LEADERSHIP & MANAGEMENT SKILLS WORKING GROUP

17 OCTOBER 2025

Australian National University

Overview

Recommendation 6: Introduce an integrated program of targeted skills development that equips academic and professional staff to successfully manage staff, culture and budgets

Current challenge: Goes <u>beyond</u> skills and development, at present:
- Performance expectations are not clear and are largely restricted to deliverables
- Tools to measure performance and resources to develop staff are either absent, ad hoc or localised

Approach taken:
- Engaged with internal and external stakeholders
- Gone beyond the referred Nixon recommendations
- Used sub-groups to focus on recommendations around managing staff, culture and budgets

Leadership and management skills at ANU: A shift in expectations is needed

- Performance is both **what** people deliver and **how** they deliver it, *how* and *what* are of equal importance for the organisation

- Behaviours and accountabilities across managing staff, culture and budgets need to be specified, measured and incentivised. When not met, responsible staff must be held to account

- Training and development needs to be embedded into roles

Recommendation: Develop an **ANU Leadership and Management Framework**

ANU
Leadership and Management Framework

CO-DESIGNED WITH STAFF

1 Technical competencies

Behavioural competencies

EMERGING   **2**   **ESTABLISHED**   **EXECUTIVE**

Development & training   **3**

Diagnostic tools, performance measurement tools & expectations

1. Competencies

ANU Leadership and Management Framework will:

- Define both **technical** and **behavioural** competencies required at each stage in leadership journey

- Be co-designed with staff

e.g. of behavioural competencies

The everyday behaviours of good cultural leadership

Models respect to all and addresses disrespect

Facilitates collaborative and democratic decision making

Repsonds to harm not just performance

Explains why decisions were made

Credits people openly and publically

Invites direct and anonymous feedback

Responds to feedback constructively and avoids defensiveness

Says "I don't know" when uncertain

Admits mistakes and apologises for them

2. Development and training: Institutional cultural change required

- Staff report that accessing time for development and training is challenging, key training is not available, refreshers and next step training is not offered

- Training and development activities are delivered by many different units of the University
  - Hard to know what is on offer, whether it is relevant and what is mandatory

- Development & training must be viewed as part of the job (EVERY job)

- To achieve this, development & training requirements and options need to be laid out in the ANU Leadership and Management Framework
  - Eliminating the academic vs. professional staff divide
  - Focusing on all leadership categories

Suggested approach to training & development

- Mandatory core trainings for leaders as part of an institutional leadership journey

- Ongoing requirement to participate in development/training activities e.g. via a catalogue of modular short refresher/skill & knowledge builder workshops/seminars with a requirement to attend at a specified amount each year

- Opt-in micro-credentials on contemporary leadership topics

- Success drivers:
  - ➢ One portal training/development offerings across all activities
  - ➢ Clear technical and behavioural competencies required for leadership roles including what is needed to progress to the next level
  - ➢ Utilisation of in-house and ANU expertise where possible,
  - ➢ Leveraging existing **award-winning Rights, Relationships & Respect (RRR) program**
  - ➢ Cultural mindset shift to believing that professional development as part of role responsibility and leadership accountability

Development and training example - Technical management competencies

Action	Required Executive Endorsement	Achieving together & quick wins
Review ANU Leadership in Practice (LiP) offering and expand to include strength-based leadership approach, annual refreshers and managerial technical competencies such as: • financial management • workforce planning • team building • talent management • ER responsibilities and obligations	Make ANU Leadership in Practice available to everyone and *mandatory for leaders at all levels*	• Streamline academic reporting lines (Levels D and E acting as supervisors) at School levels to provide in built staff development • Leverage existing coaches, professional development facilitators, and experts within ANU to: o Deliver more LiP sessions per year o Develop curriculum, pilot and scale up advanced and executive offerings o Provide coaching and mentoring support for managers as well as develop practical day to day action plans
Expand the ANU LiP to have an **advanced** and **executive offering** as part of a leadership development journey	Prioritise leadership culture and invest in future leaders and talent management pipelines	

3. Accountability is key

The framework must:

- Include ways to assess, record and report performance across both behavioural and technical competencies

- Require adequate performance across behavioural and cultural competencies as a pre-requisite for promotion, recruitment and probation

- Include Tools for staff to gain ongoing insight and feedback on their performance

Accountability examples - Financial management competencies

Ways to assess, record and report performance

➢ Mandate financial management **accountability** e.g. financial performance embedded in to FOCUS plans

➢ Require and support budget planning, management and reporting through **financial systems**

➢ Executive requirement to elevate the importance of good financial management through **communications**

Tools for staff to gain feedback on performance

➢ Incorporate **budgeting and finance skills** in recruitment, learning and development, and workforce development pipeline.

➢ Improved **financial systems and reporting**

Non-finance-specific examples

➢ Develop **360º reviews** tools – formal and informal feedback and non-negotiable for promotion, appointment and probation

➢ Develop **Cultural leadership score card**

Recommendation summary

- Develop an **ANU Leadership & Management Framework** in partnership with staff

- Framework should:
  - ➢ Place equal value on behavioural and technical competencies
  - ➢ Embed development & training requirements and options
  - ➢ Require accountability

- Consider best home for training and development oversight given this is delivered across portfolios/units and encompasses many different skills and competencies

Beyond the Nixon recommendations

Thank you!

- Prioritisation of leaders at all levels who are impacted by ANU Implementation Plans

- Addressing inconsistency in academic reporting structure at School/Research School level

- Consistent approach to celebrating leadership success

- Development of career pathway for professional staff in the new operating model

- Better utilisation of the University Leadership Group