



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WESTERN AUSTRALIA
Achieving International Excellence

Human Resources Management Plan 2009

**Management and Quality Assurance in Human Resources
at the University of Western Australia**

Document Status:

Draft

Ready for Review

Final

Document control:

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File Ref:

Document approval:

Name:

Position:

Date:

Name:

Position:

Date:

Modification history:

Version	Author(s)	Description	Date completed	Provided To
0.1	Rod Dewsbury	Initial draft	29 th April 2009	
0.2	Bob Farrelly	Final	30 th April 2009	
0.3				

Table of Contents

1	PURPOSE	4
1.1	THE ROLE OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AT UWA.....	4
2	BACKGROUND	4
2.1	CONTEXT OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	4
2.2	LINKS OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN AND THE OPERATIONAL PRIORITIES PLAN 5	5
2.3	THE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR HUMAN RESOURCES	6
2.4	POLICY FRAMEWORK.....	9
2.5	FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS	11
3	CURRENT ISSUES	12
3.1	STRATEGIC STAFFING ISSUES	12
3.2	IMPLEMENTING PRIORITIES.....	13
3.3	HUMAN RESOURCES INITIATIVES.....	14
	APPENDICES	15
APPENDIX 1	LEGISLATION RELEVANT TO HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT	15
APPENDIX 2	OPP STRATEGIES AND HR INITIATIVES ARISING FROM THE STRATEGIC STAFFING ISSUES	16

1 PURPOSE

1.1 *The role of Human resource management at UWA*

The mission of the University is:

To advance, transmit and sustain knowledge and understanding through the conduct of teaching, research and scholarship at the highest international standards, for the benefit of the Western Australian, Australian and international communities.

Human resource management in the University is a responsibility at all levels of the organisation and within the province of all staff with supervisory responsibilities. In this they are supported by a centrally located group of professional human resource specialists.

Effective human resource management contributes to the University's mission primarily through the University's key objective "to attract, develop and retain the highest quality staff."

In their conduct of human resource management activities supervisors should be guided by four principles:

Quality	To work against clear measurable standards of practice.
People Focus	To work with people in a way that is collegial, flexible and responsive to need.
Equity	To apply principles of natural justice, fairness and merit to all human resource issues.
Accountability	To work to clear purposes and defined outcomes within identified resource parameters.

These principles operate within the context of the University's core values.

- academic freedom
- excellence
- adaptability and innovation
- intellectual integrity
- ethical standards
- evaluation
- decision-making and accountability
- educational principles

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 *Context of Human Resource Management*

In universities the quality of staff is central to achievement of mission. In this context a focus on quality improvement strategies in human resource management as a means to obtain greater productivity from staff, is central.

The University has taken a strategic approach to human resource management to develop the high performance culture necessary to achieve its objectives. This has required an integration of organisational objectives with individual expectations, and human resource policies and practices with the University's culture, structure and strategic directions.

In so doing the University has been influenced by:

External Environment: The external environment is increasingly one of uncertainty and complexity. In particular, the human resources policy environment has been made more complex by the following developments:

- ❑ an increasingly competitive higher education environment including in the academic labour market;
- ❑ continuing financial constraints resulting from long term reduction of government funding in real terms and medium term reduction in investment income as a consequence of the Global Financial Crisis;
- ❑ increased requirements for accountability; and
- ❑ the impact of technology.

These factors emphasise the need to build in flexibility and responsiveness to the policy framework. Enterprise bargaining has been used and will continue to be used as an important tool to achieve this.

Strategic Directions: The University has determined that it will focus on maintaining its place as a high quality, internationally competitive institution, pursuing a growth strategy with continuous quality improvement. Human resource policy within the University reflects this orientation through human resource strategies directed towards creation of a high performance culture, extension of flexible employment arrangements, and ongoing leadership and skill development.

Responsiveness and flexibility within the University has been assisted by devolution of authority and responsibility for human resource management to local levels where possible.

UWA Culture and Decision-Making Processes: Human resource policies and processes are intended to support an innovative and collegial culture in the University. There is, however, a continuing need for some formal administrative arrangements in order to respond to external accountability requirements under legislation such as the Occupational Safety and Health Act, Equal Opportunity Act, Industrial Relations Act, the Taxation Act and the Freedom of Information Act.¹ The human resource policy framework acknowledges the potential for these demands to occasionally conflict with collegial traditions. The ongoing challenge is to ensure that the framework is sufficiently flexible and transparent to cater for this yet sufficiently robust to ensure that the University is fully accountable to the public under existing legislative parameters.

2.2 *Links of Human Resource Management to the Strategic Plan and The Operational Priorities Plan*

To the extent that quality staff are central to the achievement of the University's goals, the human resources function is a central activity for all managers and supervisors. The Human Resources Division acts as a partner to progress the teaching, research and community

¹ For a comprehensive list of relevant legislation see Attachment 1.

activities of the University. Increasingly, this is being reflected in a consultancy and advisory role for the Human Resources Division rather than a direct service provision role.

As all of the University's primary goals are achieved through the efforts of people they, and their associated objectives and strategies, are all important to human resource management within the institution.

It is, however, the priority objective of the University that is central the human resource management role for all staff with leadership and management responsibility is linked to the following operational objective in the Operational Priorities Plan:

To attract, develop and retain the highest quality staff.

Performance Management

The University stresses the need for all staff to take responsibility for their learning and development needs, and for their managers to encourage and support them in doing so. Staff in leadership roles also have responsibility for managing high and low performers. The University's performance management system links the Professional Development Review (PDR) and Performance Appraisal (PA) to the University's OPP strategies, through the various local business plans. The PDR and PA are generally completed between the staff member and their direct supervisor. Human Resources supports the performance management system by providing training and advice on the process to staff and on giving effective performance feedback to supervisors.

2.3 The Management Framework for Human Resources

2.3.1 Structural Arrangements

University Wide

The intended outcome of effective human resource management in the University is the development of a high performance culture that, at the same time, emphasises accountability for results. The Executive shares responsibility for developing this culture with all staff with management roles. The operational requirements assume that day to day management of staff is devolved to faculties, schools and divisions where Deans, Heads of School, and School Managers, are responsible for the management of staff. Deans, Heads of School and supervisory staff operate within a clear legislative and policy/procedures framework with central quality assurance processes through performance management. The Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor has responsibility for all staffing issues across the University and is assisted in undertaking this responsibility by the Human Resources Division. Faculties and Schools are also able to access advice and information from centrally located professional staff in the Human Resources Division.

The objective is for staff to have rewarding and meaningful work and are committed to the University, where they are able to develop and achieve their potential in an environment where they feel they are well managed.

Role of the Human Resources Division

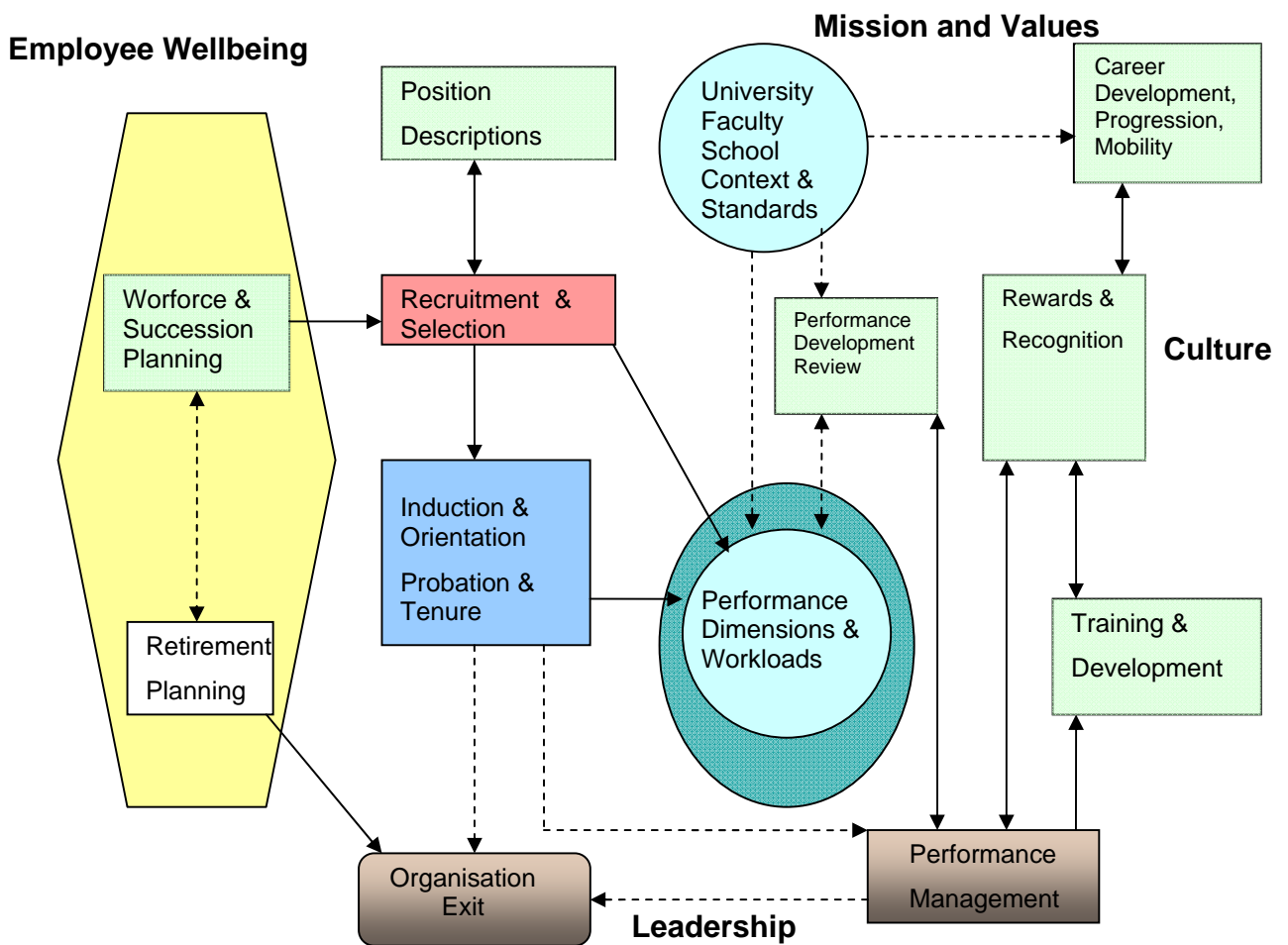
It is the role of the Human Resources Division to:

Contribute to the development of the University's mission through the development and integration of best practice human resource principles and policies to enhance individual and organisational effectiveness.

Human Resources staff offer a professional service and support to the management of the University in accordance with three key strategies; service provision and system management, policy and planning, and quality assurance. Human resource management activities are located and performed centrally only where there is added value to doing so. For example payroll and industrial representation require specialist knowledge and skills. To locate these activities in faculties would detract from the research and teaching roles of those areas. On the other hand, it is most appropriate for selection and performance processes to be a local responsibility conducted in accordance with University-wide guidelines that are part of the quality assurance strategy. Also as part of the quality assurance framework the Human Resources Division prepares reports to government instrumentalities, such as the Equal Opportunity Commission, on behalf of the University as a whole.

The cycle of Human Resources activity throughout the University is expressed below.

Figure 1: Human Resources Cycle



The Role of Committees

The following committees are important to achieving the human resource objectives of the University:

Senior Management

The senior management of the University is responsible for all significant management policy decisions, including in the area of human resources, as delegated from Senate. In recent years most significant changes affecting the management of staff have arisen from the enterprise bargaining process. Recommendations arising from enterprise bargaining are generally debated by the Executive and/or SMG prior to seeking feedback from the broader University community.

Promotions Committee

Through its performance management role in determining standards for promotion and tenure, and assessing individual claims against these standards, the Promotions Committee is part of a framework in which University-wide standards are applied at key career points as part of a quality assurance process for staff management.

Equity and Diversity Committee

The Equity and Diversity Committee ensures that equity considerations, particularly those related to staff, are incorporated into University policies and programmes.

University Safety Committee

The role of the University Safety Committee is to ensure that all areas of the University comply with Occupational Safety and Health legislation so as to minimise financial and personal liabilities to the institution. In so doing it acknowledges that the provision of a safe and healthy work environment for employees, students, contractors and visitors is not just a moral and legal responsibility but also a prerequisite for it to achieve its primary mission of conducting teaching, research and scholarship at the highest international standards.

Leadership Development for Women Planning Group

The Group's goal is to improve the access of women to career development opportunities in the University. It supports a central tenet of human resource management that is to optimise the productive potential of all staff members.

In addition there are ongoing Enterprise Bargaining meetings with unions chaired by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

2.3.2 External Constraints

Human resource management, whether conducted centrally or devolved to managers and supervisors in faculties, schools and divisions, is constrained by a wide range of legislative and policy parameters. The University's [Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct](#) provides a guide to all staff on a range of ethical issues that may confront them in their day-to-day work, while guidance specifically for staff with supervisory responsibilities can be found in the publication [Managing and Supervising Staff](#).

The sections 'Working with people' and 'Planning and organisation' in particular cover the key aspects of human resource management for non-specialist human resource staff. Items discussed include:

- (1) Working with people
 - providing leadership (goal setting, team building, morale, role clarification, workload allocation)

-
- ❑ recruitment and induction (selection and appointment, induction of new staff)
 - ❑ staff development
 - ❑ performance feedback to staff (staff assessment, formal review, unsatisfactory performance)
 - ❑ equity and equal opportunity
 - ❑ workplace relationships (positive working environment, personal welfare, grievance and dispute management, liaison, unions)
 - ❑ workplace safety and health (occupational safety and health, hazard management, safe work practices, technology, accommodation, security, emergency procedures)
 - ❑ workers' compensation and rehabilitation
 - ❑ insurance

(2) Planning and organisation

- ❑ being strategic (planning, policy development, managing change)
- ❑ being organised (goal setting, project management, delegation, evaluation and review)
- ❑ being efficient (adhering to industrial requirements, leave management, meeting with staff, managing records, acting arrangements)
- ❑ managing the financial resources (setting priorities, managing and reporting)

2.3.4 Lines of Responsibility, Authority and Accountability

Overall responsibility for the University's human resources has been delegated from Senate to the Vice-Chancellor. Within a clear legislative and policy framework, most operational aspects are then further delegated to Deans, Heads of School and supervisory staff within faculties, schools and divisions. Enterprise bargaining negotiations are conducted by the Vice-Chancellery on behalf of Senate supported by the Human Resources Division.

The Human Resources Division, which is part of the Executive Director (Finance and Resources)'s area of responsibility and accountability, is available to offer information, advice and support to supervisors in undertaking their staff management responsibilities. Whilst the Human Resources Division administratively reports to the Executive Director (Finance and Resources), operationally it works to the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor who has responsibility for staffing.

2.4 Policy Framework

2.4.1 Principles

Human resource activities at a central level are a combination of strategic advice and support, maintenance functions (eg payroll, dispute resolution, workers' compensation, superannuation, insurance) as well as development functions (eg staff development, enterprise bargaining, policy development). They are undertaken in partnership with staff management at a local level. The effective conduct of human resource management activities is a determinant of the success of the University's vision as noted below.

In the 21st Century The University of Western Australia will be recognised internationally as an excellent, research-intensive university and a leading intellectual and creative resource to the communities it services.

It will provide a broad and balance coverage of disciplines in the arts, sciences, and the professions at internationally-recognised standards. It will be characterised by a strong research and postgraduate emphasis across the full range of disciplines and it will be noted for concentrations of particular research excellence in selected areas of strength, opportunity and importance.

The University's research and postgraduate strength will be linked to and sustained by a high quality undergraduate program in which teaching and learning takes place in an atmosphere of research and scholarship. The University will foster an international focus for all its activities and standards as an integral part of its overriding commitment to excellence and high quality. It will be valued above all, for its enduring commitment to improving society through learning and discovery.

2.4.2 Policies and Procedures

Human Resource policies and procedures and other supporting documentation are available on the University's website at <http://www.universypolicies.uwa.edu.au/>. They are updated regularly.

2.4.3 Evaluation, Monitoring and Review

Human resource management in the University is under scrutiny through a number of quality assurance processes.

Review and Evaluation. Review and evaluation are central to quality assurance in human resource management. The Human Resource Division itself was reviewed in 2007 as part of the University's regular cycle of reviews of schools, other academic units and administrative divisions. Human Resources also has a practice of regularly reviewing and evaluating all major aspects of its work, including Organisational and Staff Development programmes such as Leadership Development for Women and the On Track Academic Development Programme, and the Professional Development Review. The University is also involved in benchmarking activities to ensure remuneration policies and practices reflect the contemporary environment and to ensure both quality and effectiveness of service delivery.

Enterprise Bargaining. Outcomes important to the University are placed on the agenda for enterprise bargaining. There is a strategic approach to enterprise bargaining based on four areas:

- supporting high performance teaching and research;
- improving University efficiency and effectiveness;
- providing a work environment conducive to quality output; and
- reviewing conditions of employment to ensure fairness, equity and flexibility.

The current agreements will run until December 2009.

Working Life Survey. Organisational climate surveys have been undertaken triennially since 1997. Information arising from the survey has been used in determining the University's priorities for enterprise bargaining in addition to identifying areas of strength in the University's management of its human resources or alternatively, issues of concern. A small number of questions are also replicated each survey to track progress against OPP key performance indicators. In 2009 the University is using 'The Voice Project' which operates from Macquarie University, to conduct the survey. This will provide the additional benefit of benchmarking employee attitudes against other Go8 and Australian universities.

Complaints Management. In central service areas such as equity, industrial relations, and payroll, complaints and errors are monitored regularly and procedures modified where appropriate.

Reporting. Human resources outcomes across the University are incorporated into the University's Annual Report. The Human Resources Division also produces an annual report that identifies completed tasks against priorities. A number of task areas within human resources also prepare a range of annual reports.

Priority Setting. Human resource management priorities arise largely from the University's Operational Priorities Plan (OPP) and discussions by the senior management of the University on the strategic plan and needs arising from faculties and divisions. Other priorities may arise from:

- recommendations of reviews which occur from time to time (eg Better Supporting Research Staff);
- legislative changes (eg *Fair Work Act 2009*);
- proposals developed internally by the Human Resources Division; and
- Feedback.

Many of these priorities are then incorporated into enterprise bargaining negotiations with the expectation that they become included in the next agreement. Other priorities will be addressed through policy development.

2.5 Funding Arrangements

Almost 55% of the University's annual revenue (\$362m of a total \$670.6m in 2008) is directed towards the employment costs of staff which include salaries, allowances, superannuation, and leave (eg recreational, long service, sick, study). These funds are devolved to operating units.

The Human Resources Division operates a one-line budget that includes funding from the University's operating grant, a contribution from the research funds (GSRC) and a contribution from overseas student revenue. In addition there are occasional special projects such as the Working Life Survey funded separately from central funds. Human Resources has also been successful in attracting external funding for various strategic initiatives, notably \$365,000 from 2007 to 2009 under the Commonwealth Government Workplace Productivity Programme.

3 CURRENT ISSUES

3.1 *Strategic Staffing Issues*

The strategic staffing issues facing the University are detailed in the document Strategic Human Resources Update 2009. In Summary, these key strategic issues are:

- Recruiting and Retaining High Quality Staff
- Employment Flexibility
- Creating a high performance culture
- Developing leadership
- Continual learning
- Creating an equitable and diverse workplace
- Creating a safe and supportive workplace culture

These will remain the strategic staffing issues facing the University for some years, however the human resource strategies which are pursued to achieve the University's goals will be influenced by the changing environment in which the University operates. The most significant factors shaping this environment over the next few years are expected to be the:

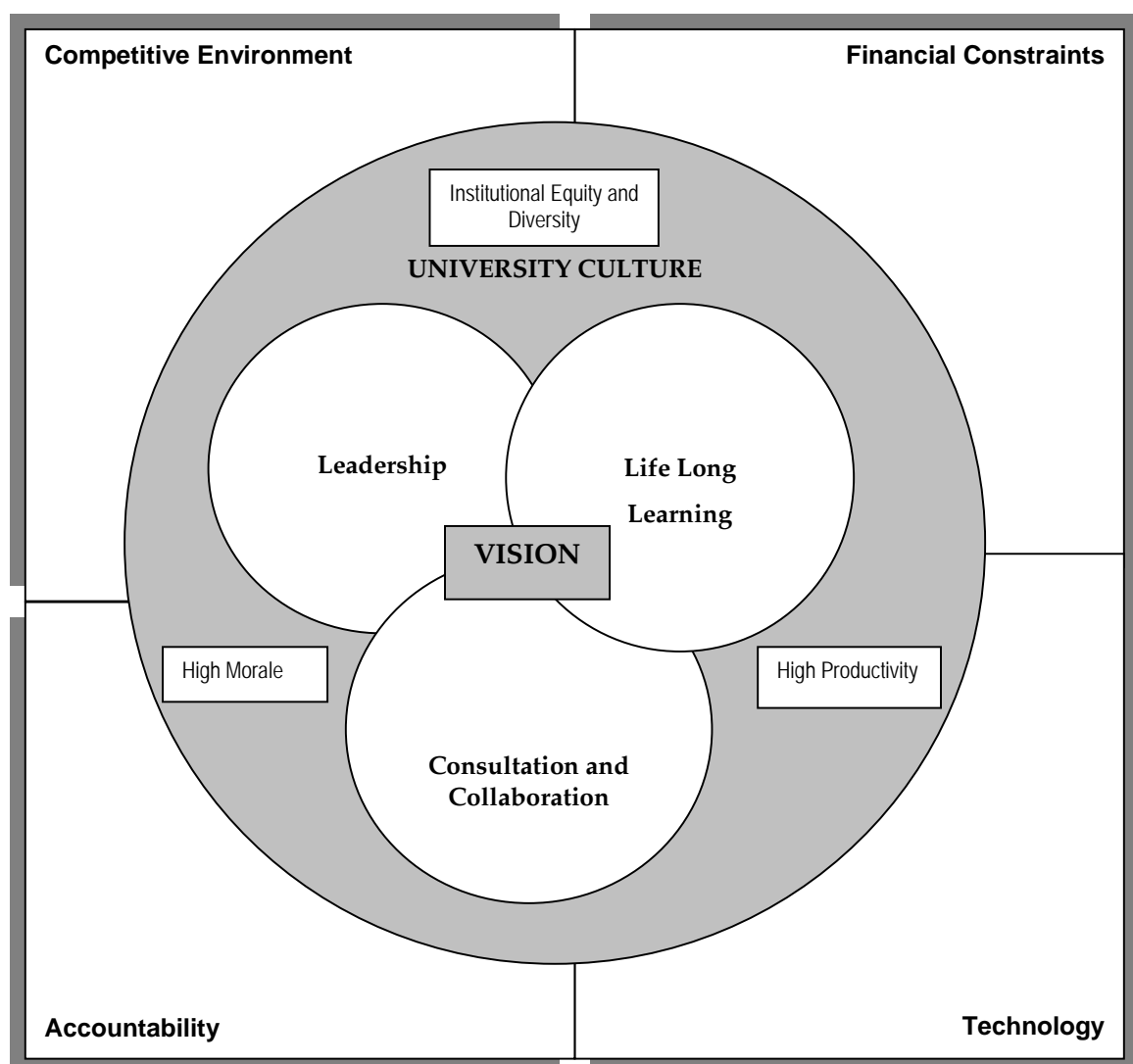
- Global Financial Crisis (GFC);
- Bradley Report - Review of Australian Higher Education;
- Cutler Report - Review of Australia's National Innovation System; and
- New Course Structures: The UWA Future Framework.

Their influence, and the interplay of their effects with one another, will unfold over the next several years.

3.2 Implementing Priorities

Human resource planning in the University is delegated to the Vice-Chancellor from Senate and operationalised through the Operational Priorities Plan.

The philosophic basis of human resource priorities within the University is encapsulated within a complex framework where a range of external challenges – a competitive environment, financial constraints, new technologies and increased requirements for accountability, meet our unique University culture. Within this framework effective human resource management requires the creation of processes that facilitate ongoing learning (creating a learning organisation²), improved leadership capacity and consultation and collaboration with staff. Such processes are central to the achievement of our intended outcomes, cultural change that enhances institutional equity and diversity, high morale and high productivity. This framework is presented diagrammatically below.



² The term 'learning organisation' was first used by Peter Senge ([The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization](#), Random House Australia, 1990). 'Learning organisations' are "organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together". (p 3)

3.3 *Human resources Initiatives*

There are a number of key strategic activities being pursued by Human Resources, arising from both the University's OPP and as a result of new and emerging issues. These are summarised in Appendix 2.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Legislation Relevant to Human Resources Management

Relevant Acts

There are a number of Commonwealth and State Acts relevant to members of this University. While the University has policies, guidelines, awards and agreements that reflect this legislation, such Acts take precedence over any internal policies or practices. Relevant examples of the major legislation are:

State Legislation

- Corruption and Crime Commission Act
- Criminal Law Amendment Act
- Disability Services Act
- Equal Opportunity Act
- Financial Management Act
- Freedom of Information Act
- Gender Reassignment Act
- Industrial Relations Act
- Industrial Training Act
- Lesbian and Gay Law Reform Act
- Occupational Safety and Health Act
- Public Interest Disclosure Act
- The University of Western Australia Act
- Worker's Compensation and Rehabilitation Act

Commonwealth Legislation

- Age Discrimination Act
- Copyright Act
- Disability Discrimination Act
- Disability Standards for Education Act
- Equal Opportunity for Women in the Workplace Act
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Act
- Privacy Act
- Racial Discrimination Act
- Sex Discrimination Act
- Superannuation Acts (various)
- Taxation Acts (various)
- Telecommunications Acts (various)
- Workplace Relations Act

This list of legislation is current as of January 2009. For a full listing of major statutes affecting the University, see [Major Statutes Affecting the University](#)

Appendix 2 OPP strategies and HR initiatives arising from the Strategic Staffing Issues

Note that the OPP implementation strategies often address more than one strategic staffing issue. Similarly, while particular OPP and other strategies pursued by Human Resources may be primarily derived from one OPP implementation strategy, they commonly further more than one goal. For instance, the promotion of the UWA Life Balance strategy not only furthers the goals of a safe and supportive workplace but also those of developing leadership and management capacity and creating a performance culture.

Strategic Staffing Issue	OPP Implementation Strategies	OPP strategies	timeframe	Other Priority Strategies and emerging issues	timeframe
Recruiting and Retaining High Quality Staff	Improve search, selection, appointment and retention policies and processes	Development of E-Recruitment and E-Promotion	2009 on	Improving probation policy and processes	2009 on
		Improve induction and development opportunities for early-career staff through development and delivery of programmes for orientation and induction		Improving selection policy and processes	2008 ongoing
		Establish workforce and succession planning, including retirement planning, at all levels of the University	2009 on		
		Negotiate collective agreements	2009 on		
		Continued development of HR IT systems to support workforce planning	2008 ongoing		
		Review and update HR policies to support recruitment and retention of highest quality staff	2008 ongoing		
		Review implementation of Hay classification tool and PD Builder	2009 on		

Strategic Staffing Issue	OPP Implementation Strategies	OPP strategies	timeframe	Other Priority Strategies and emerging issues	timeframe
Accounting for performance	Develop leadership and management capacity throughout the University	Support for the continuing implementation of the Leadership Framework	2008 ongoing	Addressing current financial constraint through development of policy and processes and to assist business units	2009 on
		Conduct Working Life Survey or equivalent	2009	Building mentorship capacity across the University	2010 on
Continual learning	Create a high performance culture	Change management - development of Organisational Change resource kit and facilitation of reviews, planning sessions and development programme 'managing schools out of financial difficulty'	2009 on		
		Improved performance management process - introduce and embed new PDR and performance appraisal process	2008 ongoing	Support Implementation of the Course Structures Review (Futures Framework)	2009 on
		Support the PDR process through provision of development opportunities	2008 ongoing	Assisting in the development and implementation of researcher development and Teaching Quality Indicators	2009 on
		Go8 Future Research Leaders programme implementation	2009	Using policy and enterprise bargaining to facilitate organisational and cultural change	2009 on
		Establish and support research leader network	2010		
		Develop online Academic Portfolio	2010	Develop Professional Development Review (PDR) for commencing staff	2009 on
		Co-implement workplace harassment and bullying strategy	2009		
Employment Flexibility		Implementation of Academic Career Structure	2010?	Development and introduction of Performance Appraisal review	2009 on
		Implement and refine Graduate Development Programme	2011 on	Assisting in the development of standards for all staff	2009 on

Strategic Staffing Issue	OPP Implementation Strategies	OPP strategies	timeframe	Other Priority Strategies and emerging issues	timeframe
Creating an equitable and diverse workplace		Implement recommendations of the "Better Supporting Research Staff" review Implement revised mobility processes (exchanges/secondments)	2008 ongoing	Implementation of 'Ongoing Contingent' status of researchers Implementation of On Track, Early Career Researcher programmes	2009 on 2009 on
	Create an equitable and diverse work environment	Provision of consultancy and direct services to support wider understanding of equity and diversity issues Develop and maintain organisational development strategies such as ALLY programme, Leadership Development for Women programme and related Promote the Indigenous Employment Strategy	2008 ongoing 2008 ongoing 2009 on	Gender Pay Equity – Equity Index paper Gender Pay Equity – review of discretionary allowances Assisting and embedding equity and cultural diversity into all aspects of the University Promote Universal Design for Instruction (UDI) in the context of the Course Structures Review	2009 2009 2009 on 2009 on
Creating a safe and supportive workplace culture	Encourage a safe and supportive workplace	Develop and promote the UWA Life Balance strategy Implement a holistic health and wellness framework at a personal and organisational level Implement the UWA Disability Access and Inclusion Action Plan Development of Online incident and injury reporting, investigation and workers' compensation management (Alesco OHS module)	2008 ongoing 2009 on 2009 on 2009		

Strategic Staffing Issue	OPP Implementation Strategies	OPP strategies	timeframe	Other Priority Strategies and emerging issues	timeframe
		<p>Development of online general safety induction for all new staff</p> <p>Implement online general and chemical risk assessment program</p> <p>Hazardous substances management - ChemAlert enhancements</p> <p>Work towards the University becoming a smoke free campus</p>	<p>2009</p> <p>2009</p> <p>2009</p> <p>2010 on</p>		