Implementation and monitoring, evaluation, review and adjustment

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

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Contact and Acknowledgement Information

Enquiries or suggestions about the APS Workforce Planning Guide are welcome and should be directed to:

APSWFP@aps.c.gov.au


Production Team:

- Human Capital Research and Evaluation (Group Manager): David Schmidtchen
- APS Workforce Planning Strategy Team (Acting Director): Janet Scott
- APS Workforce Planning Strategy Team (Assistant Director): Daniela Schlesier
- APS Workforce Planning Strategy Team (Assistant Director): Kate Walcott
- APS Workforce Planning Strategy Team (Project Officer): Simon Gordon

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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. It can be read in isolation; however there are linkages to other modules, just as there are linkages between the elements of workforce planning.

This module provides guidance on how to implement the workforce plan you have pulled together from various components of workforce planning. This includes action planning and obtaining approval. This module also provides guidance for post-implementation of your workforce plan, including monitoring progress, evaluating strategies against desired outcomes, and reviewing and adjusting the plan to reflect necessary changes.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>December 2011</td>
<td>Australian Public Service Commission</td>
<td>First version</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Glossary**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Capability</td>
<td>The measure of an individual’s ability to achieve the tasks and objectives of their role through the application of skills, knowledge and attributes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment type</td>
<td>Way in which a worker is employed—for example, ongoing, non-ongoing, non-ongoing intermittent, part time, full time, contractor, consultant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>Entity for which your workforce plan applies to. It may refer to a department, agency, division, branch, section or unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skill</td>
<td>An ability, acquired through deliberate, systematic and sustained effort, through training and/or experience, to perform tasks within a role that require specific cognitive, technical and/or interpersonal skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trend information</td>
<td>Based on data from the past that helps you predict how your current workforce might change over time. Examples include recruitment, secondments, terminations, vacancies, length of service and leave.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce capability</td>
<td>What the workforce can do. It refers to the skills and knowledge of the workforce, including elements such as its ability to be innovative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce capacity</td>
<td>How much the workforce can do. Refers to the ‘availability’ of the workforce to do work, for instance the absolute numbers of staff available with the necessary skill sets (including their level of the skills) and other elements such as levels of absenteeism (or presenteeism). When used to describe the absolute numbers of staff, the element of employment type (for example, ongoing, non-ongoing, full-time, part-time) also needs to be considered. The dimension of workforce capacity can be used to describe what is in existence, what may be required in the future and any gap between the two. The other component of workforce capacity is the workforce’s ‘performance’, which includes elements such as staff engagement, motivation and discretionary effort.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce management plan</td>
<td>Deals with immediate and specific workforce issues (such as restructure, conclusion of a significant project or a recruitment campaign for specific skills) and identifies actionable strategies for managing the workforce issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(immediate issues)</td>
<td>An organisation may have a number of workforce management plans if it’s dispersed across a number of geographic locations or business areas.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Workforce plan

Document you produce to capture the key factors you’ve considered in developing the strategies and initiatives to mitigate your workforce risks. Throughout this guide, the term is used broadly to describe either a single workforce plan or multiple workforce plans—strategic workforce plan(s), operational workforce plan(s) and/or workforce management plan(s)—depending on the needs of your organisation.

Workforce plan, operational (12-18 months)

Usually covers the next 12 to 18 months and identifies actionable strategies to address a specific workforce gap in the short to medium term.

Workforce plan, strategic (three-plus years)

Usually covers a three to five-year time horizon, with many organisations focusing on a four-year time horizon aligned to Portfolio Budget Statements. However, if the lead time to fill critical job roles is longer than three to four years, the forecast period may need to extend beyond this.

Seeks to address high-level trends and developments that will affect the availability of the workforce required to deliver organisational outcomes. A suite of actionable strategies will be articulated to mitigate the workforce risks identified.

Workforce planning

A continuous business planning process of shaping and structuring the workforce to ensure there is sufficient and sustainable capability and capacity to deliver organisational objectives, now and in the future.

To be effective, workforce planning needs to be integrated into an agency or department’s strategic planning framework and incorporate strong governance mechanisms so it can be used to clearly identify the human resource (HR) strategies required to continuously deliver the right people—that is, those with the skills and capabilities necessary for the required work—in the right numbers, in the right place, at the right time.

Workforce profile

Summary of workforce demographics that provides a snapshot view of the workforce.
Symbols

Below is a key to the symbols used in this module, to draw your attention to things that might help you along the way, as you progress workforce planning in your organisation.

Templates  
Generic templates outlining the basic information required and a suggested format for collecting and structuring this information. Templates are referred to by their number and title.

Documents to produce  
Documents you may wish to produce at a particular stage of workforce planning. These may eventually be collated to form part of your final workforce plan. Templates are provided for some of these.

Key questions  
Key questions you may need to answer at a particular stage of workforce planning. These lists are not exhaustive and you may want to think about more questions that are specific to your organisation.

Section outputs  
Summary of the documents you may have considered and produced at a particular stage of workforce planning, and guidance on where they fit in relation to the development of your workforce plan. Also provides context on how you’re progressing through the workforce planning process.

Implementation

If you haven’t done so already, you should now pull together the various components of your workforce plan. Your workforce plan is the vehicle you use to collate the documents and information you have developed and gathered during your planning process. In addition, it will contain a recommended action plan, supported by the evidence you have gathered and the conclusions you have drawn. Appendix B of the ‘Workforce planning explained’ module suggests an outline for your workforce plan and proposes where the components might logically sit within the plan.

To implement your workforce plan, you will require:

- An action plan outlining your chosen strategies and initiatives (in order of priority) and the responsibilities, key performance indicators (KPIs), timeline, milestones and resource requirements.
- Endorsement of your workforce plan by the appropriate decision maker.
**Action planning**

To develop your action plan, you should begin by evaluating the strategy and initiative options you have identified through your strategy development activities and select those that will effectively address your most critical gaps. You will need to ensure these align with your organisational objectives and obtain approval for them from your executive team. It’s also important to consider the cost of implementing strategies and initiatives against expected benefits.

You need to incorporate each strategy and initiative into the relevant business and human resources (HR) plans, so buy-in from these stakeholders is necessary for success. Those responsible for implementing your workforce plan are usually not the same people who undertake the workforce planning itself. Line managers, with HR managers, need to be heavily involved in developing a tangible, realistic action plan for implementation. The more effort expanded in stakeholder engagement during the action planning stage will increase the likelihood of a more co-ordinated approach to strategy implementation. If there are links between existing strategies and initiatives and the strategies and initiatives identified in your action plan, those responsible for implementing them must be aware of them and provided with the tools needed to coordinate them.

**Approval process**

Every organisation has its own governance arrangements and authority for endorsing a workforce plan. However, it’s generally preferred that your organisation endorse the plan at the highest executive level possible. This legitimises the content and direction of your workforce strategies and enables you to deliver it in line with business outcomes. Endorsement at this level also gives authority to your workforce plan outcomes. You should not underestimate the time involved or the potential difficulty associated with this part of the process, particularly if this is your first workforce plan and executive are not familiar with workforce planning.

Proactive stakeholder engagement will help make the approval process as smooth as possible. However, successful workforce plans will speak for themselves in outlining the risks to your organisation and the action needed to address these. Being able to communicate this to your senior managers in a language they understand is crucial.

After you have obtained approval, your workforce planning strategies initiatives need to be incorporated into the relevant division, branch and/or section plans as well into individual performance management agreements.

You can ask these types of key questions when moving through the implementation phase of your workforce plan.
Key questions: Implementation

- How are the strategies and initiatives prioritised (risk analysis)?
- Who will undertake the strategies and initiatives?
- What are the cost and budget implications?
- Are any of the strategies or initiatives interconnected? What does this mean in practice?
- How do you measure the success of the strategies and initiatives?
- What are the KPIs for those accountable?
- How do you collect data for measuring the KPIs? What is the baseline? What is the target? When will the target be reached?
- Are there existing mechanisms you can use to monitor workforce planning progress?
- What is the timeline for each strategy and initiative?
- How will you communicate the final plan to your staff?
- How will you manage staff expectations and reactions to your workforce plan?
- Who will be responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing your workforce plan and its implementation?

Section outputs

- After considering the information and suggested outputs in this section, you should be able to progress with the implementation of your workforce plan as you would have developed an ‘Action plan’ and had your workforce plan approved by your executive or a similar governance body.

- Workforce plan. The information contained in these documents will inform the ‘Workforce strategies’ section of your workforce plan and corresponding actions plans related to your workforce plan. Refer to Appendix B of the ‘Workforce planning explained’ module

Monitor, evaluate, review and adjust

Monitoring, evaluating, reviewing and adjusting (as necessary) apply after your workforce plan is completed, approved and implemented. Some key elements you will need to undertake include:

- monitor your workforce:
  - are the workforce drivers still the same as when you developed the plan?
  - are the supply and demand forecasts tracking as expected?
  - how is your workforce plan implementation progressing?

- regularly evaluate whether your workforce planning strategies and initiatives are achieving the desired business performance outcomes.

- review and adjust your workforce plan to reflect necessary changes identified in the monitoring and evaluation process, or in business direction.

- determine if any of the changes need to be approved by your executive or governing body.
Monitor

It is important to monitor the workforce measures or business reporting activities that allow you to evaluate whether you’re closing your workforce gaps.

Workforce planning is both a dynamic and an iterative process, influenced by the internal and external environment your organisation operates in. These drivers change over time and your workforce plan needs to be reviewed and adjusted to reflect them. By monitoring KPIs, you will be able to identify changes and developments in your workforce, and this will inform your workforce plan evaluation and review. Examples of KPIs are:

- workload increases and decreases
- unscheduled absence rates
- workforce age profile
- staff satisfaction levels
- resignations
- new policy proposals
- portfolio budget statements.

In many cases, this information is regularly collected by your HR, financial services or corporate planning area. You need to regularly obtain reports on this information to assess whether changes that may have implications for your workforce are taking place. In other instances, you may need to gather information on indicators particularly relevant to your organisation. For example, there may be frequent legislation changes that affect your area of work and must be monitored closely.

You will also need to monitor progress of your workforce plan implementation to ensure initiatives are delivered on time and within budget. The KPIs and milestones outlined in your action plan will assist with this.

The output from monitoring may be a quarterly or bi-annual written report, or a monthly meeting with management. However you choose to report on the monitoring process, you will need to incorporate this into your workforce planning and business planning processes, and assign responsibility for the task to someone.

Evaluate

You can evaluate the effectiveness of your workforce plan based on the information you obtain from monitoring workforce and related indicators. The purpose of the evaluation is to understand whether your workforce plan has succeeded in addressing identified workforce gaps. Looking at specific strategies and initiatives, and whether these have been effective, will enable you to improve the next iteration of your workforce plan.

A good way of evaluating success is using the KPIs you identified in your action plan. However, bear in mind that some benefits are realised with a time lag and, as such, the KPIs may not reach your desired target until enough time has elapsed since implementation. Another way of evaluating success is consulting managers to determine whether they feel that previously identified workforce problems have improved.
You should capture the evaluation of your current workforce plan in a report to give future workforce planners access to lessons learned. As your workforce plan will be updated in line with the yearly or six-monthly (mid-year review) business planning process, you should evaluate at least once a year, before the next iteration of your workforce plan and your organisation’s budget. As with monitoring, the evaluation needs to be incorporated into your workforce planning process and responsibility assigned. A further indicator could be the continued level of engagement you have received from managers during monitoring.

**Review and adjust**

Once you have evaluated your workforce plan, you will be able to review it to make adjustments and improvements to produce a second iteration. This will usually occur one year after you developed the first iteration, although in the case where significant new issues in your operating environment are affecting your workforce, you may need to adjust some strategies and initiatives earlier than this. In other words, you will not need to conduct a full-scale workforce planning process every 12 months, but rather adjust the current plan to incorporate new data and ensure coverage for the next 12 to 18 months. Any adjustments will need to be approved by your executive or governance body.

**Key questions: Monitor, evaluate, review and adjust**

- Have there been any significant changes to internal or external drivers since your workforce plan was implemented?
- Have your workforce profile or workforce trends changed since your workforce plan was implemented? Should these changes be interpreted as warning signs for the future (for example, increased sick leave can be an early warning signal that something is wrong with your workforce)?
- Who is accountable for monitoring and reporting on the progress and success of your workforce plan and its strategies and initiatives? By what means and how often will reporting occur?
- Has each strategy and initiative achieved the intended goals? If not, why not?
- Was this achievement of the outcome necessarily due to your workforce planning initiatives or could it have been due to external variables?
- What was the return on investment?
- Do the strategies and initiatives need to be modified?
- Are the assumptions underlying your workforce plan still valid?