

POSITION DESCRIPTION



Lead Workplace Relations Partner



POSITION DETAILS

Position Title	Lead Workplace Relations Partner
Classification	Level 9
Position Number	7006943
School/Office	People and Culture
Division	Division of Operations

POSITION PURPOSE

The Lead Workplace Relations Partner is a specialist responsible for leading complex workplace and industrial relations matters across the University. The role supports enterprise bargaining, provides advice on employment law and workplace relations, manages high-risk employee relations matters and disputes, and partners with University leaders to ensure compliance, foster positive industrial relationships and deliver strategic people outcomes.

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

1. Provide specialist workplace relations expertise across the University, delivering advice on complex employee and industrial relations matters, ensuring compliance with employment legislation, enterprise agreements and University policies while mitigating organisational risk.
2. Support enterprise bargaining and lead industrial relations activities, including developing bargaining strategies, representing the University in negotiations, maintaining productive relationships with unions and employee representatives, ensuring compliance with enterprise agreements, and supporting their effective implementation and interpretation.
3. Manage complex workplace matters, including grievances, disciplinary matters, misconduct, underperformance, workplace conflict and other sensitive employee relations issues, ensuring timely, fair and legally compliant outcomes.
4. Provide strategic advice and coaching to senior leaders and managers on workplace relations matters, building leadership capability in conflict resolution, performance management, employee engagement and the consistent application of employment frameworks.
5. Lead workplace investigations into complex and sensitive employee matters, ensuring investigations are conducted impartially, confidentially and in accordance with legislative requirements, University policy and procedural fairness principles.
6. Develop, review and implement workplace relations policies, procedures and frameworks that align with legislative requirements, contemporary best practice and the University's strategic objectives, while monitoring legislative changes and recommending appropriate organisational responses.

7. Analyse workplace relations trends and organisational data to identify emerging risks, inform strategic decision-making and develop proactive initiatives that enhance employee experience, minimise workplace conflict and strengthen organisational capability.
8. Partner with leaders across the University to provide specialist workplace relations advice that supports organisational change initiatives and the delivery of the University's strategic and people objectives.
9. Build and maintain effective relationships with internal stakeholders, the Office of General Counsel, external advisors, government agencies and employee representatives to facilitate collaborative, consistent and commercially sound workplace relations outcomes.
10. Contribute to continuous improvement initiatives, mentoring colleagues, sharing specialist workplace relations expertise, identifying opportunities to improve service delivery and promoting contemporary workplace relations practices across the University.

QUALIFICATIONS, EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS

1. Relevant tertiary qualification in Human Resource Management, Employment Relations, Law, Industrial Relations or a related discipline, and an equivalent combination of relevant experience, education and training.
2. Extensive experience leading complex workplace relations and industrial relations matters within a large, complex organisation, including enterprise bargaining, dispute resolution and the interpretation and application of industrial instruments.
3. Demonstrated expertise in Australian employment and industrial relations legislation, enterprise agreements and workplace policies, with the ability to provide authoritative advice and manage organisational risk.
4. Proven experience managing complex workplace investigations, employee relations matters and conflict resolution, ensuring procedural fairness and legally compliant outcomes.
5. Demonstrated ability to build trusted relationships and influence senior leaders, providing strategic workplace relations advice, coaching and guidance in a complex stakeholder environment.
6. Highly developed analytical, negotiation and communication skills, with the ability to interpret legislation, analyse workplace trends and develop practical, commercially sound solutions.
7. Demonstrated ability to contribute to organisational change initiatives, policy development and continuous improvement while mentoring and sharing specialist expertise across the broader People function.
8. Experience representing an employer in enterprise bargaining and industrial tribunals, including proceedings before the Fair Work Commission.
9. Experience within the Australian higher education sector or another similarly large and complex, highly regulated organisation is highly desirable.

KEY RELATIONSHIPS

This position reports to: Executive Director, Business Partnering and Workplace Relations

This position supervises: This position has no supervisory responsibilities but will be required to provide mentoring and guidance to staff within People and Culture.

Key internal relationships:

- Chief People Officer
- Senior and Executive Leaders across the organisation
- Office of the General Counsel

Key external relationships:

- External Consultants
- Unions
- Government Departments

- Legislative bodies

CHALLENGES

- Balancing organisational objectives with legislative obligations and industrial considerations in high-risk matters.
- Managing complex workplace disputes involving multiple stakeholders while maintaining trust and procedural fairness.
- Responding to evolving workplace relations legislation, industrial reforms and enterprise bargaining requirements.
- Influencing senior stakeholders and achieving positive outcomes in a complex, unionised environment.

UNIVERSITY EXPECTATIONS

The University expects that all employees are aware of, and comply with legislation and Western's policies and procedures relevant to the position, including but not limited to:

- Code of Conduct
- Work Health and Safety and Wellbeing Management System
- Enterprise Agreement or Award
- Anti-discrimination principles, Equal Employment Opportunity and staff and student equity.

Approved by: Chief People Officer

Date: January 2025