Professional Development and Performance Planning Policy

Section 1 - Summary

(1) The Professional Development and Performance Planning Policy encourages and supports staff to actively pursue their professional and career development as an integral element of their employment with Victoria University (VU). The University acknowledges that continuing professional development and performance planning contributes to delivering VU's Strategic Plan, personal job satisfaction, workplace productivity, reward and recognition.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to all fixed-term and continuing staff of the University.

(3) This Policy does not apply to:

a. casual employees except for Part E as stated
b. non-employee workers (eg contractors, consultants and volunteers)
c. students; and,
d. the Probation Procedure does not apply to executive and senior staff contracts.

(4) Areas this Policy covers include:

a. Performance Planning & Review (VU Develop)
b. Professional Development
c. Probation
d. Induction
e. Secondments

Section 3 - Policy Statement

Part A - Principles

(5) Aligned to VU Strategic Plan goals and priorities, VU will develop and implement a range of strategies and programs to enhance and build the capacity, skills and professionalism of its staff to enable them to contribute effectively to VU's strategic goals. VU is committed to providing staff (Professionals, Academics, Researchers and Educators) with:

a. The opportunity to develop a performance and development plan and participate in career development activities that extend and enhance their capabilities and capacity for advancement within the University.
b. Equity of access to professional development opportunities.
c. The opportunity to develop capabilities and skills that contribute to organisational, Portfolio and Department

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goals.

(6) The principles that underpin this Policy at the University comprise:

a. Creating equal opportunities for all staff to learn in a culturally safe and responsible environment, enabling growth and career progression.
b. Applying the principle of merit, including career interruption, to determine equity of access to professional development programs, resources and support.
c. Undertake an intersectional approach to enhance Progressive Inclusivity at VU not limited to women, people of other marginalised genders, First Nations people, staff/people with disabilities, people from non-western backgrounds, people identifying as LGBTIQA and LGBTQIA+ people. This includes promoting participation, professional development and leadership programs, ensuring that our physical and digital environments are accessible, inclusive and safe. The University's full commitment is established in the Staff Disability and Accessibility Policy and Staff Disability and Accessibility Procedure. To discuss any required accessibility or adjustments please contact People & Culture by submitting a service request via VU People First.
d. Recognising that responsibility for a staff member's annual VU Develop plan is shared between staff and supervisors for the planning and undertaking of professional development relevant to their roles and responsibilities.
e. Accountability with transparent documentation of a staff member's progress towards achieving goals and the opportunity to develop capabilities and skills that align and contribute to organisational, department and team goals.
f. Continuous improvement and evaluation of learning and development, ensuring the provision of learning and development meets the core requirements of VU's and staff roles and responsibilities and complies with statutory obligations and other VU policies.

Part B - Performance Planning and Review

(7) Victoria University (VU) plans for, supports and values high performance by all its staff.

(8) Participation in the VU Develop process is mandatory for all ongoing and fixed term staff, irrespective of time fraction and/or length of contract.

(9) Teaching Focused Academics seeking to transition to a Teaching and Research Academic role must have an approved VU Develop plan and meet the plan's performance, behaviour, and development objectives in alignment with the relevant provisions of the Enterprise Agreement.

(10) Individual performance planning is tied to the VU strategic plan, and operational goals and plans, and is undertaken via the VU Develop process. The process is based on an annual planning and review cycle and aligns to VU learning and development frameworks.

(11) The VU Develop process provides a structured opportunity for staff to plan for and reflect on individual goals and professional development. The process links closely to career planning and development, promotion, probation, succession planning and is one of the mechanisms for identifying and addressing unsatisfactory performance.

(12) Staff members who are not performing at the required level will be provided with guidance, support and professional development opportunities to improve their performance. Refer to the Professional Development and Performance Planning Procedure for more information.

(13) Staff members on probation will have a separate probation plan via VU Develop. Once probation is complete and the role is confirmed, a VU Develop plan will be launched. Refer to the Professional Development and Performance Planning - Probation Procedure for more information.

(14) If a staff member is dissatisfied with any aspect of the VU Develop process and is unable to resolve matters through discussion with their supervisor, they may proceed to use the process specified in the Complaints Policy and Complaints Procedure (Staff).

Part C - Professional Development

(15) VU aims to foster a culture of continuous learning and is committed to providing opportunities for professional development, ensuring all staff have the opportunity to enhance their skills and stay current with industry trends and align to VU learning and development frameworks. Staff are responsible for actively engaging in these opportunities to improve work practices and advance their careers.

(16) VU will provide professional development opportunities and programs where areas of under representation are identified to encourage and support staff in their learning and career development. Examples include where professional development opportunities are required to support First Nation staff and meet VU's commitments under relevant policies and legislation. VU will ensure women and men are represented within programs and Career Interruption considered.

(17) Staff are expected to discuss their professional development activities with their supervisor and identify opportunities aligned to their VU Develop plan. Staff and their supervisors should consider a range of professional development activities to enhance organisational and individual development and capabilities.

(18) Professional development activities will be fit for purpose and may include:

a. both formal and informal experienced-based training;
b. internal or external development activities such as short courses of study;
c. attending seminars, conferences, forums and networking events;
d. participating in internal or external committees or in university governance;
e. undertaking research or project work;
f. coaching and mentoring programs;
g. self-directed informal learning.

(19) A supervisor or manager may direct staff to attend training where there is an identified skill gap or where particular training is a requirement of the staff member's role.

(20) Professional staff who undertake an approved course of study, normally taken on a part-time basis, are entitled to apply for paid study leave for the attendance at lectures and other requirements for the period of the study in accordance with the Professional Development and Performance Planning Procedure.

(21) Where specific training or continuing professional education is a requirement for maintaining a professional registration needed for the staff member's role at VU, the University will not unreasonably refuse to provide time release and funding to fulfill this requirement.

(22) VU will best endeavor to support professional development opportunities that are within budget limits. VU may, at its discretion, decline to fund professional development if:

a. it is not directly related to the employee's current or potential future role;
b. it does not provide any discernible value or business benefit for the University; and/or,
c. it would involve exceeding the professional development budget of the relevant business unit or area.

(23) Staff members who undertake approved units and courses of study provided by the University and are related to their work will be entitled to a 25% subsidy on the fees on satisfactory completion of that unit or course. Refer to

the Professional Development and Performance Planning Procedure for more information.

Part D - Probation

(24) Participation in the probationary process is critical to the successful development of a career in the University, and is the beginning of the performance planning cycle.

(25) A probationary period will apply to:

a. all newly commencing staff with ongoing appointments; and,
b. fixed-term appointments of more than six months in length.

(26) Maximum probation periods are established in the Enterprise Agreement or contract. Refer to the Professional Development and Performance Planning - Probation Procedure for more information.

Part E - Induction

General Induction

(27) All fixed-term and continuing staff must undergo an induction process on commencement at VU which includes but not limited to the following:

a. Completing all VU mandatory compliance training;
b. Completing all mandatory role specific training;
c. Attending a face-to-face induction session;
d. Learning about VU policies and procedures;
e. Completing a probation plan;
f. Familiarisation with their organisational unit's specific plan the University's strategic plan and goals;
g. Discussion of the role's requirements.

(28) Staff delivering and teaching into VU Block model have specific induction and professional development requirements as per the Learning and Teaching Quality and Standards - Professional Development of Academic Staff Procedure.

(29) The Supervisor of a casual or sessional employee will identify what induction training is mandatory, and ensure that the individual has access to the training system as well as allocated paid time to complete mandatory units.

Part F - Secondments

(30) VU recognises the potential for secondments to contribute to the professional enrichment and career development of its staff, and to benefit the University as a whole.

(31) There are four types of secondments available, as detailed in the Professional Development and Performance Planning Procedure. They are external secondment (outgoing), external secondment (incoming), internal secondment, job exchange.

(32) Staff must have satisfactorily completed their probation period prior to being eligible to apply for secondment, or where probation does not apply, have been working in their current position for a minimum period of 12 months, unless otherwise negotiated.

(33) The opportunity for a secondment or exchange or other forms of career development should form part of the employee's VU Develop Plan.

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Section 4 - Procedures

(34) Professional Development and Performance Planning Procedure

(35) Professional Development and Performance Planning - Probation Procedure

Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(36) Higher Education Standards Framework: Standard 3.2 Staffing.

(37) Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2025: Standard 3.1 VET Workforce Management; 4.2 Leadership and Accountability; 4.4 Continuous Improvement.

Section 6 - Definitions

(38) Enterprise Agreement – The Enterprise Agreement (EA) means the Victoria University Enterprise Agreement 2025 or Victoria University Vocational Teacher Enterprise Agreement 2025 as applicable to the staff member in accordance with their contract of employment.

(39) External Secondment (Outgoing): where a VU staff member is the successful applicant for a fixed term position with an external organisation or another organisation requests the University's services, which results in a staff member working for the external organisation for a defined period of time while remaining an employee of VU.

(40) External Secondment (Incoming): where a staff member from an external organisation is seconded to work at the University for a fixed term period.

(41) Professional Development: The provision of a range of learning and development opportunities and activities to develop capabilities of staff in relation to their role and responsibilities.

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Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	11th February 2025
Review Date	11th February 2028
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	10th February 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
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