



ACU People Plan *2022-2025*

Message from the Vice-Chancellor

ACU understands and values the efforts of the many people who have served ACU with passion and commitment and who continue to do so. We are a unique university – one that is Catholic and public. Without favour or prejudice, we welcome people of all faiths and no faith to work and study with us.

At ACU our mission is our difference and we are committed to the pursuit of knowledge, the dignity of the human person and the common good. Our Catholic identity defines who we are, what we do and the outcomes we strive to achieve for our students and staff. People are at the centre of our mission.

As a Catholic university, stewardship is an important principle of Catholic Social Teaching. It refers to our shared duty to act as stewards in the care of the physical environment, our own bodies and the resources we are given for the common good. We are all stewards of ACU, with a duty of care to the organisation, its people, its stakeholders, its reputation and its resources.

Our first ever People Plan is a contemporary approach to strengthen and leverage the

talents of our people to make a difference in the lives of our students and our society. It will be a critical component of ACU's future strategic plan (2024 – 2033).

The People Plan focuses on areas that will help us to support students to learn, grow and lead meaningful lives; make an impact through world-leading research; and empower our community through grassroots service, volunteering and engagement.

At its heart, the plan aims to support our people to thrive, because universities are about people who make a difference.

The People Plan places value on the role our leaders play in building a vibrant, positive workplace culture and employee engagement, to achieve the

best outcomes for students. It commits us to supporting them in this endeavour. The plan also recognises the need to change systems, processes, and structures to enable our people to focus on what matters most and to support their physical and mental wellbeing at work.

Having a People Plan helps to ensure we have the right programs and tools in place to support our staff to bring their best to work and give their best to our students and communities.

At ACU we are immensely fortunate to have a committed, talented, and dedicated workforce. Through our People Plan we outline deliberate choices for what we want to do for staff, to ensure they find ACU to be a wonderful place to work and grow.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge and pay our respects to the First Peoples, the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways. We recognise their spiritual and ongoing connection to Country.

We respectfully acknowledge Elders past and present and thank them for their wisdom and guidance as we walk in their footsteps.

Introduction

“We will continue to offer our students an inclusive, ethics-based education, and we will search for solutions to local and global challenges through mission-based research. We will also support the broader community and advocate for those who are unable to advocate for themselves.”

(Strategic Plan 2020-2023)

ACU is a contemporary Catholic university founded in 1991, committed to delivering excellence in education, research and engagement. We are an international university ranked in the top two per cent of all universities and one of the world's top 10 Catholic universities.

All our endeavours are grounded in our Catholic mission, supported by our values of truth, academic excellence and service, and our principles of respect, honesty, courage and sustainability.

Launched in 2019, our Strategic Plan 2020-2023: *Impact through empathy* reflects our intent to make a positive, lasting and measurable difference to students, staff, communities and societies.

We live our mission every day in the service of our students by providing a distinctive student experience. Our teaching is primarily focused on service professions. We deliver our teaching to students in a way that we hope makes a difference in their lives and supports them as a whole person. We welcome our students as part of our very special community.

The higher education sector faces challenges and opportunities. The global pandemic disrupted the established model of

universities and their revenue streams. It catalysed the need to build increased digital learning capability and blended offerings on-campus and online. This in turn has challenged the traditional understanding of ‘vibrant’ campuses and workplaces. Similarly, the trends of continuous learning and micro-credentialing have required universities to adapt to meet changing student expectations.

More than ever, universities need to be anchored into societies through course delivery and research that is deeply engaged with industry sectors, to ensure relevance and the best possible impact for society.

We are operating in a changing employment environment. Talented people will always have career choices and meeting their needs will continue to become more complicated. This is particularly true against a backdrop of increased digitisation and changes in the employer landscape, including new and emerging personal, generational, life-stage, lifestyle and aspirational differences. We must be at the forefront in defining our unique employment offer and delivering the kinds of employee experiences that will attract and sustain ACU's workforce of the future.

Our People Plan 2022-2025

“As a Catholic university, we will strive to be a university for people, both individually and collectively. We will reflect the diversity of our communities.”

(Strategic Plan 2020-2023)

We have long understood and valued the contribution of our people and, while our future success will depend on many factors, we know that excellence in education, research and engagement is only possible because of our people.

Our People Plan is informed by the challenges and opportunities facing the higher education sector and the voices of staff on what matters to them. It sets out six inter-related pillars aligned with and in support of ACU's overall mission and strategic priorities.

It is our belief that a deliberate focus on these pillars will enable

us to fulfil our intent to make a positive, lasting and measurable difference to staff. At its heart, the People Plan aims to support staff to thrive and to bring to life the unique and distinct Catholic character of ACU.

Many key documents were reviewed in preparing this plan, including the ACU Strategic Plan (2020-2023), My Voice Staff Engagement Survey (2022), Campus Optimisation Report (Deloitte, March 2022), Workforce Profile and Management Reports (PwC, March 2022), ACU Stewardship Framework and Roadmap (March 2022), Research and

Enterprise Plan (2022-2023), Gender Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Framework (2021-2025) and ACU Capability Development Framework (August 2016).

Academic and professional leaders from all locations provided feedback and input on the People Plan through individual discussions and focus groups. They included executive committees (Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Committee, Vice-Chancellor's Executive Board, Portfolio Executive Committee), faculties (executive deans, campus deans, heads of school, faculty managers), HR executive and others.



People Plan Pillars

Our People Plan comprises six pillars, each with actionable steps:



Leadership
capability to bring
life to our mission



Professional
growth and
outstanding
careers to enable
potential



Employing the
best people for
our future success



Health, safety and wellbeing in a supportive and caring culture



Diversity and inclusion - we welcome everyone



Engaged and enabled workforce - free to focus on what matters



Leadership capability to bring life to our mission

Recognising and valuing the important role leaders play in fostering vibrant, positive workplaces, engaging staff and achieving the best outcomes for students and communities, we support leaders to perform their roles.

We're taking action to:

BUILD LEADERSHIP CAPABILITY

- Define what it means to be a leader at a Catholic university.
- Support ACU's Stewardship Framework, including stewardship as a model of service leadership.
- Review the Capability Development Framework to ensure alignment with the definition of leaders.
- Develop and implement an ACU Leadership Development Program for cohort groups, to skill and support leaders.

DEVELOP CRITICAL ROLE SUCCESSION PLANS

- Identify critical leadership roles (both academic and professional) and develop succession plans for these.

Professional growth and outstanding careers to enable potential



Supporting our staff to grow and develop is fundamental to making a positive, lasting and measurable difference to our staff and to the unique 'employee experience' we offer at ACU.

We're taking action to:

SUPPORT STAFF TO GROW AND DEVELOP

- Align the university learning and development curriculum for academic and professional staff to support future-focused skills.
- Ensure leadership skills are part of the curriculum for all staff.

FOSTER A FEEDBACK AND COACHING CULTURE

- Support supervisors to develop feedback and coaching skills.

ENABLE OUTSTANDING CAREER PATHWAYS FOR ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL STAFF

- Give visibility to opportunities and provide support for career pathways.
- Review and align policies to support career moves for personal growth and development.

INCREASE VISIBILITY AND TRANSPARENCY OF THE ACADEMIC PROMOTIONS PROCESS

- Implement the changes to the academic promotions process commencing in 2023.

Employing the best people for our future success



Our distinct Catholic character helps us to attract the ‘best’ people with the right skills and values that align with ACU and who will feel ‘at home’ at ACU. Our recruitment process and candidate experience align with best practice.

We’re taking action to:

RECRUIT THE BEST PEOPLE WITH THE RIGHT SKILLS AND VALUES ALIGNMENT AND WHO FEEL ‘AT HOME’ AT ACU

- Support hiring supervisors to develop and enhance selection skills.
- Develop sector best-practice processes and interfaces to ensure institutional competitiveness.
- Enhance the ‘candidate’s experience’ of ACU’s recruitment process.
- Support the mobilisation of ACU’s Workforce Profile through faculty recruitment.

LEVERAGE THE UNIQUE STRENGTHS OF ACU AS A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN RECRUITMENT

- Develop ACU’s employer brand to better leverage our mission and distinct Catholic character.
- Implement the Domus online program, which explains a Catholic university to candidates.

DEVELOP ACU’S NEXT ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER EMPLOYMENT PLAN

- Advance our capacity to recruit and retain Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff through the development of ACU’s next Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Employment Plan.

Health, safety, and wellbeing in a supportive and caring culture



Ensuring we have a supportive, caring culture and work practices that enhance staff health, safety and wellbeing benefits us all.

We're taking action to:

FOSTER A CULTURE AND WORK PRACTICES THAT ENHANCE STAFF HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

- Build supervisor confidence and capability to support staff health, safety and wellbeing.
- Develop a plan to support staff mental health and wellbeing.
- Expand staff-focused tools and mechanisms to support health, safety and wellbeing.



Diversity and inclusion - we welcome everyone

We will reflect the diversity of the community by promoting and supporting a diverse workforce and a culture of inclusiveness.

We're taking action to:

PROMOTE AND SUPPORT A DIVERSE WORKFORCE AND A CULTURE OF INCLUSIVENESS

- Implement ACU's workforce Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework to increase the diversity of ACU's workforce and strengthen our culture of inclusiveness.
- Build cultural competence.

Engaged and enabled workforce - free to focus on what matters



Fostering improving levels of employee engagement, while removing any barriers that may impede staff from doing what they do best.

We're taking action to:

ENHANCE STAFF COMMUNICATION AND LISTENING MECHANISMS

- Optimise ACU's approach to staff communication to support improving levels of workforce engagement.
- Consider and implement contemporary models for listening to staff.

CONSIDER THE CURRENT AND FUTURE ATTRIBUTES OF ACTIVE AND VIBRANT WORKPLACES AT ACU

- Evolve ACU's ways of working to balance staff expectations for flexibility with place-based working.

PROVIDE STAFF FEEDBACK AND HR DATA TO SUPPORT DECISIONS AND BUILD ENGAGED TEAMS

- Provide more regular and timely staff feedback data to supervisors.
- Develop a critical HR metrics 'dashboard'.
- Explore the opportunity to integrate HR data into ACU's Data Hub.

CURATE A 'FIT FOR PURPOSE' SET OF CONTEMPORARY PEOPLE POLICIES AND SUPPORTING PRACTICES

- Audit people policies for opportunities to modernise, simplify and reduce number and complexity.
- Ensure people policies and practices meet compliance and legislative requirements, eg wage trust, modern slavery.

IDENTIFY AND REMOVE BARRIERS TO GETTING WORK DONE TO FREE UP STAFF TO FOCUS ON WHAT MATTERS

- Consider HR systems and processes to improve efficiency and support 'best work', including modification or simplification of processes and systems architecture as needed.





Looking ahead

Over the next three years, ACU is committed to supporting and developing our staff – both academic and professional. Our first ever People Plan identifies six critical pillars to help us fulfil our intent to make a positive, lasting and measurable difference to staff.

ACU's strategic priorities will adapt over time and our People Plan will also be flexible and responsive to future changes around what we want to do for our people. Our commitment to execute is real – strategy without follow through is meaningless. We will build accountability through annual action planning, measurement, reflection and adaptation. We will take care to honour our unique history and the things that have served us well, while also continuing to evolve our people practices.



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