

**Graduate Development Program
Australian Bureau of Statistics
Workshop on Human Resources Management and Training
Budapest 5- 7 September 2012
Day 1 Session 4(a) Recruitment and training of new staff members**

Background/Context/Known Facts

1. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) attracts applications from around 2,000 graduates across the country each year.
2. A whole of ABS approach is used in the attraction, selection and placement of graduates. The ABS uses an e-Recruitment system and interviews are held using a single collaborative selection panel.
3. The ABS accepts between 80 and 170 graduates each year. This intake is the largest single component of new entries into the ABS workforce.
4. On 2 February 2012, 144 ABS graduates commenced the 2012 Graduate Development Program (GDP). The 9 month GDP offers graduates a nationally consistent program with a tailored curriculum.
5. Upon successful completion of all mandatory Graduate Development Program activities and subject to a performance review, graduates are advanced within the ABS Graduate Broadband in October each year.
6. The GDP has a good retention rate; 94% of the 2011 graduate cohort (155/164) at the formal conclusion of the program (October 2011). Comparative retention rates are 95% for the GDP in 2010, 87% in 2009 and 88% in 2008.

Section 1. Strategic relevance

1. The ABS Graduate Development Program (Graduate Development Program) is a component of the ABS People Plan. The Graduate Development Program supports this national plan by contributing to the achievement of the four national strategies:

1. Build core capability at all levels to improve organisational and individual performance;
2. Strengthen leadership to ensure organisational sustainability;
3. Improve our ability to attract and retain the right people, with the right skills, at the right place, at the right time; and
4. Understand and monitor our workforce and external environment.

2. In accordance with the ABS People Plan, the Graduate Development Program aims to attract and retain a motivated and effective workforce by positioning the ABS as an employer of choice; one that is well respected,

modern, responsive and attractive to highly skilled and capable employees, now and into the future.

Section 1. Aims

3. The ABS Graduate Development Program provides a nationally consistent and mandatory curriculum for all graduates, with training held across Central Office and Regional Offices. The program has a tailored curriculum involving local induction and orientation, formal and on the job training, a focus on statistical capability and the role of the ABS as a National Statistical Office.

4. The GDP is designed to:

- transition graduates into the ABS workplace, and the Australian Public Service (APS);
- rapidly build professional capacity and workplace capability;
- enhance statistical capability (of all graduates);
- familiarise graduates with the ABS structure and culture; and
- articulate graduate roles and responsibilities.

Section 2. GDP Curriculum

5. Each graduate is offered a permanent position in a specific ABS Division, within a statistical, technical or services stream. Graduates take up a position in their new role and Division and the first couple of weeks are mostly spent on group orientation and induction. The curriculum for orientation and induction includes:

- Discover the ABS;
- Workplace Health & Safety;
- Working@ABS (IT system);
- APS & ABS Values and Code of Conduct;
- Communicating with Respect;
- Probation Awareness (including Supervisors); and
- Development and Performance Framework with Two Way Feedback.

6. In the first 4 weeks each graduate must also undertake a number of compulsory e-learning modules:

- Say No to Bullying;
- Prevent Discrimination & Harassment;
- NewStarter@ABS Welcome Messages; and
- APS Induction.

7. This induction ensures all graduates successfully transition from university to the workplace and are familiar with the business of the ABS, and how we do business. Graduates in turn understand the expectation on them in their role and what responsibilities they have as a graduate employee of the ABS.

8. There are a range of formal programs that all graduates must attend during March to June. These relate to the core business of the ABS; statistics and the statistical cycle and public sector administrative skills. The flagship program is the Professional Statistical Program. The whole graduate group is addressed by members of the SES cohort who present and discuss the strategic directions of their section of the ABS work program.

9. The formal training programs are:

- Administrative Law and APS Decision Making in the ABS;
- Professional Statistical Program (PSP);
- Understanding the Statistical Cycle (GSBPM);
- Project Management; and
- Selection Criteria and Interview Skills.

10. To supplement the Graduate Development Program, graduates also have access to a range of subject matter specific courses. These courses cover the broad capability areas of statistics, technology, leadership and management, and personal effectiveness. As with any new starter, graduates are encouraged to discuss their training needs with their supervisor prior to enrolling in these courses.

11. The final component of the Graduate Development Program is a focus on building self-awareness and developing the soft skills of the graduates. A series of three workshops, developed and delivered internally, offer graduates the opportunity to self-reflect on their natural strengths and build capability in other areas using the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) tool as a foundation.

12. The workshops are each two days in duration and offer a mix of theory and activity based learning. Graduates from the regions travel to meet and engage with graduates in other ABS offices (groups of 20 or so).

13. The themes around the workshops (April to September) are:

- Workshop 1: Exploring MBTI types; Introversion or Extraversion, Sensing or Intuition, Thinking or Feeling, Judging or Perceiving. Day 2 covers behavioural styles, building a personal brand, resilience and shared leadership.

- Workshop 2: ABS leadership & organisational initiatives, problem solving, communication, emotional intelligence, stress, conflict resolution and negotiation.
- Workshop 3: Career planning, goal setting and personal leadership.

14. On successful completion of all mandatory training components and subject to a performance review, graduates are advanced within the ABS Graduate Broadband.

15. A number of support mechanisms are offered to graduates throughout the program. Graduates relocating to Canberra attended a 'Meet & Greet' session to facilitate networking with other relocates. All receive a 'Welcome Pack' which includes the ABS Forward Work Program, various other corporate documents, and a 'Graduate Handbook' which outlines the objectives and curriculum of the Graduate Development Program.

16. The Graduate Team provides advice and direction on the national program, manages the administrative functions, and provides pastoral care to graduates in both Canberra and Regional Offices. Graduate Coordinators are allocated in each Region and Division to provide specific advice and guidance for the area in which the graduate is placed.

17. All training and development activities throughout the program are specifically designed to facilitate networking and interaction amongst the graduate group, to ensure that graduates are able to establish rapport and support networks with their peers.

18. The 2012 Graduate Development Program was enhanced with the following elements, based on experience and feedback received throughout the 2011 Program (see Attachment A for detail):

- Graduate Coordinators and Supervisors provide on the job learning, development, and pastoral care. Respective Handbooks outline the critical role they play and a regular forum for coordinators is held to share information and promote best practice.
- Coordinators are encouraged to assign buddies to all 2012 graduates to improve the support and networking opportunities available to graduates.
- A Facebook Page for 2012 graduates was established to facilitate interaction among the graduate group, especially those who relocated.
- Graduates located in Canberra had the opportunity to participate in Australian Public Service graduate events throughout the year.

Section 3. Conclusion

19. The Graduate Development Program provides graduates with a comprehensive and relevant introduction to the ABS and wider APS. It has served the ABS well in the attraction and retention of such a large and important cohort of new starters.

Attachment A: Evaluation of the 2011 Graduate Development Program

1. Formal and informal feedback was collated throughout the Graduate Development Program from 2011 graduates, Graduate Coordinators, and Supervisors. The following key issues were identified through this feedback:

Curriculum

2. Approximately 90% of graduates were either very satisfied or satisfied with the Induction Program. Written feedback from graduates indicates that, overall, they found the Induction Program a useful and important introduction to the ABS.

3. Approximately 80% of graduates rated the quality of the two-day Professional Statistical Program (PSP) as either excellent or good. Graduates noted that PSP was an interesting and valuable course. Some suggested that PSP be extended in the future to maximise their learning opportunities and ensure all speakers have sufficient time to convey their information and answer questions.

4. Approximately 68% of graduates rated the Statistical Cycle as either excellent or good. This course was newly developed in 2011 to improve the graduates' understanding of the statistical cycle. Consequently, this course was held later in the year than was ideal, and the comments reflect that holding the course earlier in the program would improve its relevance.

5. Almost 90% of graduates rated the quality of the Project Management course as either excellent or good. Overall, the feedback indicated that the course was very valuable to their learning and development, and was one of the highlights of the Graduate Development Program.

Quality of the Workshops

6. Approximately 32% of graduates participated in rotations, with the majority of these graduates indicating they were either very satisfied (30%) or satisfied (55%) with their rotations. The written feedback indicated that they appreciated the opportunity to rotate, as it contributed significantly to their learning and development at the ABS. Of those graduates who did not complete a rotation, 70% indicated they would have liked the opportunity to rotate and were disappointed this was not available to them.

7. Some graduates were assigned formal projects by their relevant Division or Region, and where this was the case, verbal feedback indicates that this was an extremely beneficial component of their graduate year.

Support

8. Approximately 83% of graduates strongly agreed or agreed that the Graduate Team provided adequate support throughout the Graduate Development Program. Written feedback indicated that most graduates felt that significant guidance and support had been provided, and highlighted the approachability, commitment, dedication, and professionalism of the Graduate Team

9. Approximately 94% of graduates indicated that their Supervisors contributed to their development, while 70% rated their Graduate Coordinators' level of support as very good.

Outcomes

10. Over 90% of graduates either strongly agreed or agreed that they have a good knowledge of the ABS, its business, goals and strategic directions. Similarly, over 90% strongly agreed or agreed that they have a good understanding of the ABS role in the context of government.

11. Over 97% of graduates either strongly agreed or agreed that they have the capability to perform well in their current role, while over 89% either strongly agreed or agreed that they are a good candidate for promotion to the next level.

12. Over 70% either strongly agreed or agreed that the ABS is the right employer for them, and 80% either strongly agreed or agreed that the ABS is a good fit for them.

13. The majority of graduates (87%) either strongly agreed or agreed that they see themselves working at the ABS for the next 1-2 years, while less graduates (40%) either strongly agreed or agreed that they could see themselves working for the ABS for the next 5 years.

14. The majority of graduates either strongly agreed or agreed that they plan to get promoted within the ABS (92%) and/or wider APS (78%) in the future.

Chris Libreri

Human Resources Branch

July 2012

**Graduate Leadership Program
Australian Bureau of Statistics
Workshop on Human Resources Management and Training
Budapest 5- 7 September 2012
Day 1 Session 4(b) Recruitment and training of new staff members**

Background/Context/Known Facts

1. The ABS People Plan vision is to maximise the leadership and management capability of staff, and to recognise and nurture high potentials, building a high performing agency with long term organisational sustainability.
2. ABS has an established leadership and development curriculum which meets the needs of staff at different levels. Programs specifically for high potentials have primarily focussed on Executive and SES staff to date.
3. The Graduate Leadership Program was introduced to accelerate the development of the top ten per cent of the graduate intake, to help nurture the development of future leaders and to help position the ABS to meet current and future challenges.
4. The program requires a significant level of support and commitment from senior ABS leaders to ensure its success.

Section1. Aims

1. The Graduate Leadership Program was a new component of the ABS leadership and management development strategy in 2011. It was designed to:
 - i. strengthen executive leadership across the ABS by accelerating the development of the top ten per cent of the 2011 graduate intake who demonstrated high potential for leadership; and
 - ii. respond to the workforce challenges facing the wider APS by incorporating succession planning, thereby strategically positioning the ABS for future sustainability.
2. The Graduate Leadership Program aimed to provide a tailored program to accelerate high potential graduates in preparation for middle management positions and:
 - i. provide these future leaders with opportunities to rapidly grow their careers within the ABS; and
 - ii. contribute to organisational sustainability.
3. The Graduate Leadership Program (GLP) was designed as a competitive program to identify and nurture high potential graduates and best position the ABS to meet current and future workforce challenges.

4. The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) was the only Australian government agency to offer such a program.

Section 2. Selection of Participants

5. All 164 graduates in 2011 were invited to submit an application to participate in the Graduate Leadership Program. Selection used a merit based approach by the four Senior Executive Service (SES) sponsors. Graduates were asked to:

- write a covering letter as to why they applied for the program and what they would bring to it;
- submit an application against selection criteria (Attachment A);
- supply a referee report from their Director commenting on the graduates' performance and leadership potential; and
- undertake an inductive reasoning test.

6. After an assessment on the above 4 components, shortlisted graduates were asked to fill in an Occupational Personality Questionnaire. Shortlisting was done by the 4 SES program sponsors.

7. Due to the significant investment of both time and resources, graduates were contacted by the SES sponsor to discuss their willingness to commit to additional work commitments and a further year of study and before final approval was granted.

8. This approach aimed to provide a rigorous selection process to identify candidates with the best potential, and provided an equitable and transparent process in which all graduates had the opportunity to be considered for participation in the program.

9. There were 19 successful applicants, in line with expectations.

Section 3. The Program

10. The Graduate Leadership Program was designed around the Australian Government's Integrated Learning System (ILS) capabilities however it was tailored to meet the business of the ABS. The ILS capabilities are: Supports Strategic Direction, Achieves Results, Supports Productive Working Relationships, Displays Personal Drive and Integrity and Communicates with Influence.

11. Senior ABS Executive members were invited to present directly to the successful applicants on strategic elements of the program. The Graduate Leadership Program contained mandatory curriculum and assessment activities over a twelve-month period. The program was intensive, challenging and the

assessment robust. At the end of the program successful graduates were awarded an Advanced Diploma in Government.

12. The GLP program (details shown in Attachment B) is a combination of:

- strategically tailored training (Orientation Day plus 8 formal training modules including a 3 day residential);
- work based projects (including one major corporate project over the duration of the program);
- corporate placements (2 rotations) outside of each participant's own area of expertise; and
- assessable components for 15 competencies using a range of assessment tools including a work based evidence portfolio, on line assessments, observation and project work.

13. Coaching and mentoring was provided by the SES sponsors and also more formally within the program from the external course providers.

Section 4. Corporate Placements

14. The program required people to undertake 2 rotations across selected ABS areas. Participants left behind the comfort of their own area of expertise to undertake these placements, often in parts of the ABS where they knew very little and they were forced to build expertise in these other areas.

15. The placements were corporately funded and managed centrally. Potential corporate placements were identified across all Divisions and all offices (Attachment C).

16. Graduates reported to line management in the placement area, were treated like any other staff member, and were expected to contribute to the area's forward work program.

17. Further, and in accordance with the People Plan, managers were expected to play an active role in supporting the learning experiences of graduates as they participated in the Graduate Leadership Program. Managers were asked to have pre and post formal training discussions to connect the relationship between program content and each graduate's role in the workplace.

18. Participants who were promoted during the period were still expected to complete all elements of the Graduate Leadership Program, including rotations.

19. A major challenge reported by the participants was prioritising their time to meet all their commitments, particularly in the second rotation when the deadline for the major group project got closer and closer.

Section 5. Governance and Senior Leader Role

20. The success of the Graduate Leadership Program relied heavily upon the participation and sponsorship of ABS senior leaders. Commitment for the program from the Australian Statistician and Deputy Australian Statisticians was critical to success.

21. The Australian Statistician was the corporate sponsor. The Chief Operating Officer (Deputy) led the team of four SES Band 1 sponsors and the four EL2 project sponsors (Attachment D). SES officers addressed the participants during orientation in August to articulate the aims and expectations of the program. The four SES sponsors attended parts of the 3 day residential which was held in September 2011 (Attachment E). The sponsors mentored on team (5 graduates) over the entirety of the program.

22. Final presentations of the major projects were delivered in the Knibbs Auditorium on 15 June 2012 to an audience that included the Australian Statistician, two Deputies and a number of other SES officers. This event doubled as the graduation for the program.

23. The interim evaluation report (feedback from participants) shows that the most value from the program to date has been a much deeper understanding of the ABS & APS operating context, strategic directions and leadership challenges. Engagement with SES officers has been seen as highly beneficial. The technical public sector skills' training has been the most valuable to date as participants feel they have not had the opportunity to fully explore leadership capability in their current roles. The rotation placements were highly valued and the group project work has been challenging.

24. The inaugural Graduate Leadership Program will be formally reviewed in October 2012. Ultimately a recommendation on whether to continue or broaden the program will be made by the Australian Statistician and the Deputies.

Chris Libreri

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July 2012

Attachment A

GRADUATE LEADERSHIP PROGRAM SELECTION CRITERIA

These selection criteria are based on the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) Integrated Leadership System (ILS). Applicants are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the ILS at <http://www.apsc.gov.au/ils/index.html>.

1. Supports strategic direction

- Supports shared purpose and direction
- Thinks strategically
- Harnesses information and opportunities
- Shows judgement, intelligence and common sense

2. Achieves results

- Identifies and uses resources wisely
- Applies and builds professional expertise
- Responds positively to change
- Takes responsibility for managing projects to achieve results

3. Supports productive working relationships

- Nurtures internal and external relationships
- Listens to, understands and recognises the needs of others
- Values individual difference and diversity
- Shares learning and supports others

4. Displays personal drive and integrity

- Demonstrates public service professionalism and probity
- Engages with risk and shows personal courage
- Commits to action
- Promotes and adopts a positive and balanced approach to work
- Demonstrates self awareness and commitment to personal development

5. Communicates with influence

- Communicates clearly
- Listens, understands and adapts to audience
- Negotiates confidently

6. Professional Leadership

- Demonstrates professional leadership and delivers quality business outcomes
- Demonstrates strong people management skills and commitment
- Thinks beyond own area in the ABS to broader organisational issues
- Demonstrates perseverance and resilience when faced with obstacles/ setbacks

Attachment B

Graduate Leadership Program

Formal training	Date
Orientation Session (Introduction and launch of the program, project team set up, coach introductions)	29 August 2011
Strategic Leadership Fundamentals - Residential Program	21 - 23 September 2011
Administrative Law	5-6 October (2 days)
Leading & influencing for Performance and Strengths Based Leadership	3-4 November (2 days)
Conflict Resolution and Relationship Management	2 December (1 day)
Engagement, Trust and Stakeholder Relationship Management	16-17 February (2 days)
Financial Management	14 March (1 day)
Strategic Thinking and Innovation for the Future	12 April (1 day)
Leadership Image, Career Planning & Networking	9 May (1 day)
Rotations	
Rotation one	12 September 2011 – 10 February 2012
Rotation two	13 February - 29 June 2012

Attachment B: Graduate Leadership Program (continued)

Coaching	
Session one	October 2011
Session two	February 2012
Session three	May 2012
Assessment	
Meeting one	November 2011
Meeting two	March 2012
Meeting three	May 2012
Final Assessment	June 2012
Group Project	
Project Topics due	August 2011
Project Progress Meeting 1	October 2011
Project Progress Meeting 2	November 2011
Project Progress Meeting 3	March 2012
Draft Project Papers Due	April 2012
Project Final Due	May 2012
Graduation	
Presentation of Projects and Completion Ceremony	15 June 2012

Attachment C

Corporate Placements

Office of the Statistician

Strategic Policy & Planning

International Relations

Corporate Services Division

Financial Management

Workforce Strategies

Workplace Relations

People Management

Integrated Collection and Dissemination Services Division

Client Services Branch:

Customer Insights & Strategies

Integrated Collection Branch:

Collection Management

Population Survey Development

Technology Division

Technology Strategy Section

Technology Infrastructure and Solutions Design

Desktop Environment & Software Technology

Macroeconomics and Integration Group

Economic Analysis & Reporting

Macroeconomics Research

Social Statistics Group

Social Data Integration & Analysis

Social and progress reporting

Census Data Enhancement

National Health Survey

Population, Labour, Industry and Environment Statistics

Census 2016

Business Statistics Futures

Methodology and Data Management Division

Operations Research and Process Improvement

Data Collection Methodology

NSS Leadership

Regional Offices

State & Territory Statistical Services

National Statistics Centres

Attachment D

Chief Operating Officer Role: Graduate Leadership Program (GLP)

1. Approve the selection of the 4 x Senior Executive Service (SES) Band 1 GLP Sponsors - Denise Carlton, Paul Jelfs, Chris Duffy & Bruce Hockman
2. Convene an initial SES GLP meeting in May 2011- Brian Pink (Corporate Sponsor), Chris Libreri (AS CSD) and the 4 x SES Sponsors to:
 - Discuss roles and responsibilities of SES Sponsors;
 - Determine 4 relevant ABS Work Projects (and associated EL2 Project Sponsor);
 - Discuss corporate placements (2 rotations) for each GLP participant; and
 - Endorse the suggested budget approach for GLP participants.
3. Chair quarterly Sponsor Group meetings
4. Champion the GLP across Executive Leadership Group & Senior Management Group
5. Attend/ address the Orientation/ Launch (morning 29 August 2011)
6. Attend/ address at part of the GLP Residential Program in Canberra 21 - 23 September 2011
7. Attend/address Project Presentation and Graduation 15 June 2012
8. Review GLP program from SES Sponsor Group October 2012.

Attachment E

SES Sponsor Role: Graduate Leadership Program

1. Attend SES GLP Meeting for briefing of expectations then quarterly meetings
2. Shortlist GLP applications (end May 2011)
3. Meet with/ informal interview with shortlisted GLP candidates (early -mid June)
4. Sponsor for 5 GLP participants (one project team) throughout program (till June 2012)
5. Champion the GLP with colleagues and peers
6. Attend/ address the Orientation/ Launch (morning 29 August 2011)
7. Attend/ address at part of the GLP Residential Program in Canberra 21 - 23 September 2011
8. Attend Project Presentation and Graduation 15 June 2012
9. Be available to EL2 Project Sponsors (if required)