Australian Public Service

Workforce planning guide

Introduction and how to use the guide

Effective leadership  Diverse workforce  Capable organisations and workforce  Employee conditions  APS Values

December 2011
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Module overview

This is one of eight modules in the Australian Public Service Workforce Planning Guide, designed to assist you with workforce planning in your agency or department.

This module provides context for the development of the Australian Public Service Workforce Planning Guide (the guide), its purpose and its target audience. It also provides guidance on how to use the guide.

The structure of the modules as they relate to the workforce planning process is depicted in Figure 1. The module you're reading is highlighted in purple.

Figure 1. Modules in the APS Workforce Planning Guide
Document management

Version history

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<td>Australian Public Service Commission</td>
<td>First version</td>
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Introduction

_Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for the Reform of Australian Government Administration_1 recommends that agencies and departments undertake deliberate planning, and that common standards and language be adopted for workforce planning across the Australian Public Service (APS).

The APS Workforce Planning Guide (the guide) has been designed for Human Resources (HR) professionals and other APS staff responsible for working in partnership with agency division, branch and section heads to undertake workforce planning.

The guide presents a common approach to workforce planning and builds on existing information and good practice across the APS. While this approach is recommended by the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC), agencies and departments should use only the parts that are appropriate and relevant to their level of readiness to undertake workforce planning.

Business-driven workforce planning can be complex and it takes time, effort and practice. However, developing a workforce plan is a great accomplishment and will help your organisation achieve its objectives and deliver better services to citizens and government. The guide is designed to help you with this. You may also want to talk to other agencies and departments undertaking workforce planning. Sharing experiences and knowledge, as well as discussing issues, can be of great help during the workforce planning process. In many instances, agencies and departments have workforce issues in common and a common solution will save time and resources.

Finally, to get the most out of workforce planning, you need to regularly update your workforce plan and processes, to ensure continuous improvement. Your workforce planning process does not end here, in other words, so it’s important not to lose enthusiasm.

A large number of agencies and departments have contributed to the guide’s development, and are acknowledged at Appendix A. The sources used in developing the guide are listed at Appendix B.

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How to use the Australian Public Service Workforce Planning Guide

The guide has a number of modules. It includes an explanation of workforce planning and its importance as a critical business planning tool, as well as guidance on each element of the workforce planning process.

In general, each major element of workforce planning has a corresponding module. However, ‘Demand and supply analysis’ has been split into two modules due to the level of detail involved and some other elements have been combined into one module. The guide’s eight modules are listed below.

- Introduction and how to use the guide
- Workforce planning explained
- Initiation and planning for workforce planning
- Segmenting your workforce
- Demand analysis
- Supply analysis
- Gap analysis and strategy and initiative development
- Implementation and monitoring, evaluation, review and adjustment.

You can read each module in isolation, however there are linkages between them, just as there are linkages between the elements of workforce planning. There is a logical sequence in which some elements will naturally be undertaken. However you don’t need to reference or follow the modules in a set order. You can reference only one, a few or all modules. Your organisation should approach workforce planning in a way that best suits your own needs, and in line with your level of readiness to progress workforce planning.

The guide outlines a straightforward approach to developing a workforce plan that is scalable to your organisation. It’s essentially a plan that you can build upon to mature your workforce planning in future years. The appendixes provide an extra level of detail, which you may find of interest, especially if your organisation is more progressed with workforce planning.

The guide acknowledges that APS organisations are at different levels of progress in embedding workforce planning as a business planning tool. The level of progress depends on issues such as organisation size, availability of resources, access to accurate workforce data and existing business planning activities that support workforce planning. You can use Table 1 in the ‘Initiation and planning for workforce planning’ module to self-assess and determine where to start.

An organisation’s workforce plan depends on the inputs into the process (that is the information, data and level of analysis conducted). Table 1 (referenced above) can also help you determine what inputs you have (and don’t have) and, in doing so, give you an understanding of what your final workforce plan(s) might look like.

Throughout the workforce planning process, you’re encouraged to ask ‘So what?’ and ‘How is this relevant to my organisation?’ This will help you apply the guide and its templates to ensure your workforce planning process suits your organisation’s needs or is fit-for-purpose.
Each module includes a glossary of key workforce planning terminology used throughout the module. At the start of each section throughout the modules, there may be suggestions for people you can consult, documents you can consult and produce, and templates and examples that might help you develop a workforce plan(s). At the end of each section throughout the modules, there may be key questions, ideas, information and summaries of section outputs to help you think about and understand workforce planning.
Appendix A: Acknowledgement of the contribution of agencies and departments

The Australian Public Service Commission would like to acknowledge the contribution of the following agencies and departments for their contribution to the development of the APS Workforce Planning Guide:

AusAID
Attorney-General’s Department
Australian Bureau of Statistics
Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
Australian Communications and Media Authority
Australian Competition and Consumer Commission
Australian Crime Commission
Australian Customs and Border Protection Service
Australian Federal Police
Australian National Maritime Museum
Australian Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation
Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority
Australian Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety Agency
Australian Research Council
Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority
Australian Taxation Office
Australian Transaction Reports and Analysis Centre
Australian War Memorial
ComSuper
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry
Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy
Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency
Department of Defence
Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs
Department of Finance and Deregulation
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
Department of Health and Ageing
Department of the House of Representatives
Department of Human Services
Department of Immigration and Citizenship
Department of Infrastructure and Transport
Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research
Department of Regional Australia
Department of Resources, Energy and Tourism
Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities
Department of Veterans' Affairs
Fair Work Ombudsman
Family Court of Australia and Federal Magistrates Court
Food Standards Australia New Zealand
IP Australia
Migration Review Tribunal and Refugee Review Tribunal
Murray-Darling Basin Authority
National Archives of Australia
National Film and Sound Archive
National Library of Australia
National Native Title Tribunal
Office of the Australian Building and Construction Commissioner
Office of the Commonwealth Ombudsman
Office of Parliamentary Counsel
Productivity Commission
Safe Work Australia
The Treasury
Appendix B: Information sources

The following documents were reviewed during the development of the APS Workforce Planning Guide:


Other information sources used for the development of the guide include:

APS Workforce Group within the APSC

APSC Progressing workforce planning Agency Symposium

Observations arising from the analysis of Agency workforce plans.

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2 Document available on the workforce planning section of the Human Capital Strategy and Research Community on Govdex. For access to the community or to get a copy of this document, contact the APS Workforce Planning Strategy Team at the Australian Public Service Commission (email: apswfp@apsc.gov.au).