responsible and Accountable for Achieving Excellence

Strategic Link: UPI 2.2 Quality Learning and Teaching Experiences

- d) Lead the review of curriculum design and development for faculty discipline X during the review period that aligns with discipline trends, TEQSA/AQF and other relevant professional requirements to provide quality learning and teaching experiences for students in x course/courses.

CDF Core Competencies: Coach and Develop, Deliver Stakeholder Centric Service, Be Responsible and Accountable for Achieving Excellence

Strategic Link: UPI 2.2 Quality Learning and Teaching Experiences

- e) Exploration and potential implementation of current pedagogical teaching strategies of blended learning into teaching practice. Consult with colleagues and provide leadership in embedding these strategies more widely into teaching practice at the program level.

CDF Core Competencies: Collaborate Effectively, Be Responsible and Accountable for Achieving Excellence

Strategic Link: UPI 2.2 Quality Learning and Teaching Experiences

- f) Join a team undertaking a scholarship of teaching project, and seek mentoring for the development of a competitive teaching scholarship grant application.

CDF Core Competencies: Collaborate Effectively, Be Responsible and Accountable for Achieving Excellence

Strategic Link: KRA 2.2 Learning and Teaching

- g) Make effective use of LEO and Adobe Connect to provide an enhanced learning environment for students in the unit xxx0000 during the review period. Undertake evaluation of student learning experiences during teaching period x.

CDF Core Competencies: Know ACU Work Processes and Systems, Deliver Stakeholder Centric Service

Strategic Link: UPI 2.2 Quality Learning and Teaching Experiences

Research

- a) Submission for publication of X high quality research outputs appropriate to discipline (e.g. journals, books, book chapters) during the annual review period.

CDF Core Competencies: Be Responsible and Accountable for Achieving Excellence, Communicate with Impact

Strategic Link: UPI 3.3 Research Quality

- b) Complete HDR supervision training and accreditation in the next 12 months to qualify as an Assistant Supervisor.

CDF Core Competencies: Coach and Develop, Be Responsible and Accountable for Achieving Excellence

Strategic Link: UPI 3.3 Research Quality

- c) Achieve milestones in line with the PhD completion plan.

CDF Core Competencies: Be Responsible and Accountable for Achieving Excellence, Communicate with Impact

Strategic Link: UPI 3.3 Research Quality

- d) HDR Supervision – During x time period, provide effective supervision and mentoring to develop the research skills of staff and HDR students including the development of assistant supervisors.

CDF Core Competencies: Coach and Develop, Communicate with Impact, Deliver Stakeholder Centric Service,

Strategic Link: UPI 3.3 Research Quality

- e) Grant Applications - Develop and submit a competitive grant application in line with ACU and ERA research priorities.

CDF Core Competencies: Communicate with Impact, Be Responsible and Accountable for Achieving Excellence

Strategic Link: UPI 3.3 Research Quality

Other activities including Academic Leadership/Service

- a) Effective unit coordination of (no.) unit(s)/course(s) within the review period that ensures curriculum and administrative requirements and timelines are met.

CDF Core Competencies: Communicate with Impact, Deliver Stakeholder Centric Service, Be Responsible and Accountable for Achieving Excellence, Coach and Develop

Strategic Link: UPI 2.2 Quality Learning and Teaching Experiences.

- b) Active participation in Faculty Research/Learning and Teaching Committee measured by regular meeting attendance, active participation in sub groups and contributions to the achievement of Committee objectives.

CDF Core Competencies: Communicate with Impact, Know ACU Work Processes and Systems, Be Responsible and Accountable for Achieving Excellence

Strategic Link: KRA 4.1 Strategic Approach and Governance

- c) Participate as a member on a relevant and related external (research, discipline based, government or industry) committee to facilitate and /or maintain strategic partnership and outcomes with XYZ organisation.

CDF Core Competencies: Communicate with Impact, Apply Commercial Acumen

Strategic Link: KRA 1.2 External Partnerships

- d) Manage industry partnerships and relevant operating committees.

CDF Core Competencies: Communicate with Impact, Apply Commercial Acumen, Deliver Stakeholder Centric Service

Strategic Link: KRA 1.2 External Partnerships

- e) Continue to lead the School of X with a specific focus on excellence in learning and teaching achieving a higher number of units with overall satisfaction scores above benchmark.

CDF Core Competencies: Coach and Develop, Communicate with Impact, Collaborate Effectively

Strategic Link: KRA 2.2 Learning and Teaching

General Requirements and Catholic Identity and Mission

- a) Work collaboratively with school/faculty/University colleagues on projects and BAU activities to meet and exceed performance expectations.

CDF Core Competencies: Collaborate Effectively, Be Responsible and Accountable for Achieving Excellence

Strategic Link: KRA 4.2 Workplace Culture, Staff Performance and Development

- b) Ensure work practices are aligned with ACU preferred methodologies (e.g. frameworks, policies and procedures) to execute work in a consistent and comprehensive way that contributes to effective student outcomes and/or research performance.

CDF Core Competencies: Know ACU Work Processes and Systems, Deliver Stakeholder Centric Service, Be Responsible and Accountable for Achieving Excellence

Strategic Link: KRA 1.3 Academic Environment

- c) Revision of program X to ensure integration of principles of Catholic Identity and Mission, including social justice, the pursuit of truth and care for the common good in the development of curriculum content. Consult and work with X area to enhance and expand on strategies to achieve this.

CDF Core Competencies: Live ACU's Mission, Vision and Values, Communicate with Impact, Collaborate Effectively

Strategic Link: KRA ii. Catholic University Experience

- d) Building links with staff in education systems and agencies relating to supporting the Mission and strategic objectives of ACU.

CDF Core Competencies: Live ACU's Mission, Vision and Values, Communicate with Impact, Collaborate Effectively

Strategic Link : KRA 1.2 External Partnerships

NOTE: The CDF and strategic links are suggestions only

