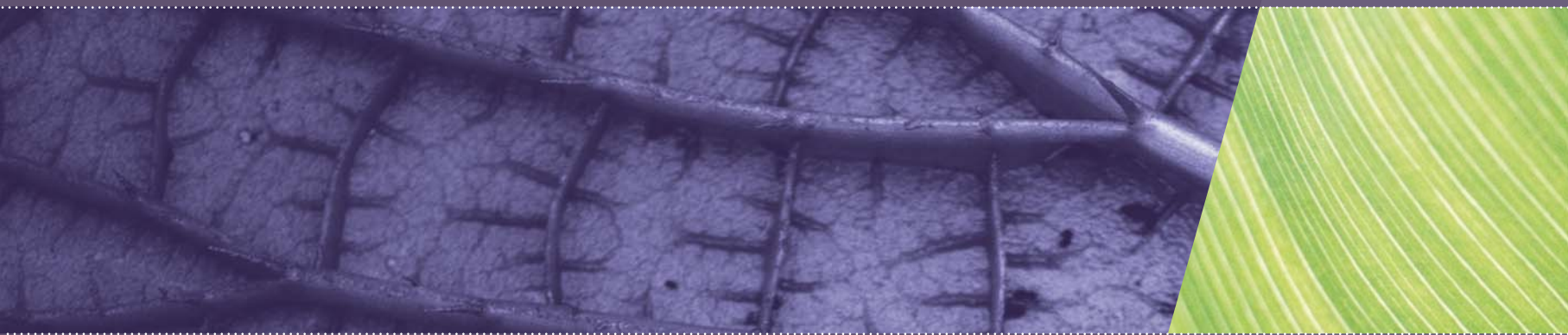




Australian Government
Australian Public Service Commission



Building business capability through workforce planning

Workforce planning—planning for performance

Securing the people and skills you need to do business

Planning for the future

Just good management

Workforce planning is about achieving sustained organisational performance and accountability through the development of a capable workforce. This guide is intended to enable you to make the critical decisions and identify the key strategies that will assist your agency to deliver business outcomes now and into the future.

Workforce planning in a nutshell

This diagram shows the central elements commonly found in most workforce planning models. It may be substituted with your agency specific model or refer to the ANAO Better Practice Guide Planning for the Workforce of the Future (www.anao.gov.au).

Workforce planning is not a stand alone process or system. An effective approach must be integrated with business practices; incorporate an analysis of the agency's current and possible future operating contexts; and include ongoing monitoring of the environment, workforce issues and organisational strategies.



Examine ▶ Decide ▶ Deliver


A practical approach to workforce planning

What factors might you examine in order to make sound workforce planning decisions? How do you identify the most useful information? How do you prioritise areas for action? How do you best establish the workforce to be ‘future ready’?






Regardless of the approach taken, Examine—Decide—Deliver will assist you to address these critical questions by focusing on the strategic outcomes of workforce planning.

	Examine		Decide
<p>Where are we heading? Understanding the strategic context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > External and internal operating environments - consider using SWOT analysis > Possible, probable and most likely future scenarios (e.g. growth/reassignment of priorities, change in work requirements) > Planned organisational change > Agency performance and customer feedback > Organisational culture > APSC’s Thinking About Planning checklist (www.apsc.gov.au) 	▶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Agency workforce planning objectives > Workforce planning approach (e.g. top down, bottom up, planning horizons, all or some business units) > Goals and critical success factors to aid in evaluation > The organisational and business unit specific skill requirements emerging from the most likely scenarios
<p>Where are we now? Knowing the current workforce and work programme</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Current roles and job categories, workflow and workload patterns > Critical workforce data for your agency (could include HRMIS, annual reports, performance ratings, staff interviews, skills audits, recruitment trends, and labour market data from relevant government agencies and industry bodies) > Effectiveness of organisational structure 	▶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Pivotal roles and job categories for business success—now and future (focus your efforts) > Peaks and troughs in workloads and availability of required skills > Specific challenges to be dealt with through the workforce planning strategy
<p>How are we going to get there? Staffing for and enhancing performance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Gaps/deviation in current and future workforce capability for pivotal roles and job categories > Strategy options to build organisational and workforce capability > Agency effectiveness in making flexible use of its workforce and HR strategies > Opportunities for cross-agency collaboration > Current better practice 	▶	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Risk and priority of identified workforce challenges > Integrated strategies to address each priority issue (adjustment of current/introduction of new practices) > Resources required to implement the strategy > Strategy review and evaluation mechanisms

There is no single approach or common model when it comes to workforce planning. While one agency may have the need and capacity to undertake complex planning, it may be sufficient for another to simply 'look around the room' to identify key workforce risks both now and in the future.

Deliver	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Persuasive business case which reflects the agency's key priorities and indicates how workforce planning will tackle strategic workforce challenges > Workforce planning framework > Change management, communication and evaluation strategies > Shared understanding of the required workforce profile for pivotal roles and job categories (e.g. positions, classifications, skills and professions)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Clear picture of the current state of the workforce > Analysis of how workforce issues impact on the delivery of business outcomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Comprehensive plans tailored to specific areas of the agency (e.g. divisional, work group) > Implementation plan and review strategy > Integration and alignment of business policies and HR strategies > Ongoing dialogue with line managers on emerging business and workforce issues

Prioritising the most-likely and highest-impact risks will help you to focus workforce planning action where it will have the most advantageous effect. Consider using a 3x3 risk analysis matrix which plots future capability gaps according to their importance and availability, or critical events according to their likelihood and impact.

	Maintain a clear focus on the business
	Establish the levels of partnership between the line and HR—involve your stakeholders early in the process
	Build flexibility into the workforce planning process to lead to more effective and tailored solutions
	Focus on critical data and emerging trends—you do not need to assess with complete certainty
	Do the most you can with the information that you have—you can't risk doing nothing
	Solve problems, don't just build a process
	A workforce plan is not an end product—planning must be ongoing

Strategies

The strategy table identifies particular areas where you may need to focus your efforts to achieve effective workforce planning outcomes—developing the organisation, developing the current workforce or developing the future workforce.

Consider your agency's current context, its future requirements and the impact of lead times—then drawing from one or more sectors of the table, identify your immediate and longer-term workforce planning strategies.

Integrated strategies to build organisational capability

Developing the organisation	Developing the current workforce	Developing the future workforce
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Organisational culture and reputation > Employer of Choice (for the best people) > Organisational structure and 'shape' > Retention strategies > Job design and classification > Employment conditions > Remuneration and workplace agreements > Workload cycles > Capability frameworks > Reward and recognition > Succession management > Diversity initiatives > Knowledge management > Operational procedures and processes > Physical environment > Organisational surveys > Links with other agencies > Whole-of-Government initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Performance management > Training needs analysis (generalist, specialist) > Learning and development programmes > Individual development plans > Leadership development > New methods of learning (e.g. E-learning) > Mentoring/coaching/shadowing > Induction and orientation > 'Job ready' training > Scholarships > Study assistance > Career planning > Accelerated pathways > Agency partnerships > Acting/secondment/redeployment arrangements > Stretch assignments > Job rotation > Workload scheduling > Flexible work options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Promotion of agency and APS image > Robust and tailored recruitment and selection techniques > Targeted sourcing > E-recruitment > Untapped markets > Engagement with educational institutions > Graduate programmes > Apprenticeships/cadetships/traineeships/internships > Base-level recruitment pathways > Enable portfolio careers > Agency partnerships > Communities of practice > Workforce reduction/realignment > Exit interviews



The selected strategies may be new or might involve re-building a current process



Integrated strategies are essential—they are often interdependent, linked and may impact on each other over time



Used in conjunction with a risk assessment tool, the table will assist in discussions with managers.



A high priority

Managing workforce planning effectively has become a high priority for agencies. A future supply of capable and effective staff is essential to deliver against Government expectations.

The MAC report *Managing and Sustaining the APS Workforce* reinforces this message, stressing the need for agencies to implement systematic workforce planning processes.

Keys to successful implementation

- ✓ Work with your managers throughout the process
- ✓ Identify short and long term strategies to address the most critical issues
- ✓ Align workforce planning to existing organisational processes (e.g. business planning, budgeting)
- ✓ Address anticipated and unforeseen challenges/difficulties
- ✓ Plan the review process
- ✓ Workforce planning is a continuous process - periodically provide updated data, progress reports and manager coaching

Other resources

This guide provides a range of decision-making tools to support workforce planning efforts and contribute to wider organisational performance. It is further supported by the Thinking About Planning checklist available on the APSC website and the APSED Internet Interface (APSEDII), which enables agencies to extract benchmark data for similar-sized agencies.

Get it Right—A Recruitment Kit for Managers, the Managing Succession within the APS information guide, the Integrated Leadership System and the Human Resources Capability Model also focus on workforce capability development.