



Northern Territory Public Sector **Graduate Development Program Policy**

Version 1

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1. RATIONALE

The Northern Territory Public Sector (NTPS), like other jurisdictions, recognises the need for innovative workforce planning interventions to ensure that it has the capability and capacity to deliver the appropriate level and quality of service, now, and in the future. This is in the face of: the ageing workforce; ongoing difficulty with attracting, recruiting and retaining staff; skills shortages in the areas of health and education; and the disparity between the employment profile of the NTPS and the community it serves. A skilled and productive workforce is essential for the “economic take off” of the Northern Territory (NT).

An NTPS Graduate Development Program (GDP) is one of the workforce planning interventions the Office of the Commissioner for Public Employment (OCPE) has developed. A GDP is a best practice recruitment strategy to develop new generations of employees whose ideas, ambition and leadership potential will help shape the future of the NTPS.

A GDP has been in operation in the NTPS for some time. This program was reviewed and research was undertaken into emerging best practice. The experience of other jurisdictions and past graduates was also taken into consideration. This Policy is the result of that review and provides a broader range of options and increased flexibility for agencies to employ graduates

This policy is integral to other NTPS or Northern Territory Government (NTG) strategies that have a career development and/or equity focus. Figure 1 indicates the relationship of this program to strategies such as the “Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy 2002-2006” (IECDS), “Willing and Able - A Strategy for the Employment of People with Disabilities in the NTPS 2003-2006”, “NTG Remote Workforce Development Strategy 2003-2006” (RWDS), and, a proposed NTPS Career Development Framework.

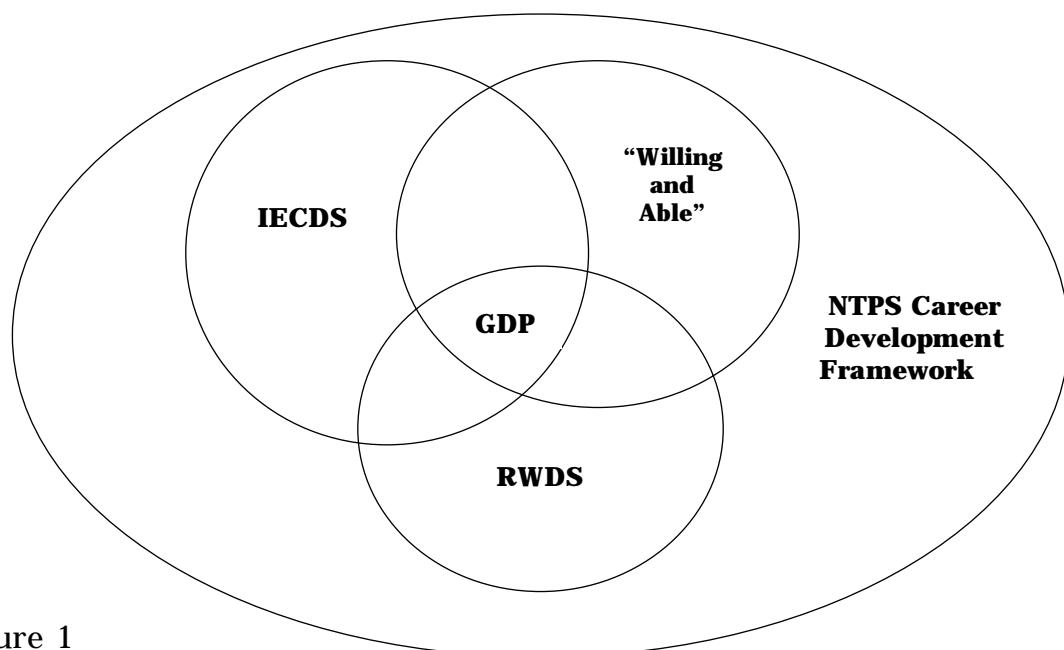


Figure 1

2. DEFINITIONS

Graduate, for the purpose of this policy, is any person who has completed a degree program at a recognised university.

3. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- establish best practice workforce planning
- develop the capability of the NTPS and increase the capacity of the NTPS to resolve current and future labour market shortages
- address the critical under representation of Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) groups in the NTPS (Indigenous people, people with disabilities, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, and women in management and non-traditional employment)¹
- recruit, develop and retain graduates and address the impending workforce shortages as a result of the ageing workforce ²
- create equity of access to employment for graduates in the regions in line with the objectives of the NTG RWDS. ³

4. SCOPE

The scope of this policy is to build on and expand the existing NTPS GDP. That is to:

- offer the NTPS GDP to people who have completed a degree program including those with some relevant industry experience
- increase the graduate intake into the NTPS
- broaden participation in the GDP to all agencies and regions ³
- increase the diversity of the NTPS staff profile so that it better reflects that of the wider community. ⁴

¹ Office of Youth Affairs, *Building a Better Future for Young Territorians*, April 2003.

² Access Economics, *Population Ageing and the Economy* Jan 2001

³ OCPE 2003, *NTG Remote Workforce Development Strategy 2003-2006*

⁴ OCPE, *Indigenous Employment and Career Development Strategy 2002-2006 Advancing Indigenous Employment – Improving Business Outcomes*, November 2002

5. POLICY ELEMENTS

(More detailed information regarding this program can be found in the “NTPS Graduate Development Program Guidelines 2004”).

5.1 Participating Agencies

All agencies are strongly encouraged to participate in the NTPS GDP either as a host employer or by sharing a graduate with another agency or agencies. Opportunities will exist for smaller agencies that have a similar skill set to another agency (or agencies) to negotiate a 3-6 month graduate rotation. Agencies will report on their level of participation in the GDP in annual reports.

All agencies represented in the regions will offer a place on the GDP or an alternative Early Careers Program (e.g. a Cadetship, or New Apprenticeship) either on a rotation basis or as a shared resource.

5.2 Eligibility Criteria

- Persons who have completed a degree program who have graduated or who are eligible to graduate (that is they have satisfactorily completed all program requirements),
- Existing employees who have completed a degree who have graduated or are eligible to graduate,
- Those from EEO groups who have completed a degree program and have graduated or are eligible to graduate (agencies are encouraged to engage persons from EEO groups to improve the diversity of their staff profile so that it better reflects that of the wider community and/or their client base).

5.3 Diversity Strategies

All agencies will have strategies in place for recruiting and supporting graduates from EEO groups.

5.4 Marketing Promotion and Recruitment

Marketing, promotion and recruitment of graduates will be centralised. This will be undertaken by the Department of Corporate and Information Services (DCIS). DCIS will maintain a database of those graduates who have expressed interest or who have applied for the GDP.

5.5 Selection

Agencies will be responsible for the selection of graduates in cooperation with DCIS.

5.6 Length of the Graduate Development Program

The length of the GDP will be from one to two years as determined by the agency and the complexity of the discipline.

Graduate intakes will occur twice a year, once in November and one in May.

5.7 Employment Conditions

Graduates will be appointed permanently at the beginning of the program and will be subject to the same employment terms and conditions as any other permanent appointees as described in section 32 of the *Public Sector Employment and Management Act (PSEMA) 1993*. A probationary period will apply to the appointment of all graduates.⁵

On occasion there may be circumstances where agencies are not able to permanently appoint a graduate at the outset of the GDP. An example of this would be if the agency undertakes to develop more graduates than it has the capacity to employ. Justification of a divergence from permanent appointment of graduates will be provided in an agency annual report.

5.8 Probation

Probation is a period during which an employee's conduct and performance is assessed. The assessment determines whether the employee's permanent appointment should be confirmed or terminated. The probationary period will be for six months and consist of two assessments, one at three months and one at five months. At the end of the probationary period the manager/supervisor will provide a report which makes a recommendation as to whether the employee's appointment is to be confirmed, terminated or probationary period extended. If the manager/supervisor considers that a probationer's service during the initial period of probation is unsatisfactory, but believes that an extension of time may result in improved performance and to the required level, the probationary period may be extended by six months. An extension will only occur once. At the end of the extension the manager/supervisor will recommend whether the employee's appointment will be confirmed or terminated.

"Existing employees" who are permanent will be exempt from the probationary period described above.

5.9 Remuneration

Graduates are employed in accordance with the salary determined by the Commissioner for Public Employment as specified in the schedule of Determination No. 9 of 2003. A Chief Executive Officer (CEO) may advance a graduate through the incremental levels of the graduate pay scale at six monthly intervals based on the assessment of performance and achievement of identified outcomes.

Existing permanent employees who are at a level higher than the graduate pay scale will remain at level at the Chief Executive Officer's discretion. This will be considered on a case-

⁵ Employment Instruction Number 2 Probation, *Northern Territory Public Sector Employment and Management Act 1993*

by-case basis and is an appropriate strategy to recruit employees to 'hard to recruit to positions' or, where an agency has major skills shortages. If an existing employee is at a pay level comparable to a level within the graduate pay scale range, they will be transferred to the closest graduate pay scale point above their current pay point. They will then have the opportunity to advance as described in Determination No 9 of 2003.

On completion of the GDP graduates will be appointed to the nearest pay level in a discipline specific employment stream. For example; on completion of a one year GDP a graduate with a three year degree and no experience would move from the third level of the graduate pay scale of \$38,716 (see Determination 9 of 2003) to fourth level of the P1 pay scale at \$40,069.

5.10 Rotations

It is highly desirable for graduates to be rotated every three to six months to provide them with the opportunity to develop a broad range of skills and knowledge relevant to their discipline, agency and the NTPS. These can be intra or inter agency rotations. Smaller agencies and regional offices are encouraged to share the rotations of a graduate. The OCPE RWDS identifies an allocation of funds for agencies to assist in the rotation of graduates to the regions. There may be rare circumstances where a rotation isn't possible because of the unique nature of the discipline. Rotations are to be negotiated with the graduate and recorded in their Personal Development Plan (PDP)

5.11 Personal Development Plan

A PDP which is developed collaboratively by the supervisor and the graduate will be in place for each rotation. Prior to the rotation of a graduate a supervisor will prepare a Training Plan which identifies those development opportunities available to the graduate in their work unit. This will form the basis of the discussion when developing the graduate's PDP. Progress in relation to the PDP will be evaluated during a performance evaluation at the end of each rotation. The nominated Early Careers Coordinator (see clause 5.13) will ensure that a performance evaluation occurs for each rotation.

5.12 Mentoring

All graduates will have a Mentor because mentoring is critical to the success of the GDP. To ensure the success of the mentoring relationship the agency early careers coordinator and the graduate will identify a mentor with whom the graduate is comfortable. However it is not a requirement for the mentor to be from the host agency. All mentors without recent relevant experience as a mentor will need to undertake appropriate training or coaching. Advice about the skills and attributes required of an effective mentor can be discussed with DCIS.

5.13 Early Careers Coordinator

All agencies will nominate an Early Careers Coordinator who is responsible for coordinating graduate rotations and completing an exit interview with the graduate/s after each rotation. A summary of feedback gained through exit interviews with graduates will be reported to DCIS quarterly as described in Clause 6 "Records and Reporting".

5.14 Supervisors

Every graduate will have a supervisor for each rotation. All supervisors are responsible for ensuring the graduate has a PDP and for monitoring progress against the plan.

5.15 Training for Mentors, Supervisors and Early Careers Coordinators

Training will be provided for mentors, supervisors and early careers coordinators to ensure they understand their role and responsibilities.

5.16 GDP Program Components

The GDP has two components. They are “Working in the Public Service” and an “Agency Specific Development” component. The “Working in the Public Service” component is designed to ensure that graduates develop an understanding of the function and legislative framework of government and their responsibilities as a public servant. The “Agency Specific Development” component is designed to provide graduates with an understanding of the purpose and function of the agency within which they are placed. This is in addition to the development of discipline specific skills and knowledge.

5.16.1 Working in the Public Service

The Working in the Public Service component consists of:

- Sector Wide Induction Program for Employees (SWIPE)
- Graduate Development Program Induction
- Graduate Forums
 - Seminars
 - Workshops
 - Networking
- Three Units of Competence from the Certificate III in Government PSP0 3 01 99 - This is a Nationally accredited qualification from the Public Services Training Package. All graduates are required to complete the following core units:
 - PSPETHC301A Uphold the Values and Principles of Public Service
 - PSPLEGN301A Comply with Legislation in the Public Sector
 - PSPGOV308A Working Effectively with Diversity

Additional units can be completed at the graduate’s discretion.

The cost associated with a graduate undertaking the three units of competence from the Public Services Training Package will be the responsibility of the agency. OCPE is currently negotiating with providers regarding the costs of this training.

Those who have prior knowledge, skills and experience relevant to the units of competence from the Certificate III in Government will be able to apply for Recognition of Current Competency (RCC) with a nominated Registered Training Organisation (RTO).

5.16.2 Agency Specific Development

The Agency Specific Development component consists of:

- agency and work unit induction
- remote location induction (if relevant)
- relevant discipline specific training.

5.17 Program Management

5.17.1 Agency Responsibilities

- selecting their graduates in cooperation with DCIS
- managing the graduate, including all personnel matters (as the graduate is an agency employee)
- appointing an agency early careers coordinator
- providing interesting, stimulating and challenging work for graduates
- welcoming and orientating the graduate to the agency
- arranging regular work placement rotations
- supporting and supervising the graduate
- creating and reviewing PDP's in partnership with the graduate
- evaluating the graduate's performance and progress in relation to the PDP
- providing constructive feedback to the graduate
- providing exit interviews at the end of each rotation
- reporting on the GDP to DCIS and OCPE re numbers and progress,
- working with the graduate to identify an appropriate mentor.

5.17.2 Graduate's Responsibilities

- creating a PDP in partnership with the supervisor/early careers coordinator
- communicating with the supervisor/early careers coordinator about progress against the PDP, including alternative placements, and any issues relating to this
- actively participating in all development activities
- successfully completing three Core Modules in the Certificate III
- adhering to agency policies and procedures and observing the NTPS Code of Conduct
- participating in an exit interview with the early careers coordinator at the completion of all rotations
- working with the early careers coordinator to identify an appropriate mentor
- actively participating in the mentoring program.

5.17.3 OCPE Responsibilities

- establishing and maintaining the policy framework and guidelines for the GDP, in partnership with agencies
- setting employment conditions
- evaluating the effectiveness of the policy and guidelines.
- reviewing policy and guidelines

5.17.4 DCIS Responsibilities

- advertising, recruitment and coordination of selection process
- providing an outline for “Working in the Public Service” component of the GDP
- coordinating the “Working in the Public Service” component of the GDP
- providing training for early careers coordinators/supervisors/mentors
- assisting with the development of PDP's and advice on alternative placements
- advising agencies on appropriate development opportunities for graduates
- sector wide reporting on graduates.

6. RECORDS AND REPORTING

All agencies will maintain records and data relating to engagement and progress of graduates. Reports will be provided to DCIS on a quarterly basis. Information to be reported is as follows:

- number of graduates and disciplines
- employment status of graduates - permanency v temporary
- number of rotations
- number of graduates rotated to the regions (if agency is represented in the regions)
- number of graduates from EEO groups
- number of graduate resignations
- number of promotions inside or outside the sector
- destination if promoted outside the sector (if available)
- a summary of feedback gained through exit interviews, which would serve to improve the program.

DCIS will provide a summary of this data to OCPE annually for the purposes of evaluating the effectiveness and progress of the NTPS GDP.

7. REVIEW

A full evaluation of the GDP will take place every two years to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in achieving the stated objectives in Section 3 of this policy.

An in-process evaluation will take place every year to monitor the progress of the GDP.

This policy will undergo a formal review in December 2005.