Supporting Job Design for Academics Employed in Academic Development Units

A guide for Directors

COUNCIL OF AUSTRALIAN
DIRECTORS OF ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

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This brief guide aims to support Directors engage in respectful ways, supporting and managing academics' work within Academic Development Units (ADUs).   It is strongly recommended that the Director speak with their Human Resources unit. Identifying a mentor would also be recommended, potentially a Director from another ADU.

Suggested steps	Resources
Step 1: Become familiar with the eight key domains of practice prior to considering job design for academics within ADUs.	CADAD [Benchmarking Performance of Academic Development Units in Australian Universities](#)

Step 2: Collate and review key University documents and ADU documents.
 	
• Consider the orientation of the ADU within the University.   Consider the options you have for setting a strategic direction for the unit. Is the unit required to:
   o Deliver specific services?
   o Engage in specific higher educational research activities?
   o Promote the scholarship of learning and teaching?
 	
Conceptualising the alignment of individual academic research interests and the service and strategic interests of the ADU within the University will be important to working through job design elements later.
 	
• Review the associated performance indicators for the ADU as an entity and the individual academic performance requirements.
	Relevant documents:
	
	• University Strategic Plan: What are the key priorities/directions the ADU is required to support?
	
	• Learning and Teaching Plan: How does the ADU engage with the plan?
	
	• Enterprise Agreement: What are the required parameters for considering work planning / workload for academics?
	
	• Any existing Position Descriptions, including mandatory requirements or components of descriptions (e.g. Academic Duty Descriptor)
	
	• Workload management / planning tools or frameworks in existence
	
	• Performance development / management policies and metrics: What are the stated or unstated requirements for academic performance? Do they apply to academics within in the ADU? Why, or why not?
	
	• Academic Level Descriptors
	
	• Position descriptions or position description templates
	
	• Promotion requirements: What components of academics' work are valued for promotion and how do these appear?
	
	• Service level agreement documentation: Some ADUs may have formal or semi-formal agreements with faculties / schools, etc.
	
	• Operational / strategic plans for the ADU

Suggested steps	Resources
Step 3: Reflect on the *CADAD Domains of Practice* for each academic role in your ADU. To what extent do academics in the unit have roles defined by each domain? Can these be considered as the basis of position description? (see example below)	**CADAD Domains of Practice:** • Strategy, Policy and Governance • Quality of Learning and Teaching • Scholarship of Teaching and Learning • Professional Development • Credit-bearing Programs in Higher Education • Curriculum Development • Engagement • ADU Effectiveness
Step 4: Detail job design in agreed position description • For each academic, consider the kinds of work they engage in and how this might be inscribed in a position description. A challenge is often to equate research, teaching, scholarship and engagement to the elements of work required for academics in ADUs. While specific position descriptions are not common for academics, they are often necessary in ADUs. The position description should be prepared in collaboration with staff members.	• CADAD Domains of Practice • Formal University documents • Enterprise Agreement • Promotion requirements • Position description template • ADU plans and priorities
Step 5: Consider output indicators or input measures to support workload planning, support and management • *Output indicators* should be aligned to promotional pathways and integrated into the work duties of the staff member, e.g. minimum 2 publications, minimum 1 grant. Output measures should be linked to University promotion processes. Outputs might also be completion or attainment of milestones within a project, re-development of a unit or program. Well-articulated output indicators support staff development/management. • *Input measures* map the time and resources required for any activity. These might include number of professional development sessions, units to be delivered, etc., e.g. 1 hour of professional development might be considered 3 hours of actual work. Another framework for input measures might be the nominal allocation of days to a project or activity, e.g. 2 days per week for work with faculty, 1 day per week for Graduate Certificate. • Increasingly, the literature focuses on the need to articulate output indicators rather than focus on input measures. There is increasing emphasis on co-generation of output indicators. All measures need to be documented through use a University template or other ADU designed template.	• Formal University documents • Enterprise Agreement • Promotion requirements • University performance metrics • Relevant Human Resources policies

Suggested steps	Resources
Step 6: Develop a review cycle for supporting academic staff • A regular review of position description, work plan and output/input indicators is critical. • Reviews should also include leave plans.	• University Performance / Development / Management policies

Suggested core elements of an Academic Position Description aligned to the CADAD Domains of Practice

Select as appropriate

Domain of Practice	Example position description statement
Strategy, Policy and Governance	• Contribute to the strategic governance and policy development of teaching and learning within the University (in a specified area – student evaluation; social media; learning technology).
Quality of Learning and Teaching	• Actively contribute to enhancing the quality of learning and teaching through (specify), e.g. Ensuring Australian Qualifications Framework standards are met; supporting use of student evaluation.
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning	• Support and contribute to the scholarship of (specify) through (specify), e.g. support grant / award development; research into higher education. • Maintain an active researcher status through publications, grants and supervision of honours or postgraduate students aligned to your work.
Professional Development	• Provide professional development incentives to staff through planning, management and delivering of the following (specify).
Credit-bearing Programs in Higher Education	• Teach into / contribute to credit-bearing programs in higher education through program and course design, management and/or delivery.
Curriculum Development	• Initiate and support a range of curriculum development activities.
Engagement	• Actively engage with stakeholders across the University to support institutional goals.
ADU Effectiveness	• Ensure an effective evaluation process for your work. • Monitor effectiveness of work through a range of appropriate tools, which may measure impact and suggest improvements.

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