Introduction

This document was developed for the Local Learning and Employment Network (LLEN) Committees of Management in Victoria with the aim of providing them with support in their efforts to hire the right candidates into the Executive Officer role, effectively directing the efforts of incumbents and managing their performance.

The work was commissioned by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and involved consultations with a number of Chairs as well as representatives from the Department.

The objective of this project was not to provide an extensive manual on the recruitment and management of Executive Officers. It aims to provide high level pointers combined with practical advice for the Committee of Management to apply within their local context.
Contents

1. High level process map of the selection process
2. Statement of accountabilities
3. Technical requirements
4. Behavioural strengths
5. Guidelines on how to communicate expectations
6. High level process map of the performance management process
7. Examples of measures of success
8. Guidelines for phrasing alternative measures of success
9. Guidelines on performance related conversations

Appendix – Job Description
High level process map of the selection process
Selection process

- Job analysis
  (What is the job?)
- Job description
- Attracting and managing applications
- Selecting candidates
  shortlisting and assessment
- Making the appointment
- Joining the organisation/induction
1. Job Analysis

   - This stage is about gathering information about the nature of the job. For the development of this generic model, interviews were conducted with the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, a sample of the LLEN Chairs and by reviewing of information about the LLEN. Ensure that the generic model is in line with the local situation.

   Outcome of this stage ➔ Certainty that the generic model of the job and its aspects will fit in the local situation.

2. Job Description

   - A generic written position description has been created which includes accountabilities, sample performance measures, knowledge skills and experience and required behaviours. It is important to make sure that this description covers all aspects that have come up in your job analysis.

   Outcome of this stage ➔ A job description based on the generic model that fits the specific situation of your LLEN
3. Attracting Applications

- The first step is to generate interest from candidates. This can be done either internally (from within the organisation) or externally (e.g. through advertising through newspapers and the internet)

- Advertisements should be clear and indicate the broad requirements of the job, necessary criteria for applicants, the nature of the LLEN’s activities, job location, reward package, job tenure and details on how to apply

- Advertisements should appeal to all sections of the community, using positive visual images and appropriate wording

Outcome of this stage ➔ A sufficient number of candidates to engage in an effective selection process. Too many candidates will lead to an unnecessary workload in managing the selection process. Too few candidates will make it difficult to be sure that the right choice is made. A number of 5 candidates meeting most of the requirements is often seen as a good objective.
4. Managing the Application Process

- A decision needs to be made on the format in which applications should be received. This can be by CV or by application forms. A less onerous way for the LLEN would be to ask for CVs, in order to save potential time and trouble creating an application form. CVs give candidates the opportunity to sell themselves in their own way and do not have the restrictions of fitting information into boxes as on an application form.

- All applications should be acknowledged promptly. They should be treated confidentially and circulated only to those individuals involved in the recruitment process.

Outcome of this stage ➔ All applicants have been acknowledged promptly and the right information is available to the LLEN Committee of Management to commence the selection process.
5. Selecting Candidates

- This involves two main processes – short listing and assessing applicants to decide who should be made a job offer, based on the job and person requirements outlined in the position description.

- Short Listing - when deciding who to shortlist, it is helpful to draw up a list of criteria using the position description. These criteria are normally taken from the technical requirement section in the position Description.

- Each application can then be rated according to these standards, or a simple scoring system can be used. It can be useful to allow some flexibility to ensure, for example, that a good candidate who does not exactly match the specified criteria is not overlooked. Having more than one person review all the applications received makes it less likely that discrimination or stereotyping will occur at this stage.

Outcome of this stage ➔ A short list of candidates (ideally 3 to 5) that have been selected based on factual information comparing the data in the CV with the Technical Requirements in the position description.
Assessing Applications

- Interviews are the most common way to assess potential employees. As well as providing information to predict performance, interviews also give an opportunity for the interviewer and interviewee to meet face to face and exchange information. Structuring the interview can help improve its ability to predict performance in the job. A ‘structured interview’ means that:
  - Questions are planned carefully before the interview
  - All candidates are asked the same questions
  - Answers can be scored using a rating system
  - Questions focus specifically on the attributes and behaviours needed in the job.
  - Interviews can take a range of formats, and can be carried out by one or more interviewers.
One to one interviews have the advantage of putting the candidate more at their ease, but make it more difficult for the interviewer to concentrate on and consider the interviewee’s responses. They also make it more likely for unfair bias to occur as the interviewer will not have to justify their opinions to anyone else.

This can be partly addressed by using two interviewers, or carrying out a panel interview. However, this is more likely to be a formal and intimidating situation where the candidate will find it difficult to act naturally.
Selection process (continued)

A generic agenda for such an interview could be:

- Provide additional information on the LLEN and the role by the interviewers
- Answer questions from the candidate on organisation and role
- Ask for concrete examples from the candidate on past experiences that are relevant to this application, ask for one where he/she was successful and one where he/she was less successful
- Inquire why the candidate is interested in this role, what is the motivation?
- Ask for preferred circumstances for the candidate to work under and what sort of things are perceived as less ideal in a working environment
- Explain the next steps in the selection process

Outcome of this stage ➔ Candidates have a good understanding of the role and organisation (so that they can make an informed decision about the continuation of their candidacy) and the Committee of Management has the right data to decide on which candidate will receive an offer of employment.
6. Reference Check

- It is good practice to validate the impression that the Committee of Management has formed of the candidate it is intending to employ, by talking to individuals who have worked with the candidate. Ask the preferred candidate to provide two referees (previous employer, manager or peer), their contact details and make sure the referee is forewarned. Conduct the reference check only after you are sure that the candidate has contacted the referee. The purpose of a reference check is not to find a candidate out, it aims to validate the understanding the Committee of Management has developed of a candidate. Check the facts: ‘has this person worked with you, which role, which period, what were the results?’ Ask for strengths and areas for improvement and what the referee would deem to be ideal working conditions for the candidate. Stress the confidentiality and thank for the contribution.

Outcome of this stage ➔ Assurance that the understanding of a candidate’s experience, strengths and areas for development by the Committee of Management are validated by someone who as actually worked with the candidate.
6. Making the Appointment

- Offers of employment should be made in writing and be reflective of the verbal messages given previously to the selected candidate. The employer should also be aware of the legal requirements of what information should be given in the written statement of particulars of employment. Some employers opt to present the document in a meeting which allows for a verbal presentation of the offer.

Outcome of this stage ➔ The candidate understands and appreciates the offer of employment and is likely to sign the agreement.
7. Joining the LLEN

- Well planned induction enables the new employees to become fully operational quickly and should be integrated with the recruitment process. Many organisations specifically draft a brief plan for the first three months with specific induction objectives and planned activities that will lead to the achievement of these objectives. Make sure that the new EO is clear on expectations, introduced to the relevant stakeholders and knows who to turn to in case of questions. It makes sense to use the information from the selection process on the new employee in drafting the induction plan. What are the strengths of the individual to leverage in the first couple of months? What are the areas for development that need to be focused on?

Outcome of this stage ➔ The new EO is successfully integrated into the new organisation.
Statement of accountabilities
## Statement of accountabilities

| Stakeholder Management and Community Engagement | Build networks and develop key relationships, by representing and promoting the LLEN to all stakeholders, including LLEN strategy and previous achievements, to ensure engagement from the business, education and social communities, and ensure outcomes stated in Schedules 1 & 2 of the LLEN Agreement are delivered. |
| Strategic Planning and Implementation | In consultation with the Committee of Management, review and contribute to setting the strategic direction and objectives for the LLEN, including developing and implementing Schedules 1 & 2 to ensure the LLEN achieves its goals. |
| Committee Management | Build an effective working relationship with and provide support to the Committee of Management and related committees and manage Committee processes to ensure that the Committee of Management of the LLEN and related committees are running efficiently and effectively. |
| Financial Management | Monitor and allocate the annual budget to ensure that income received and expenses incurred are spent appropriately and are aligned with forecast and that all statutory financial reporting is adhered to, in order to comply with budgetary and legislative requirements. |
| Operational Management | Develop, motivate and retain staff and manage the physical resources of the LLEN in order to deliver the objectives of the LLEN and ensure optimal performance. |
| Governance and Reporting | Report on all statutory requirements and regulations in a timely and accurate manner to ensure compliance and monitoring of performance and that risk is reduced or eliminated. |
| Project and Contract Management | Manage the LLEN’s involvement in activities outlined in the Schedule, including negotiating and influencing providers to ensure that the LLEN is delivering against objectives. |
03

Technical requirements
Technical requirements

- Knowledge of the education sector and experience of education processes
- Experience of managing projects
- Experience of managing a small team
- Experience of working with Committees and governance procedures
- Experience of working across a range of organisations and sectors
- Financial management skills
- Ability to communicate with a diverse range of stakeholders
- Negotiation, facilitation and networking skills
- Strong administrative skills
- Ability to work independently
04

Behavioural strengths
## Behavioural strengths

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavioural Strength</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Strategic thinking</strong></td>
<td>The ability to think strategically about the LLEN’s direction, recognising operations for the LLEN’s development.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self awareness</strong></td>
<td>The ability to know one’s own strengths and limitations, being aware of one’s own emotions and what triggers these.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self confidence</strong></td>
<td>A belief in one’s own capability to accomplish a task and select an effective approach to a task or problem.</td>
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<td><strong>Team Leadership</strong></td>
<td>The ability to position oneself as leader of a team.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Initiative</strong></td>
<td>The identification of a problem, obstacle or opportunities and taking pro-active action in the light of this to address current or future problems or opportunities.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Impact and Influence</strong></td>
<td>The ability to persuade, convince or influence others in order to get them aligned with the Executive Officer/LLEN’s agenda.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Empathy</strong></td>
<td>The desire to understand others and accurately hear and understand the unspoken or partly expressed thoughts, feelings and concerns of others.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Achievement Orientation</strong></td>
<td>A concern for working well or surpassing a standard of excellence.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Relationship Building</strong></td>
<td>Ability to build and/or maintain friendly, reciprocal and warm relationships with networks of people who are able to assist in achieving the objectives of the LLEN.</td>
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Guidelines on how to communicate expectations
Communicating expectations to the incumbent

- Be clear about the outcomes that are expected (the ‘what’)
- Explain how these outcomes relate to the strategic plan and the accountability statements
- Provide practical examples by answering the question; ‘what will successful achievement of these accountabilities look like?’
- Be clear on how the incumbent is expected to operate (the ‘how’)
- Explain how the desired way of operating is linked to the behaviours
- Provide practical examples of the desired application of behaviours; ‘the way we would like to see you doing this is…’
High level process map of the performance management process
Performance management process

LLEN Strategy

Schedule and LLEN Objectives

Capabilities

How

Accountabilities

What

1. Performance Planning
   Clear relationship between annual planning and performance planning

2. Monitoring/Coaching
   Supportive climate and effective coaching

3. Reviewing
   Formal review based on planning/coaching

4. Rewarding
   Link between performance, development and reward
1. Performance Planning

- This is a participative process, soliciting input from all related parties i.e. the Chair, the Committee of Management and the Executive Officer.

- The planning process should look at WHAT is to be achieved – i.e. the accountabilities of the role and HOW it is to be achieved – i.e. the behaviours/skills etc. required to be able to meet the criteria.

- The process will identify the relevant performance measures for the Executive Officer for the performance period, agreed by each of the parties (i.e. the Chair and Committee of Management and the Executive Officer)
2. Monitoring and Coaching

- **Monitoring**
  
  The aim of this stage is to provide all of the relevant information necessary for a fair and informative sense of the Executive Officer’s performance. Suggested ways of carrying this out are to talk to the Executive Officer, observe them at work and to obtain feedback from individuals such as the stakeholders, Committee of Management and EO’s staff members.

- **Coaching**
  
  The coaching aspect of this part of the process is aimed at improving the Executive Officer’s performance. This can both be formal and informal and may be carried out by the Chair or a nominated member of the Committee of Management. Coaching should be continuous and focus on providing constructive, helpful, feedback, both in terms of the WHAT and the HOW i.e. the requirements of the job and how the job holder goes about fulfilling these requirements. It should be delivered in a timely fashion and in an appropriate setting.
3. Reviewing

- There are a number of principles that should be adhered to when carrying out a performance review.

- There should be no surprises when it comes to the formal review – feedback and coaching should have been provided continuously throughout the performance period.

- It is important to carefully prepare for the review, including gathering enough relevant evidence and feedback on which to form a view of performance and the meeting should be scheduled and held in an appropriate place.

- Participation should be equal from both the Executive Officer and the Chair, and the inputs and outputs should both be linked to the purpose of the job in the context of the overall effectiveness of the LLEN.
4. Rewarding

- The items to consider at this stage are:
  - What type of reward will be offered? Will it be a monetary or non-monetary reward (e.g. vouchers, time off etc). Consider how this will be communicated at the start of the performance period. Also consider what constraints there are in providing any reward to the Executive Officer.
  - Timing – how long will the performance period last i.e. for how long is performance to be measured – e.g. 6 months, 1 year etc
  - Recognition setting and context – ensure that any reward and recognition is linked proportionately to effort put in by the Executive Officer and the results they have achieved.
Examples of measures of success
Performance measures

Based on the accountabilities described in the position description, suggested performance measures would be as follows:

- Development of strategy for LLEN
- Annual development of Schedule
- Implementation of Schedule according to agreed timetable
- Activities outlined in the Schedule achieved within budget
- External relationships with key stakeholders including Committee of Management are managed effectively
- Selection and retention of high quality staff
- Timely and accurate reporting
Guidelines for phrasing alternative measures of success
The setting of objectives is important as this provides a justifiable basis for reviewing performance. The objectives should be linked to accomplishing the LLEN’s strategy and Schedule.

The objectives will also provide clear performance targets that help staff members monitor their progress.

In order to set objectives based on the performance measures suggested, the following questions should be considered:

- What is the job supposed to accomplish?
- Why does the job exist?
- What results are achieved through the functions of this job?
- What are the key performance expectations of the job?
- What does this job have to do to support the accomplishment of this year’s business plan?
Objectives

- Types of objectives
  - Results Objectives – the “WHATs”
  - Behavioural Objectives – the “HOWs”

- Objectives should be “S.M.A.R.T”
  - Specific
  - Measurable and/or observable
  - Attainable
  - Relevant
  - Time-based
Guidelines on performance related conversations
Preparing for and conducting a planning/goal setting meeting

**Prepare**
- Review LLEN strategy and Schedule
- Review position description
- Review last year’s performance
- Make appointment with Executive Officer and ask him/her to prepare accordingly

**Conduct**
- Find suitable location and avoid interruptions
- Provide a summary of the context
- Propose key goals for discussion
- Seek Committee of Management/stakeholder views
- Jointly Set annual goals and measures of success

**Follow Up**
- Document and distribute for review and validation
- Offer Ongoing Support
Preparing for and conducting a mid year review

- The purpose of the mid year review is to look at the performance of Executive Officer before the more formal end of year performance assessment and identify any areas that need attention

- **Preparation**
  - Set time and date well in advance, and an appropriate venue
  - Decide who should be involved in the assessment process
  - Review documented evidence of goals, standards and behaviours over last 6 months, looking at ‘what’ and ‘how’
  - Obtain input from the Executive Officer and others about performance
  - Think about reasons for any gaps between actual & expected performance and concrete examples of the gaps
  - Note any specific feedback to be given at this stage
  - Practice beforehand any tough messages you need to give
Mid year review - agenda

1. Review of Performance Expectations - Goals & Position Description
2. Compare Actual and Expected Performance to Date
3. Discuss Performance Observations – Chair and Executive Officer
4. Discuss Reasons for Success and Failures
5. Consider Development Options/Coaching to Help Achieve Goals
6. Set Date for Next Meetings – Coaching and Performance Assessment
Preparing for and conducting a performance assessment

**Preparation**

- Set time and date well in advance, and an appropriate venue
- Decide who should be involved in the assessment process
- Review documented evidence of goals, standards and behaviours over last 6-12 months, looking at ‘what’ and ‘how’
- Obtain input from the Executive Officer and others about performance
- Think about reasons for any gaps between actual & expected performance and concrete examples of the gaps
- Note any specific feedback to be given
- Plan your key messages
  - The one or two areas in which the person did well
  - The one or two areas in which the person needs to improve
- Think about how the person will feel and react to your feedback and prepare for this
- Practice beforehand any tough messages you need to give
- Plan the review meeting agenda
Performance assessment - agenda

1. Review of Performance Expectations - Goals & Position Description
2. Compare Actual and Expected Performance to Date
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Appendix – Job description