

Academic Performance Review and Planning: Conversation Guide for Nominated Supervisors

Contents

Introduction	3
The career conversation model	6
How to use the nominated supervisor checklist.....	7
Appendix: Examples of SMART Performance Objectives.....	12

About this guide

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

- The Career Conversation Model
- The Nominated Supervisor Checklist
- The [APME 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
April 2017

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 the staff member's probationary criteria to the systemic performance review process;
- (c) 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
- (d) 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 the 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 also benefits staff by providing a prompt for them to consider their future career aspirations and career and professional development priorities and activities. It provides the opportunity for you to offer guidance, and support the staff member's Academic Career Path (ACP) in the context of the strategic and work unit requirements and the staff member's performance and career aspirations.

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

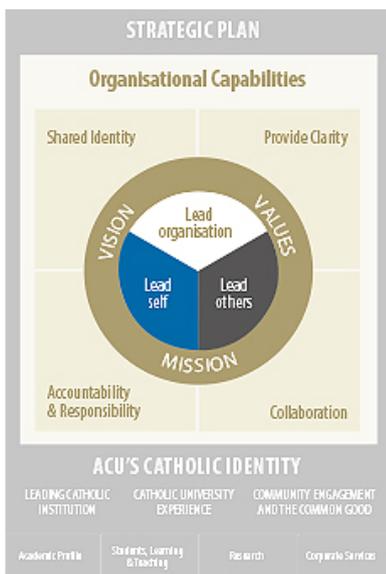
Academic working arrangements, enabled by the ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2013-2017 will inform your preparation for the PRP conversation with staff. This includes changes to the requirements in relation to the ACPs as follows:

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

The outcome of the X3 research workload allocation from the Faculty Research Workload Review Panel (FRWRP) 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 ACP and should inform performance objectives and development discussions.

The ACU Capability Development Framework



The PRP process incorporates ACU's [Capability Development Framework](#) (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, visit www.acu.edu.au/cdf

The Annual Performance Review and Planning Form has two parts:

Part A – Annual Performance Review

Section 1: The staff member reports on their achievements against the objectives identified in the previous year's plan. Copies of supporting documents are required as evidence of achievements.

You, as the nominated supervisor, comment on their achievements against the objectives.

Section 2: You, as the nominated supervisor, provide an evaluation of the staff member's overall work performance including an assessment of the behavioural competencies.

Part B – Annual Performance Plan

The staff member is encouraged to provide input to this section in draft form prior to meeting with you to aid the discussion. You and your staff member 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 probation criteria)

Section 4: Confirmation of ACP

Section 5: Leave Management, which includes consideration of plans to utilise annual leave each year as part of annual workload and other excess leave aligned with the University's Leave Management Strategy.

Section 6: Professional and career development plans.

Staff on Academic 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 staff members' progress during their probationary period by including the probation criteria in the staff member's performance objectives. This provides a prompt for a 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.

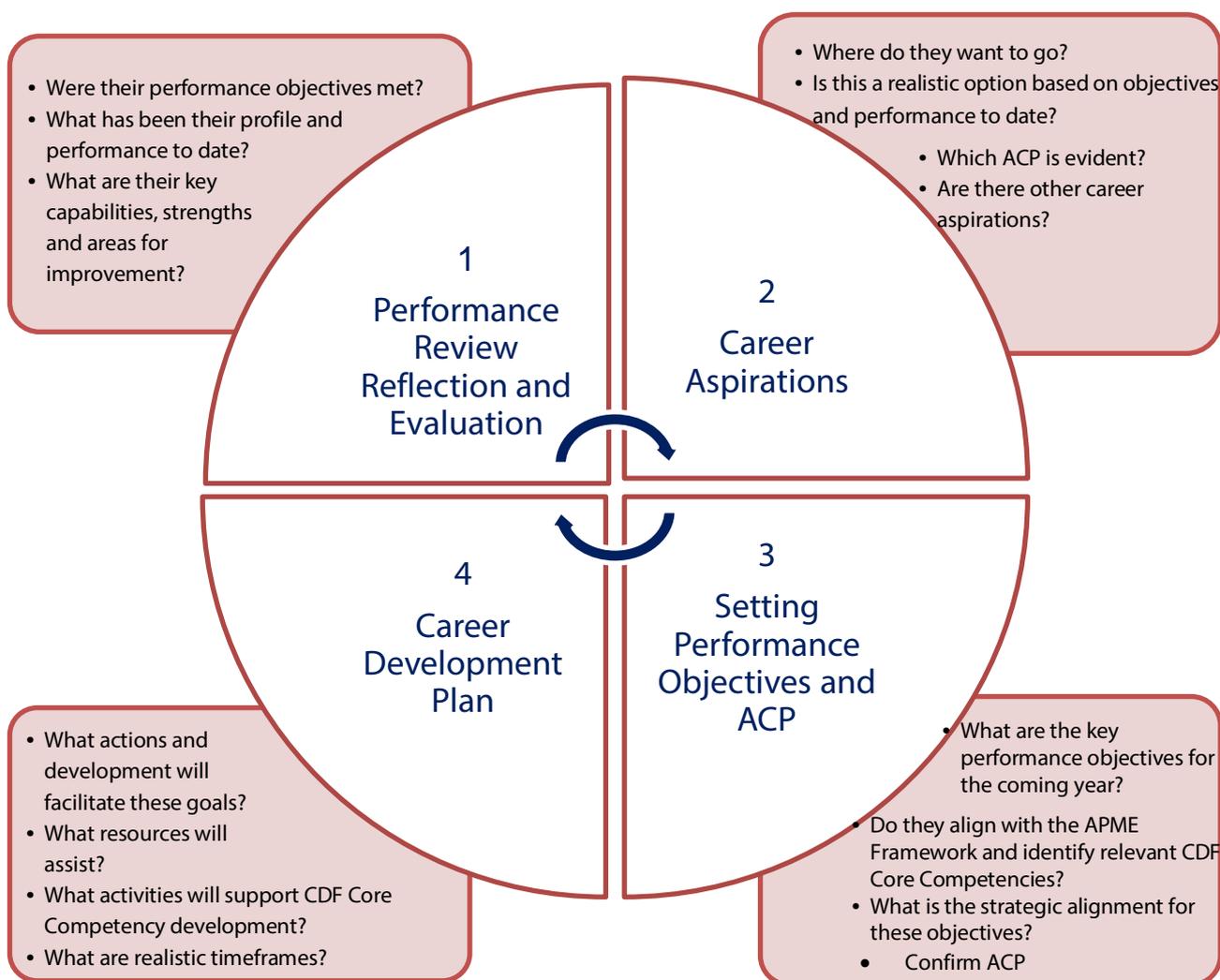
See the ACU [Managing for Performance site](#) for more information about probation for academic staff.

The Career Conversation Model

The Career Conversation Model illustrates the cycle of the PRP process. In the 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 the staff member.

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

Figure 1: The Career Conversation Model



Nominated Supervisor Checklist

The Nominated Supervisor Checklist will help you in preparing for your annual PRP meetings with staff members. It contains prompts, reflections and questions to ensure that the meeting meets its purpose. You should review this checklist before you begin planning annual PRP meetings with your staff members.

NOMINATED SUPERVISOR CHECKLIST – Preparing for the PRP conversation

General preparation

Communicate to staff that the annual performance review and planning process is underway. Request staff to begin preparing for meetings with you. You should notify them three to four weeks prior to the PRP meeting.

Establish a mutually convenient meeting time for the PRP conversation (preferably a face-to-face meeting) with individual staff members.

You will need to refer to the following documents in preparing for the review:

- The Performance Review and Planning for Academic Staff: [Policy and Form](#)
- The [APME Framework](#)
- The [CDF](#)
- The [Academic Workload Policy](#)
- For Academic Staff in their probation period please also review 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](#)

You will also need to have a specific understanding of any probationary requirements and/or contractual terms.

Review Faculty/School/Institute/Centre/Directorate/Portfolio strategic priorities and ensure that you understand how they apply to the staff member's objectives.

Request the staff member to provide you with their draft *Annual Performance Review and Planning Program Form for Academic Staff* with Part A Section 1 drafted with associated evidence, and Part B Sections 1, 2, 3, 6b and 6c drafted. The draft should be provided at least one week prior to the meeting to give you sufficient time to review the form and complete/prepare the nominated supervisor comments before the meeting. Where applicable, the staff member will need to also provide you with a copy of their RPRP.

Part A: Annual Performance Review

Section 1 – Review the staff member's completed form.

In preparing for the review conversation, you should consider the 12-month review period and assess:



- if the staff member's objectives were met and the progress made;
- their key capabilities, achievements and areas of improvement;
- their progress against meeting probation criteria if applicable;
- any factors that impacted on achieving their goals and objectives; and
- where the staff member's view of their achievements is different to yours, prepare examples and specific details to support your view.

Section 2 – You will need to complete this section following the discussion with the staff member. You should:

- review the staff member's workload profile with them and discuss whether it meets or does not

NOMINATED SUPERVISOR CHECKLIST – Preparing for the PRP conversation

- meet the requirements of their ACP;
- consider any issues that have impacted on their workload and, if a possible change to their ACP is required, you will need to be prepared for this conversation;
- evaluate their performance against behavioural competencies during the review period; and, if a competency is not achieved, discuss the areas where the staff member has not met standards, (you will need to have evidence to support your assessment), what improvements are expected in the next review period, and how they will be monitored with review and feedback to ensure a fair and equitable process; and
- provide an overall rating, considering achievements in relation to performance objectives, workload profile, behavioural competencies and supporting evidence provided.

At the end of the review process, give the staff member the opportunity to provide their comments and/or response prior to you and the staff member signing that the review process has been completed.

Part B: Annual Performance Plan

Section 1 – Prepare to discuss the staff member’s main duties and priorities for the next 12 months, in the context of their ACP, Academic Probation Criteria and RPRP (if applicable), APME Framework for their academic level, relevant CDF Core Competencies and University and Faculty/School/Institute/Centre/Directorate/Portfolio strategic priorities.

Section 2 – In this section staff members are requested to consider their individual shorter and long term career goals, and to identify what steps they will need to take to work towards achieving them.



Your role as the nominated supervisor in the career planning conversation is to provide feedback to the staff member that will assist them to identify appropriate and realistic career goals. This includes consideration of readiness for career advancement through academic promotion, which is a process that requires significant planning, preparation and support of the staff member.

These discussions occur in the context of the staff member’s achievements, skills, competencies and knowledge as well as strategic, regulatory and operational requirements of the School/Faculty/ or Institute.

Section 3 – Discuss and confirm the staff member’s performance objectives for the next review period.



When developing work objectives, identify the key priorities for the Faculty/School/Institute/Centre/Directorate/Portfolio that relate to the staff member’s position and ensure objectives are aligned with strategic priorities of the University and the Faculty/School/Institute/Centre/Directorate/Portfolio and the level of the position. Use the SMART principle to assist you with setting performance objectives.

The [APME Framework](#) provides the performance standards in each area of academic activity for each ACP and academic level and should inform the performance objectives. Record the agreed performance objectives.

In addition, CDF core competencies relevant to the achievement level of the staff member’s role should be identified for the performance objectives prior to the discussion with you. Refer to the [ACU CDF website](#) for more information.

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.

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 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 incorporating performance standards in the APME Framework and links to relevant CDF Core Competencies are provided in the Appendix at the end of this document. For demonstration purposes only.

Section 4 – The discussion regarding Academic Career Pathway (ACP) may already have started during the review process. If the staff member’s individual contribution, has changed this may result in a conversation regarding a change to ACP. Whether an ACP change is being considered because there has been a change in a specific workload allocation or to meet operational requirements, preparation will be required for the discussion. In cases where the full workload allocation is not met,

it is recommended that you review the Academic Workload Policy, and also refer to the [‘Consultation/Conversation Guide for the management for staff who may be under load’](#) that supports this process.

Support can also be provided by your nominated supervisor and HR representative.

It will also be important to ensure that you are in a position to create a shared understanding of the criteria for performance in the identified ACP and/or requirements for a particular ACP, including changes to probation criteria where applicable. The Academic Performance Matrix (APM) for the relevant ACP and academic level should be consulted.

Section 5 – Consider the staff member’s leave balance and 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 need to be considered in the context of organisational needs.

The discussion starts with the staff member’s 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 additional academic workload. Note that excess annual or long service leave will need to be managed and planned, particularly where there is a large leave balance, in line with the University’s Leave Management Strategy. (Refer to the *ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2013-2017 Sections 3.11.5 and 3.8.3 for more information regarding annual and long service leave management*).

Section 6 – It is important for you and the staff member to consider the professional development that will assist them to meet their performance objectives and to achieve their career goals. As the nominated supervisor you can review the draft professional development activities provided and consider:



- the staff member’s performance objectives, and their current career goals and ambitions;
- the performance standards set out in the [APME Framework](#) which have been provided for each ACP and academic level;
- the objectives/planned outcomes in the RPRP (where applicable);
- the skills, competencies and knowledge that will facilitate achieving these goals;
- the skills, competencies and knowledge they already have;
- the development areas identified in relation to the CDF Core Competencies, included in section 6 of the pro-forma the actions and resources they need to acquire further skills/knowledge; and
- realistic timeframes to undertake development activities.

In the context of the staff member’s performance objectives and career goals, their professional development could include:

- *specialist skills* – skills related to their discipline;
- *general academic skills* – writing applications for grants, research planning, research supervision, curriculum development;
- *technical skills* – information and communication technology for academic purposes;
- *transferable skills* – can be applied across work contexts or tasks (e.g. communication, team work, negotiation and leadership skills) and;
- *Core Competencies at the relevant achievement level in the CDF*- the essential competencies that are needed in all ACU staff to achieve our strategy and support our Mission

After identifying the staff member’s current strengths, competency development, skills and knowledge, focus on their development needs and plans for the future. The professional and career discussion with you is an opportunity for the staff member to examine their 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.

Record the agreed activities to support achievement of performance objectives and activities that ACU will support in relation to the staff member’s shorter term and long term career objectives.

If you have identified any gaps or incomplete sections while reviewing the staff member's *Annual PRP Form for Academic Staff*, you should address these gaps in the context of the discussion with the staff member.

Ongoing discussions

Once the *Annual PRP Form for Academic Staff* has been completed, schedule regular meetings with the staff member throughout the coming year to discuss their progress in relation to the performance objectives, development and career goals.

This provides you and the staff member an opportunity to discuss any challenges, changing priorities or new opportunities that may arise during the year.

Appendix

Developing SMART Performance Objectives

The [APME Framework](#) provides guidance and inform 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 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);
- Is the staff member on academic probation? If so, probation criteria must be incorporated into the performance objectives;
- What is the focus of the 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).
- Has the Evidence document of the [APME Framework](#) been consulted to inform the evidence section of the performance objectives?
- Which CDF core competencies will support achievement of staff performance objectives and career goals?

Below are 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

