

DEVELOPING AN ACADEMIC DIRECTOR'S PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY

REPORT AND WORKBOOK

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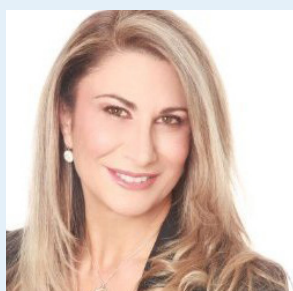
Foreward

Having transitioned as an academic from the Faculty of Information Technology to a Director of a central Learning and Teaching Unit, I'm often asked what I do, what stand for and what's my narrative. Acknowledging that many Academic Directors follow a similar transition path, I thought it might be helpful to provide them with a resource that can guide them in reaffirming, recreating or reinvigorating their professional identity. As leaders of learning and teaching in higher education, we need to support each other in creating our narrative. This includes: confirming expertise, fields of study, contributing to key debates, fostering networks and being part of a communities of practice. The aim of this workbook is to help Academic Directors devise strategies that develop their professional learning and teaching identity, and strengthen their identity through an online presence.

I hope you find this resource useful and invite you to make the most of it.



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1. Introduction

The career path for most Academic Directors is from their discipline, with a good reputation for being a great teacher by their students and peers. However, it is often their research that defines their identity. This academic identity typically weakens when they leave their discipline and move into a unit that is focused on improving learning and teaching. 'Who they are' may get lost in the transition and they struggle to form a new identity and standing in the learning and teaching space.

2. Aims of Professional Identity Plan

The aim of a Professional Identity for Academic Directors is to describe who they are and what they will do. The Professional Identity Plan is to reaffirm or create a professional identity as an Academic Director. The plan will build on key theoretical career frameworks to present targeted insights on ways in which Academic Directors can develop their identity and standing, and how that can be strengthened through an online presence.

On completion of the Professional Identity Plan, participations will be able to:

1. Become self-aware of their strengths and weaknesses, values and interests
2. Identify current and intended career networks
3. Identify the social media that will assist in developing their online presence
4. Create a narrative of who they are and what they stand for
5. Develop an action plan to advance their identity as an Academic Director

3. Background—Mini Literature Review

Research has suggested that people develop their professional identities to serve as a key force in shaping their careers (Amundson, Mills & Smith, 2014). Through a path of alternating stages and transitions, the development of professional identities occurs as a natural by-product of a progression through each career phase (Dobrow & Higgins, 2005). Identity is to "know what one is doing and why one is doing it" (Giddens, 1991, p. 35). To develop a solid understanding of the Academic Director's professional identity and its effects on their career development, there are three ways that they know who they are as Academic Directors. First, they observe themselves. They note their success, their challenges and use this information to inform their professional identities (Kinash & Wood, 2013). Second, they compare themselves to others. They 'measure up' to decide who they are. Finally, they decide their identities based on what they perceive others think of them. Identities can be co-created, deployed, and altered in social interactions with others (Dutton & Heaphy, 2003).

3.1 Theoretical Frameworks for Career Planning and Development

Career identity is not the sum, but the assimilation of your experiences into meaningful or useful structures (Meijer, 1998). This Professional Identity Plan is underpinned by three career planning frameworks, the DOTS model, System Theory Framework and CareerEDGE framework.

3.1.1 DOTS Model

The DOTS model is a 'four stage' model of career planning (Table 1). Although called DOTS, the steps of the development of career experiences are completed in the following order, Self-awareness (S), Opportunity awareness (O), Decision making (D) and Transition learning (T) (shown in Figure 1). The processing of career development starts with one's self-awareness, which includes skills, values, interests and personal style. To implement a fully informed career plan, relevant and credible information is needed. The next stage of the process requires one to know and evaluate options, relate personal priorities and identify career goals to facilitate decision-making. Finally, an action plan is developed to support the transition in order to move into a career of one's choice.

Table 1 DOTS Component-- Law & Watts (1977)

DOTS components	Comments on component
Decision making	Evaluating career options, making decisions, setting goals and creating a career action plan.
Opportunity awareness	Exploring occupations, industries and labour market trends in your field.
Transition skills	Implementing the plan and moving in to the next role, requiring job applications (resume, cover letter, key selection criteria response, interview), networking, negotiating, etc.
Self-awareness	Reflecting and learning about your skills, values, interests, style, etc. in various social contexts. Deciding how you define career success.



Figure 1 DOTS Model

3.1.2 System Theory Framework

The Systems Theory Framework (STF) is based around three systems outlined in Table 2, the individual system (a person) with their own set of characteristics (e.g. gender, skills), the social system, which provides the context (e.g. family, media) and the Environmental-Societal system which is often outside of the individual's control (e.g. geographical location, employment market) (Patton and McMahon, 2015). Each of these three systems has elements that affect the individual at different stages of their life. The social system is made of components that can directly influence the individual system. The environmental-societal system is often fundamental within in the creation of an individual's life view.

The framework notes that career development is a lifespan phenomenon, which is unlikely to be linear, straight forward or clear. The STF accounts for a reciprocal interaction between the systems and unpredictable changes (Figure 2). When multiple components are active within the context of time—past, present and future, it assumes that they are exerting recursiveness (i.e. interactions between influences) inside and beyond each system. The STF also includes the element of chance events, which is shown pictorially in Figure 2 by a lightning bolt slicing through the system. The STF can adopt a narrative approach to represent historically what one's career pathways look like (Patton and McMahon, 2006).

Table 2 Systems Theory Framework Components

STF Components	Comments on component
Individual system (a person)	An individual's own set of characteristics. A central component of the model. Examples: interests, skills, ability, values, beliefs, health, personality, age.
Social system	Each social system holds values, beliefs and attitudes that may influence the individual. Examples: family, media, peers, community groups, work place, education institutions
Environmental - Societal system	Broader components which can be outside of the individual's control. Examples: geographical location, employment markets, political decisions, globalisation.

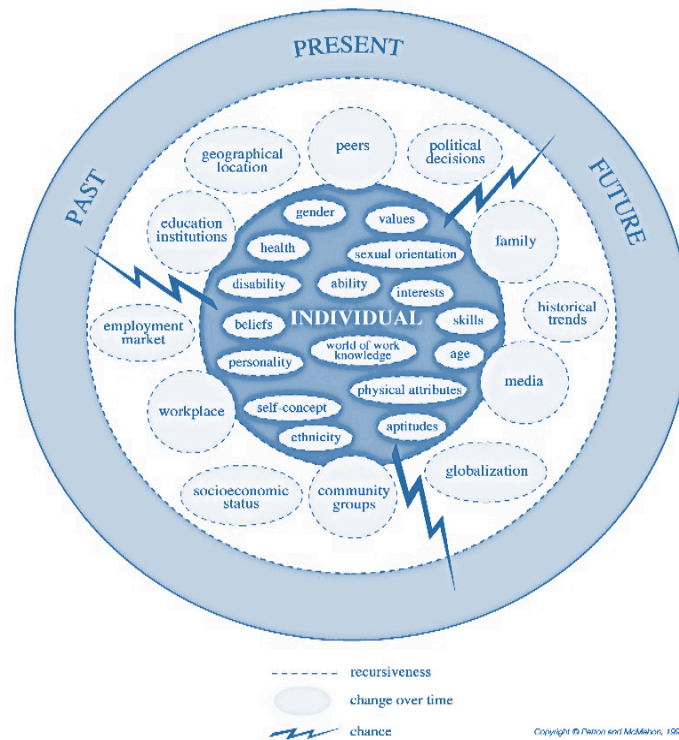


Figure 2 Systems Theory Framework

3.1.3 CareerEDGE

Dacre Pool and Sewell (2007) developed a CareerEDGE framework (Figure 3), which highlights the need to reflect on the personal, relational and contextual aspects of identity. CareerEDGE components (Table 3a) are based on having a set of experiences (E), degree subject knowledge and understanding (D), generic skills (G) and emotional intelligence (E) that make a person more likely to choose and secure critical capabilities to assist with career transition.

CareerEDGE applications (Table 3b) identify a number of specific steps and processes that facilitate career development and enhance employability. The process of reflection and evaluation emphasises a need to review ones past and present employment and decide what needs to be done in order to develop it further.

It is suggested that the career development starts with accessing and developing the five CareerEDGE components on the lower tier of the model, then reflecting on and evaluating these experiences, resulting in the development of higher levels of self-efficacy, self-confidence and self-esteem, essentially forging the crucial links to employability.

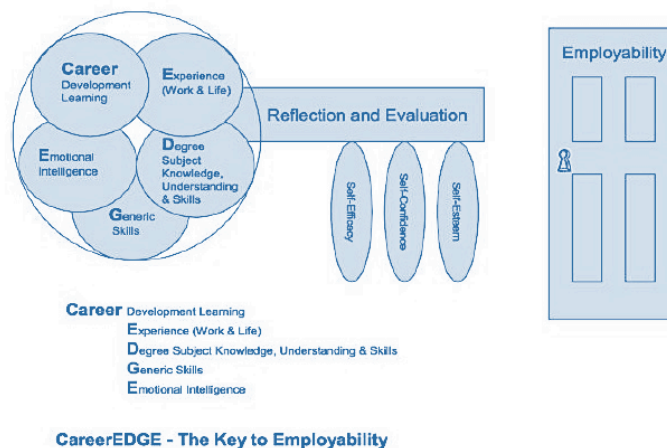


Figure 3 A Metaphorical Model of Employability

Table 3a CareerEDGE Components

CareerEDGE components	Comments on component
Career development learning	Includes career planning as described in the DOTS model: Decision learning, Opportunity awareness, Transition learning and Self-awareness (see page 2).
Experience – work and life	Work experience, increases employment outcomes, key competencies and skills. Employers value work experience and the capacity to articulate learnings.
Degree subject knowledge, understanding & skills	The central concept in the model. Degree results are often the simplest comparative measure available to employers. However, subject specific knowledge isn't always critical to the role.
Generic skills	Also called: core skills; key skills and transferable skills. The model lists multiple examples of generic skills.
Emotional intelligence	"...the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships". Goleman (1998, p. 317). Emotional intelligence or emotional literacy can be taught.

Table 3b CareerEDGE Application Processes and Requirements

CareerEDGE application	Comments on application processes and requirements
Reflection and evaluation	There is a need to review ones past and present employment and decide what needs to be done in order to develop it further.
Self-efficacy	A belief that one has the capability to succeed in a particular situation. Sources of self-efficacy include mastery and vicarious experiences
Self-confidence	The way ones self-efficacy is projected to the outside world. It can be seen from a person's manner and behaviour.
Self-esteem	"...people with global self-esteem have self-respect and a feeling of worthiness but are realistic in their evaluations of themselves". Owens (1993) "A vast body of research evidence has accumulated showing a positive correlation between self-esteem and achievement..." Lawrence (1996, p. xi)

3.2 Domains of Practice for Academic Directors

Eight domains of practice have been identified for Academic Directors by the Council of Australian Directors of Academic Development (CADAD, 2013). Each domain is divided into sub-domains for identification of the strategic contributions to the academic development units. The domains and sub-domains, inform decision-making and judgment-based practice that establish professional and academic legitimacy and credibility. Professionalism for Academic Directors is often evaluated through institutional performance reviews, provoking an evaluation of progress and creating plans for further development. The assessment of performance of developmental units in domains presented in Table 4 is considered relevant to Academic Director's competencies. The scope statements for eight key domains are outlined in Table 4.

Table 4 Domains of practice for Academic Development Units (ADU)

Domains	Descriptions
1: Strategy Policy and Governance	The ADU actively contributes to the governance of learning and teaching. This may include contributions to strategic planning, policy and initiatives
2: Quality of Learning and Teaching	The ADU actively contributes to assuring and enhancing the quality of learning and teaching. This may include contributing to the evaluation and improvement of teaching through student feedback, peer review and curriculum review
3: Scholarship of Learning and Teaching	The ADU actively contributes to the scholarship of learning and teaching. It does this through initiating and/or participating in grants and awards, research and scholarly investigation of learning and teaching
4: Professional Development	The ADU actively contributes to the professional development of all staff involved who contribute to learning and teaching. This includes the effective planning, management and delivery of programs and services associated with professional development
5: Credit-bearing Programs in Higher Education	The ADU actively contributes to the effective planning, management and delivery of credit-bearing programs in higher education
6: Curriculum Development	The ADU actively supports curriculum planning and design and the development of educational resources
7: Engagement	The ADU actively communicates with and engages the university's communities in the development of learning and teaching
8: ADU Effectiveness	The ADU actively monitors the effectiveness of its operations and the domains of practice in which it engages in supporting learning and teaching

4. Steps to Developing a Professional Identity Plan for Academic Directors

A three-step process to develop a professional identity for Academic Directors has been developed. Step 1 involves self-assessment activities. Step 2 identifies an individual's developmental network. Finally, step 3 leads to a professional identity statement.

4.1 Self-Assessment

It is suggested that people with self-awareness are able to present themselves with self-assurance. The self-assessment activities will encourage reflection on and evaluation of Academic Directors' practices, which enable them to give consideration to the experiences that they enjoy doing, are interested in, motivated by, and suit their career development. The self-evaluations are crucial to the process of lifelong learning.

Academic Directors will reflect on their competency across the eight domain of practices required for developing an academic development unit. In addition, a broader reflection of one's strengths, weaknesses, values and interests is a process to systematically reflect and consider professional identity and standing. As a result, Academic Directors become more self-aware of their knowledge, skills, experience, personal attributes and employability. Increased self-awareness will be reflected in a clearer identity statement.

To help ascertain your interests, skills and values visiting the following profilers:

- Interest - O*Net Interest profiler
- Skills - myfuture
- Values - http://www.career-test.biz/values_assessment.htm

Note:

O*Net Interest profiler, developed by the National Center for O*NET Development (Center) under the sponsorship of the US Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration (USDOL/ETA)

MyFuture is Australia's career information and exploration service.

Prioritising life values - http://www.career-test.biz/values_assessment.htm

4.2 Networks

Social systems can directly influence the individual's construction of career (Patton & McMahon 2015). Academic Directors will describe the key individuals who help them complete their work and advance their career and seek their feedback to obtain a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. Peer observation can help Academic Directors gain a better understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. The knowledge can be used to build stronger professional and personal relationships.

Academic Directors will outline the types and usages of social media that assist them in advancing their network possibilities, and increase awareness of the opportunities available and current trends. These experiences play a vital role within a professional identity for Academic Directors. In addition, Academic Directors may use the information obtained from peer feedback in social media to decide how to present themselves effectively to prospective audiences, to create a strong online presence.

4.3 Professional identity Statement

The use of a story telling approach is a way of “identifying and analysing life career themes” (Gysbers, Heppener, and Johnston, 1998, p.236). Stories or narratives are “a unique derivative of systems theory thinking” (Patton and McMahon, 1999, p. 235). Academic Directors will present a self-introduction (professional identity statement) after reflecting on and evaluating the key findings from step 1 and step 2.

A reflection process will enable Academic Directors to gain insight into the interconnectedness of influences in each individual’s network. Importantly, Academic Directors can make a realistic and suitable action plan based upon their heightened self-knowledge. The action plan can prioritise their professional development needs and the potential strategies to better fulfil the role of an Academic Director.

5. Activities

The following activities aim to help Academic Directors outline the knowledge, skills and aspirational domains of their role and guide articulation of professional identity and professional development needs.

5.1 Self-Assessment

This activity provides a process to systematically reflect on and evaluate your practices.

5.1.1 Assess your competence against domains of practice

Tick your level of performance, against the eight domains in the CADAD framework.

Domains	Beginning - Developing Strategies, systems, and capabilities to enable and facilitate this type of engagement at this level are in development and/or only partially implemented	Functional - Proficient Well-developed strategies, systems and capabilities to enable and facilitate this type of engagement at this level	Accomplished - Exemplary Systems, strategies and capabilities to enable and facilitate this type of activity are exemplary and reflect an advanced state of development and implementation
1. Strategy, Policy and Governance			
1.1. Strategic Advice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.2. Strategic Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.3. Governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.4. Policy Development and Implementation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
1.5. Strategic Initiatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Quality of Learning and Teaching			
2.1. Standards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2. Evaluation and Improvement			
2.2.1. Student Feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2.2. Peer Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.2.3. Curriculum Review	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Scholarship of Teaching and Learning			
3.1. Grants and Awards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.2. Significant Projects and Research into L&T	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.3. Research Into Academic Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Professional Development			
4.1. Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.2. Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.3. Delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Credit-bearing Programs in Higher Education			
5.1. Program and Course Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.2. Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.3. Delivery	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Curriculum Development			
6.1. Curriculum Planning and Design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.2. Education Resource Development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Engagement			
7.1. Internal Engagement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.2. External Engagement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. ADU Effectiveness			
8.1. ADU Mission and Strategy Alignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.2. ADU Leadership and Management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.3. ADU Impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.4. ADU Quality Assurance and Improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5.1.2 *Reflect on personal competencies*

This activity involves a broader reflection, embracing a range of descriptive and evaluative recognitions of strengths, weaknesses, values and interests.

First, write down what you do, depending upon how much you enjoy doing or participating in the task.

Second, clarify your core values and beliefs that shape how you think about yourself.

Identify your strengths (things you do well). For example, provide current and timely information.

Identify your weaknesses (things you could do better). For example, implement appropriate indicators and performance measures.

Identify your interests (things you really enjoy). For example, developing learning and teaching strategy and policy.

Identify your values (why you do what you do). For example, supporting the mission/vision of the university.

Identify your standing (what you want to be known for). For example, to be known as a skilled practitioner in teaching and learning.

5.2 Networks

This activity highlights the Academic Director's current networks and encourages identification of the members with whom the director knows and connects with.

5.2.1 Identify your networks

Identify and describe the key individuals from your different networks that support you in your role as an Academic Director.

Developer's name	Career Focus	Network range	Role	Strength
Write the names of 10 individuals in your developmental network	What is the position of each individual? e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job title Department Employer Industry 	What is the social system(s) you share with the individual? e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employer Industry Professional Association Research Studies Community organisation Interest group Board Personal 	How does this <i>person help</i> you? e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helps you to do your work (colleague, collaborator) Develops your career (a leader, well connected, influential) A role model A mentor Personal support (friends and family) How do <i>you help</i> the person?	What is the strength of your relationship with the individual? e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close Moderate Distant
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				

5.2.2 Mapping your networks

Networks can be illustrated graphically showing the range and strength of developmental networks. Below are two examples, that show the social systems and the strength of your relationship with individuals in that social system.

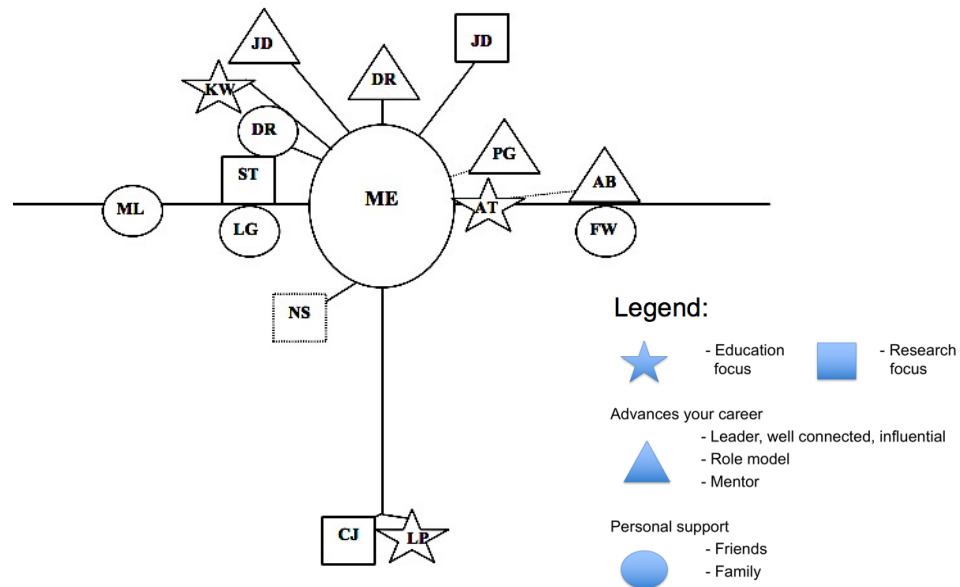


Figure 4 Your development network map example

Adapted with permission from Kram KE (2009). Expand Your Mentoring Horizons: Developing New Paradigms for Academic Medicine. Accessed June 28, 2010 at http://www.childrenshospital.org/cfapps/research/data_admin/Site2209/Documents/KathyKramPhDMappingYourNetwork.pdf.

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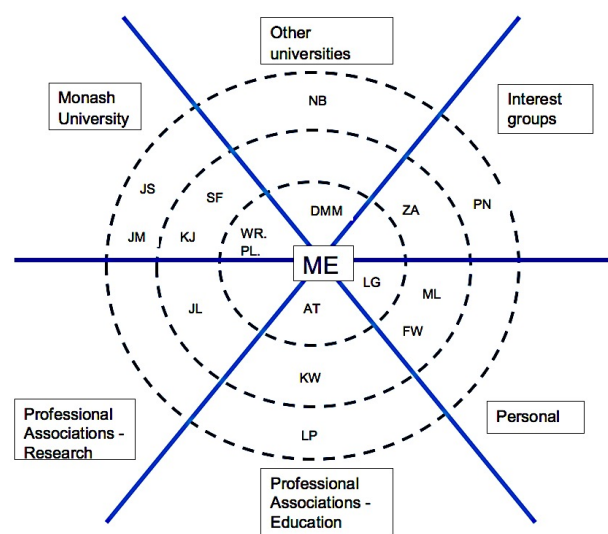


Figure 5 Network range and strength

Kram K. E. and Higgins M. (2013), building your developmental network. Part 1: Defining your network

5.2.3 *Seek feedback from networks*

This activity involves asking the individuals listed in Table 7 to tell you what they think are your greatest strengths and the areas for improvement.

Get feedback to improve the way you work.

Dear _____,

I am currently participating in a process to help me write a professional identity statement. To help create an accurate statement I am seeking feedback from my network, and I have identified you as a valuable member of my network. It would be very helpful if you could provide feedback related to my role as an Academic Director.

List my 3 strengths an Academic Director.

List my 3 areas for development an Academic Director.

Other comments

5.2.4 Expand your networks via social media

Social connections can be strategically advanced by utilising digital tools and platforms.

Identify the available of online platforms that help build your profile as Academic director.

Social Media/Online Tools	Descriptions	Reach Gauge the size of your community	Engagement How often do you use the following tools? 1) Used daily 2) Used occasionally 3) Rarely or never	Motivation Which of these are the main reasons that you use the following tools? a) Share content b) See what is 'trending' c) Get more information on something d) See what others are talking about e) Being a part of a community f) others
LinkedIn	Business and professional networking	#connections		
Academia.edu	Social networking site for academics/researchers	#followers		
YouTube	a global video-sharing website	#views		
Facebook	General: photos, videos, blogs, apps.	#friends		
Twitter	General. Micro-blogging, RSS, updates	#followers		
Personal Blog	Publish and display personal work	#hits		
ResearchGate	Scientists and researchers share papers, ask and answer questions, and find collaborators	Follow #researchers		
Others				
Please specify:				

5.3 Professional Identity Statement

Through the self-assessment and network activities, the patterns and themes of an individual's identity can be uncovered.

5.3.1 *Develop a self-introduction or professional identity statement*

Draws together key findings from the self-assessment and network activities into a clear statement of your professional identity.

Write a professional identity statement (suggested length 200-300 words).

5.3.2 Construct a professional identity action plan

Academic Directors become aware of their professional development needs in order to successfully adapt to their current and new environments.

Construct a professional identity action plan to determine priority development needs and strategies in line with your institutional processes and professional aspirations.

What changes could you implement to help strengthen your professional identity?

What changes would you like to make in your networks over the next 5 years?

What actions will you take to achieve the changes you want?

	Actions	Timeframe	Support needed	Comments
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

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