

Staff development planning template

A template providing options, guidelines and planning timeframe for preparing a Staff Development Plan for a Portfolio, School or Group.

Context

Staff Development Plans for Portfolios and Schools/Groups at RMIT are a critical component of the RMIT Supporting Professional Development Policy and Quality Assurance System. The Supporting Professional Development Policy states that Portfolios and Schools/Groups will:

Develop three-year plans for staff development with annual priorities, allocation of resources and achievement targets by March each year

The Staff Development Plan must be prepared in the context of other planning processes. It must be informed by the broader plans (University, Portfolio and School/Group plans). It must also take account of staff development planning for other University projects and strategies.

To ensure the Staff Development Plan is a valid, workable document it should:

- Recognise input from staff;
- Respond to needs identified in staff and student feedback;
- Be flexible enough to change as priorities shift;
- Be consistent with the organisational unit's other planning process;
- Support supervisors in their role as developers of staff and provide them with the appropriate level of discretion in resource allocation and decision-making;
- Guide staff in their pursuit of development options;
- Align the development activities with the strategic direction of the wider organisation; and
- Highlight any other priority development issues of the organisational unit.

The Staff Development Planning Template can be used as a guide to preparing a Staff Development Plan. The sections in the template could be combined into one document, or appear as headings or sections in other documents (eg. Strategic Plan, Operational Plan, etc.).

The template specifies five major sections, with a range of optional appendices. The optional appendices could be included if they are seen as necessary to achieve the purpose of the plan or to improve the plan's overall quality. The template includes a brief description for each section and includes examples.

Planning Options

The minimum requirements for a Portfolio or School/Group Staff Development Plan, defined by the Supporting Professional Development Policy, are:

- A priority list of the staff development programs or activities, showing how they align with the strategic and operational needs of the organisational unit,
- Resource allocation
- A statement of the targets or success indicators for staff development, and
- An operational (one-year) and three-year planning horizon.

There are several options for preparing Staff Development Plans in Portfolios and Schools/Groups. Below are three illustrations of how a plan can be prepared and what the final document might look like. A Portfolio or School/Group might use a mix of the features in each illustration.

Planning Timeframe

The Supporting Professional Development Policy indicates Portfolio and School/Group Plans should be prepared by March each year. However, given the need for the plan to be flexible, and the variety of data sources that can be used for setting priorities, it should be updated as required during the year. March is a pertinent date as it coincides with the individual development planning as part of the Work Plan process.

The Planning Template

Listed below are the sections that make up the template. As indicated, a number of the sections are optional.

1. Introduction (or 'What is this all about?')

Purpose of the Plan

Examples of the different purposes of the Staff Development Plan could include:

- To meet strategic directions of the Portfolio and School/Group
- To enable the efficient and equitable allocation of resources
- To assist staff in preparing their own Development Plan

How the plan was designed

This section could include descriptions of which information sources were used (eg. needs analyses, skills audits, competency assessments), the methodology for collecting and analysing data and how the final plan was written.

Links to other plans/documents

This is a standard section in many plans. For an organisational unit Staff Development Plan links could include:

- Supporting Professional Development Policy
- Related policies such as Study Support
- Quality Assurance System
- Portfolio and University Plans

Evaluation and Review of the Plan

The Portfolio/Group should show how the success of the plan will be evaluated and a date when the plan will next be formally reviewed.

2. Staff Development Priorities (or 'What are the important issues?')

This section must identify the staff development priorities of the organisational unit. There are three parts to identifying the priorities:

- Selecting which elements of the University and organisational unit plans will be addressed in the Staff Development Plan and applying a priority listing.
- Specifying the development needs arising from the selected and prioritised elements
- Identifying any programs or initiatives that will address the development needs.
- Each of these parts is described under the sub-headings below.

Broad Priorities

The broad priorities selected from the relevant strategic and operational plans could include:

- Strategic directions in which staff development will play a role
- Change initiatives that will be supported through staff development
- Other priorities specific to the organisational unit.

As a starting point, the table at attachment A lists the main University-wide elements of focus for development. This is the list used in university-wide reporting on staff development.

Development Needs

The second part to identifying the development priorities is to specify the development needs arising from the broad priorities above. These needs may have been identified through formal data collection (such as needs analyses, skills audits, etc.) or through a combination of suggestions from staff, learning aims identified in individual development plans, responses to staff or student feedback and surveys or issues raised in staff and committee meetings. It may also be useful to divide the needs into one-year (short-term) and three-year (longer term) needs.

Programs/Activities

The third part is to identify how the organisational unit intends to address the development needs. Priorities could be addressed through existing programs/activities or by developing new programs. Listing existing programs will provide staff with a guide to their own development planning and selection of programs/activities. Programs requiring development should also be listed and resources allocated. This will be especially relevant for long-term needs.

3. Allocation of Resources (or 'How do things happen?')

Financial Allocation

The Portfolio and School/Group is required to allocate a percentage of its budget to meet staff development needs. This is often devolved to the School/Group level. Nominal allocations to programs should be made in the plan. Allocations should take account of any grants or reimbursements for staff enrolling in formal study. Flexibility to meet shifting priorities, to take advantage of emerging opportunities and to meet urgent individual development needs should be acknowledged in the plan. A summary description of the financial allocation against specific programs and activities could be included in the table at attachment A.

Staff Resources

Staff resources in guiding, delivering and administering staff development in the organisational unit should also be identified. Key roles could be defined under the following headings:

- Staff Development decision makers
- Administration/record keeping staff
- Staff Development Network contacts

4. Three-year Plan (or 'Where are we going?')

If the three-year horizon has not been covered elsewhere then the plan will need to include a separate section on the longer-term priorities for the organisational unit. These may be in response to:

- Items in the strategic or business plans not already addressed
- Analysis of industry trends
- A perceived imbalance in the priorities for the current year
- Skills and knowledge needs identified through succession planning.

5. Statement of achievement targets

This section must specify any indicators or targets by which the organisational unit will determine how well it is performing in developing its staff. Examples of performance measures for staff development at organisational unit level can be quantitative or qualitative and might include:

Expenditure targets

- Benchmark hours of development per staff member
 - Implementation of specific processes or programs
 - Completion of individual development plans
 - Evaluation and dissemination practices
 - Quality of nomination and decision-making procedures
 - Staff satisfaction with access to development opportunities
 - Targets for the qualification profile or competency standards among staff
- The Quality Assurance System and ISO Accreditation require that organisational units follow a number of staff development related processes. The RMIT Staff Development Policy also refers to other processes and standards. A number of these

are listed below as appendices that could enhance the usefulness and quality of the Staff Development Plan. It is optional whether these are documented as part of the Staff Development Plan. The list is by no means exhaustive, and further options are listed at point 8.

6. Program Descriptions (or 'What do all these programs mean?')

Descriptions of the programs listed in the 'Staff Development Priorities' section could be provided in the plan. This information would help staff identify whether the program will meet their development needs. The program description should specify:

- Program/Activity title,
- Provider/coordinator,
- Target group,
- Content and expected outcomes
- Dates and any costs (specifying any contributions the individual may have to make).

7. Administration Procedures (or 'How do I get a piece of the action?')

This appendix should explain to staff the procedures for nominating for staff development activities and their responsibilities to enable accurate record keeping. The Quality Assurance System and ISO accreditation requires these processes to be explicit and understood by staff.

Nomination procedures may vary depending on the program. An organisational unit might recognise a number of procedures including:

- Individual Development Plans signed by the supervisor (especially where there are no resource implications)
- Nomination by the supervisor (especially for programs coordinated within the organisational unit or RMIT)
- Self-nomination using a 'Staff Development Activity' form.

A flow chart showing the accepted processes and relevant decision-makers could be included. It is important that these procedures are transparent, ethical, equitable and are consistent with the Quality Assurance System.

A University-wide personnel development record-keeping system is operational on SAP. All SAP users with a HR profile are eligible to enter data on the system. Keeping of financial records is through the SAP financial system. Staff should be aware of their responsibilities for providing information to the record keepers.

8. Dissemination Policy (or 'What obligations do I have to my colleagues?')

This is another important component of the Quality Assurance System. It relates to expectations that staff who undertake staff development activities will disseminate their learning and benefits gained from the activity to others in the RMIT community. Dissemination may include presenting papers, distributing notes, undertaking projects, contributing to improvements, etc. These outcomes should be discussed prior to the activity. Including this in the plan will help make staff aware of their responsibilities.

9. Other Appendices

Other appendices could be included where the organisational unit has procedures it wants to clarify for staff, or initiatives it wishes to highlight. The type of appendices might include:

- The organisational unit's approach to needs analysis and skills auditing
- Career and succession planning approaches and policies
- Policy and procedures for evaluating activities (when is it done, expenditure threshold, how is it done, etc.)

Summary Table

Ideally the priority list of programs and activities (section 2) could be shown on this table. The University-wide priorities in the left hand column of the table reflect the categories for reporting on staff development activity across the University. Funding allocations against these priorities (section 3) could be included in the table. The column headings may vary depending on the local planning processes. Where different priorities are allocated for the various classifications and levels, separate sets of priorities could be constructed for the various employment classifications (eg Academic, VET Teachers, Administration staff, IT staff, Laboratory staff, other PACCT) and levels of staff (eg. entry level/new staff, supervisors and managers/executives). Cross-over programs could appear on more than one table.

Broad Priorities	Development Needs	Programs/Activity	Schedule/Timing	Programs to be developed	Resource Allocation
University-wide Priorities					
Teaching and Learning					
Research and Development					
International					
Regional and Community Development					
Information Technology					
Management and Leadership					
RMIT Business Processes and Systems					
Legislation and Regulations					
Organisational Unit Specific Priorities					
Discipline Specific Expertise					
Personal Growth / Skills Development					

Assistance and advice

It is recognised that staff resources are not necessarily available for Portfolios and Schools/Groups to prepare their plan. People and Culture are available to provide advice and assistance. Contact [Amy Love](#).

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