

Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure

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Purpose

This Policy and Procedure describes the approach to the recruitment, management and support of academic and non-academic staff at Australia Institute of Future Education (AIFE).

Scope

This Policy applies to:

- all staff (full-time, part-time, casual or contract), and
- members of AIFE's Governing Bodies.

Policy

Principles

A central tenet of AIFE's operating model (as reflected in the AIFE Strategic Plan Priority 2) is to secure and retain pre-eminent academic staff to deliver its courses. To achieve this strategic priority, AIFE's approach to staff recruitment, management and support are to be guided by the following principles:

- AIFE will manage its staff in pursuit of AIFE's objectives for scholarly, academic and operational excellence
- Staff are to be appointed based on merit
- Efforts will be made to attract applicants from diverse cultural backgrounds and to seek an appropriate gender balance
- Academic staff are appropriately qualified and experienced in accordance with the requirements of the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021* and the responsibilities of their roles
- At induction, new staff will be made aware of AIFE's policies and legislative and regulatory obligations, including under the *Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011* and the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*
- AIFE will arrange seminars / workshops / training sessions, as required, to support staff knowledge and understanding of AIFE's policies, and the legislative and regulatory framework under which AIFE operates
- All staff will have equitable access to benefits and services
- All staff have professional development opportunities appropriate to their role
- Staff performance is monitored and their feedback sought to enable continuous improvement
- Staff should be aware of, and behave in line with, the expectations under the *Staff Code of Conduct*. Alleged breaches will be investigated and responded to fairly, in accordance with this Policy and Procedure and relevant industrial agreements

- Staff have access to appropriate, fair and transparent grievance mechanisms.

Procedure

Process for Recruiting Ongoing Staff

Approval from the CEO must first be obtained prior to conducting a process for recruiting ongoing staff.

If this approval is granted, the position description must be checked to ensure the statement of duties are current and the selection criteria are relevant.

The following selection criteria may be included in the position description and advertisement for the recruitment of academic staff with oversight and/or teaching roles:

- Knowledge of contemporary developments in the discipline, as demonstrated by evidence of continuing scholarship, research or advances in practice
- Skills in contemporary online teaching, learning and assessment principles relevant to the discipline and the role
- Knowledge and skills in pedagogical principles and practices to facilitate and support online delivery of teaching, learning and assessment
- A qualification one Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) level above the course they are teaching into. If this is not possible, the applicant must be able to demonstrate equivalent experience, as outlined in the *Equivalence of Academic Staff Qualifications Policy*.

All ongoing positions must be advertised (e.g. in online recruitment platforms and AIFE's website) to attract a sufficient pool of the most qualified persons from which to be shortlisted and interviewed.

The recruitment process for ongoing staff is set out as follows:

Applications and shortlisting

Job applicants will be acknowledged

A Selection Panel will be established to:

- assess applicants against the selection criteria and
- prepare a shortlist of applicants to interview.

Unsuccessful candidates will be advised as soon as a shortlist of candidates has been established

Selection

Interviews with shortlisted candidates will be conducted either in person, via telephone, video conference or another online medium (e.g. Microsoft Teams or Zoom)

The Selection Panel will compile a list of interview questions based on the position description and selection criteria

As well as the interview, other forms of selecting the appropriate candidate may be considered, including seminars (for academic appointments) or skill assessment tests

The Selection Panel ranks the candidates in order of preference and identify the preferred candidate

Reference checks must be conducted on the preferred candidate, using the referees nominated by the preferred candidate

Chair of the Selection Panel prepares a report setting out the reasons how the successful candidate meets the selection criteria in the position description

Unsuccessful interviewees are to be advised of the outcome and the reasons.

If the preferred candidate holds an overseas qualification, that qualification must be assessed for equivalence to Australian qualifications by using:

- the [Country Education Profiles](#) prepared by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment, or
- the [National Academic Recognition Information Centres \(NARIC\) database](#).

Appointment The successful candidate will receive a written contract of employment which they are to sign and return to AIFE

Certified copies of highest relevant qualifications claimed by the successful candidates must be sighted and copies of sighted documents made and placed on the staff's personnel file.

Process for Recruiting Casual Staff

Approval from the CEO must also be obtained for the recruitment of casual staff to cover ad hoc and/or short- to medium-term vacancies created by temporary peak in workloads or to cover short-term staff absences.

A request for approval to engage casual staff must include:

- Justification for the engagement
- Duties, classification and period of the engagement, and
- Relevant skills, knowledge, experience and qualification required.

An open and merit-based process, as set out for the recruitment for ongoing staff, should also be followed.

Induction

Attendance at an induction program is compulsory for all new staff (ongoing or casual) and must be completed within 14 days of commencing employment with AIFE.

The purpose of the induction program is to help new staff become familiar with:

- Work health and safety requirements, including the availability of an employee assistance program, Access EAP (<https://www.accesseap.com.au/>), which staff can access for confidential discussions about personal or work-related issues
- IT systems and software used by AIFE
- AIFE's policy framework, including critical incident processes and academic integrity requirements, and
- Their professional development entitlements.

Upon completion of a induction, new staff must sign an Induction Program Declaration as proof that they have completed the induction program, which their supervisor will verify has been undertaken and which will then be placed on the staff's personal file.

Performance Planning and Review

It is mandatory for all staff to participate in the performance planning and review appropriate to their employment classification.

Each staff member will meet at least annually with their direct supervisor to discuss individual performance goals, work plans and individual professional development plans.

Annual performance reviews will involve the staff member:

- Setting performance objectives for the next 12 months that should have regard to AIFE's strategic goals, their position description and in consultation with their immediate supervisor. The performance objectives are to be accompanied by associated metrics and a development plan. For academic staff, this includes planned scholarly activities for the next 12 months
- Meeting their supervisor at the end of 12 months to:
 - Discuss their performance over the last 12 months. This is also an appropriate forum for the supervisor to provide constructive feedback gathered from a variety of sources, including student and peer feedback as applicable
 - Agree on new and adjusted objectives for the next 12 months

Supervisors will document the performance review process and are also expected to hold regular discussions with employees on their performance and ensure that performance issues are resolved as they arise, where appropriate.

Managing Underperformance

Underperformance will be managed according to the following steps:

Identify and Assess the Underlying Issue The supervisor will identify the performance issue and, where possible, its cause

	Common performance issues is outlined at Appendix 1
Meeting	<p>The supervisor meets with the staff member to discuss the issue</p> <p>The staff member will be made aware of the purpose of the meeting in advance to allow for adequate preparation. A support person can be present at the meeting, where the supervisor will clearly explain what the issue is and its impact on the business</p>
Prepare Action Plan	<p>The supervisor and the staff member will agree on an action plan, including, as appropriate, performance standard and expectations, timeframes, roles and responsibilities, and required development and support</p> <p>A date will be set for another meeting to review progress</p>
Monitor Performance	The supervisor monitors the staff member's performance and provides regular and constructive feedback
Conclude	The supervisor and staff member meet to review performance as part of formally finalising the performance management process
Escalation	The supervisor escalates the matter to the CEO if the staff member continues to underperform

Professional Development

The performance planning and review processes is the primary means of aligning staff's professional development needs with AIFE's strategic priorities.

Staff will enjoy equitable access to professional development programs and resources and support, which AIFE will provide through:

- Allocation of funding (to attend internal and/or external professional development courses and conferences). Within the AIFE Financial Model there is provision of \$1,500 per full-time equivalent academic staff for professional development purposes.
- Career development within AIFE (e.g. internal vacancies or temporary appointment to a higher classified position).

Individual professional development plans will be developed and reviewed as part of the Performance Planning and Review process, as set out in this Policy and Procedure.

Staff members, with the support of their supervisor and senior management, will actively implement their individual development plans and summarise progress and outcomes of the plan at the annual planning and review meeting.

Grievance Principles and Procedures

Principles of Grievance Management

The following principles guide AIFE's management of staff grievances:

- Grievances will be addressed sensitively, promptly and in accordance with the principles of natural justice
- All reasonable steps will be taken to respect the confidentiality of the people involved in a grievance
- All parties to a grievance will be treated with fairness and impartiality and grievances will be regarded as allegations until properly investigated and a decision made
- Appropriate records will be maintained throughout the process
- Any staff who lodge a grievance will be protected from victimisation or reprisal, and will be kept regularly informed of the progress of the matter
- All parties to a grievance will be advised of the outcome of the investigation, including any actions that are to be taken as a consequence and of their right to appeal

Grievance Management Procedures

Informal Resolution Options

A staff member with a concern about a work-related issue can speak:

- Speak directly to the person responsible for the problem and inform them that their behaviour was unfair, offensive or discriminatory, and the grounds for this
- Speak to their immediate supervisor or, if that is not appropriate, a senior manager about their grievance

Formal Grievance

If the matter remains unresolved after following one of the informal resolution options above, the staff member or supervisor should submit a formal grievance in writing to the Chief Executive Officer.

A Responsible Officer will be appointed by the Chief Executive Officer to investigate the matter.

The Responsible Officer will:

- Provide opportunities for any involved parties to make a submission and determine whether the grievance is substantiated
- Make a recommendation about the grievance, and
- Submit a report and recommendations for the Chief Executive Officer to action.

Recommendations may include:

- The appointment of an external mediator, as agreed between relevant parties, where appropriate
- Advising the staff member about their reported behaviour and the findings made as a result of the investigation

- Disciplinary action in accordance with the relevant staff employment agreement
- Some other form of appropriate action, or
- No further action.

The Chief Executive Officer may:

- Confirm the actions recommended by the Responsible Officer
- Vary the actions, or
- Set the action aside and substitute a new action.

All parties to the grievance will be notified of the outcome, including the right to appeal.

Staff may also wish to seek the assistance of the Fair Work Ombudsman throughout this process.

All records of grievances are to be maintained in accordance with the *Records Management Policy and Procedure*.

The Chief Executive Officer will submit de-identified reports of grievance investigations and outcomes to the Board of Directors with recommendations in relation to any systemic issues.

If a grievance concerns the Chief Executive Officer, the grievance should be submitted in writing to the Chair of the Board of Directors who will determine the appropriate course of action in accordance with this Policy and Procedure.

Misconduct

Where a supervisor or manager has concerns about a staff member's conduct a disciplinary interview will be conducted to provide an opportunity to discuss the issues of concern.

The staff member will have the right to be supported by a person of their choosing and will have the right to respond to the allegations of misconduct put to them. This meeting will be witnessed, confirmed in writing and acknowledged by the staff member concerned.

The warnings procedure will normally include a series of verbal, written and witnessed warnings that set out to the staff member who is being warned, the basis of the warning and the ways that the staff member can and must improve their behaviour. It must also identify what action or actions will occur if there is no improvement within the time frames set down. Such actions could include termination of employment.

Cases of serious and wilful breaches of the *Staff Code of Conduct* can result in instant dismissal.

Appeals

Internal Appeals A staff member may appeal against a decision made under this Policy and Procedure.

Appeals must be made in writing and lodged with the Chief Executive Officer within 5 working days of receiving written notification of the decision.

- ⇒ **Note:** Where the Chief Executive Officer was involved with the original decision, appeals must be submitted to the Chair of the Board of Directors.

The Chief Executive Officer / Chair will:

- Undertake whatever enquiries deemed necessary to investigate the matter, including consulting with the staff member lodging the appeal and the original decision maker.
- Confirm or vary the decision and respond in writing to the appeal within 10 working days.

All decisions made by the Chief Executive Officer / Chair in relation to appeals will be reported to the Academic Board and/or the Board of Directors, as appropriate, with due consideration of requirements for confidentiality.

External Appeals If a staff member remains dissatisfied with the outcome of their grievance or appeal they have the right to lodge an external appeal with:

- The Australian Human Rights Commission for matters relating to discrimination and breaches of human rights, or
- The Fair Work Ombudsman for matters relating to their employment contract and conditions
- The Fair Work Commission for matters relating to dismissal and bullying.

Definitions

There are no definitions in this Policy and Procedure.

Version history

Version #	Changes	Approval Body	Approval Date
1.0	New Policy	Board of Directors	05 September 2022

Additional Information

Policy Status	Approved
Policy Owner	CEO
Next Review Date	3 years from Approval Date

Related Internal Documents	Equivalence of Academic Staff Qualifications Policy Records Management Policy and Procedure Staff Code of Conduct Staff Scholarly Activity Policy and Procedure Strategic Plan
Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2022	Standards 3.2.1 to 3.2.4
Other legislative or regulatory instruments	Not applicable

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Appendix 1. Common Performance Issues

The following table is adapted from the Fair Work Ombudsman's Best Practice Guide: Managing Underperformance.¹

Issue	Possible causes	Actions
<p>Employee does not undertake work as required, showing signs of apathy and laziness</p> <p>Employee does not appear to understand job requirements or directions</p>	<p>Job content & design</p> <p>Inappropriate job fit</p> <p>Personal or external issues</p>	<p>Begin with informal performance discussion</p> <p>Be clear about the performance requirements and expected contribution of the role to AIFE</p> <p>Focus on interest in work tasks, and how they might be improved</p> <p>Explore options for opportunities in other areas of AIFE, if possible</p> <p>Refer to counselling service if personal circumstances are impacting performance</p>
<p>Employee will not follow directions or perform tasks as required</p>	<p>Failure to understand what is required</p> <p>Inability to perform tasks</p> <p>Personal issues</p>	<p>Begin performance improvement process starting with informal discussions around what is required in the position.</p> <p>Look at possible options for training and development if a skill deficit is identified</p> <p>Commence formal performance management process if no improvement forthcoming</p>
<p>Employee fails to acknowledge they are underperforming</p>	<p>Performance issues have not been adequately explained</p> <p>Process has not been adequately applied</p> <p>Employee does not accept supervisor assessments</p>	<p>Re-establish expected outcomes, use evidence of how performance has failed to meet expected standards, explain the impact of this on the success of the business</p> <p>If necessary commence formal performance management process</p>

¹ Fair Work Ombudsman, Best Practice Guide: Managing Underperformance (Link: <https://www.fairwork.gov.au/tools-and-resources/best-practice-guides/managing-underperformance>)

Issue	Possible causes	Actions
Employee does not complete work tasks to the required standard	Lacks the required skills and capabilities	<p>Identify training and development opportunities as part of performance improvement plan</p> <p>If employee fails to develop required skills, progress through performance management process to possible options such as reassignment of duties, or transfer to another area to achieve a better job fit where possible</p> <p>Review recruitment practices to ensure appropriate selection decisions are being made</p>