## Background

In August 2014, the ANU Library undertook a pilot programme to create an opportunity for those staff working at ANU05 level to take part in a rotation which provided opportunities to further develop their knowledge and skills through working in different areas of ANU Library.

The Library’s Workforce Plan 2014/2015 looked at immediate priorities for 2014 which encouraged the development of Library staff to increase cross library competencies and enrich the work experiences of staff in a practical and effective manner, it was proposed that the Library make available a staff an opportunity by offering this type of development. The first step undertaken for the pilot programme was to encourage ANU05 staff to rotate and work in other areas.

The ANU05 level was chosen as staff above this level are often able to participate in project work to develop their skills. Staff below this level often work in several libraries developing their knowledge and expertise. At this level staff agree generally working in a single library supervising a small team without as many development opportunities as other levels.

The rotation was designed to run for a period of 12 months and was able to be adjusted to meet business operations and individual requirements of staff, if required.

## Process

The Library worked with Human Resources to set up the framework in which the rotations were able to be operationalised. The framework utilised the University’s Temporary Transfer arrangement. This allowed for the successful applicants to be temporarily transferred into the rotation position and then reverted back to their substantive position at the conclusion of the rotation, which was 12 months from commencement date of the new role. Staff could also be transferred back to their substantive position at a mutually agreed time if required. As part of the rotation scheme the willingness of eligible staff members to take part in additional rotations or to remain in the position that they have been rotated into
was also taken into consideration. Each application was considered on a case by case basis. Staff in continuing position who were successful applicants for the rotation retained their continuing employment status.

The Library called for expressions of interest via email for the rotation. All Library staff who were currently employed in a substantive ANU05 role, either fixed term or continuing were eligible to apply for the rotation. Due to a University wide freeze on advertising vacancies being lifted prior to the advertisement of the rotation opportunity, there were three vacant ANU05 Library positions available for rotations at this level.

The ANU05 staff were asked to submit a one to two page document with a summary of their skills. The statement needed to include ideas about the skills and knowledge that they would like to develop and how the rotation would contribute to their career development. The applicants were also asked to supply a copy of their current CV.

A Selection Committee was formed, with a member external to the Library, and they assess all of the expression of interest applications. The application process included interviews to assist with the suitability of the applicants’ for the positions available for rotation. A Selection Committee report was written detailing the results of the above process and the applicants were then informed of the position that they had won.

**Outcomes**

Three ANU05 staff applied for the rotation.

At the time the process was completed there were six ANU05 positions available for staff to move into as part of the rotation (two created from the application process itself). There were two positions in Menzies Library, two positions in Chifley Library, one position in the Law Library plus another position in the Library Administration Office.

The three applicants were appointed to their respective positions and temporary transfer documentation was completed for them all. After the rotation process was completed the remaining vacant ANU05 positions needing to be filled were advertised following the usual University recruitment procedures.

In relation to the outcomes of the ANU05 rotation:

- The staff members all learned new skills and developed expertise in areas that had had not been able to develop before
- All enjoyed the teams they worked with.

Feedback received from two of the applicants noted –

- I would like to use this opportunity to express my appreciation to all staff involved in this job rotation arrangement especially the Menzies Serial Team. As this is the best opportunity for me to get into the Technical Services area and learn new things which will definitely benefit me significantly for my career path and development.
recognised this arrangement as a rare and unique opportunity to be rotated into a completely different work experience, to be able to receive “on-the-job training” for technical skills.

During one year acting in User Services Coordinator position in Law Library, I gained a great experience in day and after-hours staff supervision. It was one of the main areas in which I aimed to be able to develop my skill set. I also expanded my knowledge in Law and legal research subject area. I dealt with reference questions at the front desk on a daily basis and built up my knowledge about common law, legal databases and terminology. I am currently undertaking “Legal research” course.

As the rotation period drew to a close, the affected staff were spoken to in order to decide where their thoughts were in relation to the position that they were in currently, whether they wished to return to their substantive positions or if they would like to rotate into another position.

The results of discussion with the three individuals are that Library Management have agreed that:

One staff member will remain (be transferred permanently) into the position of Executive Assistant (no 312) – the staff member is on leave till mid-January and is reviewing employment options
One staff member will remain (be transferred permanently) into the position of Library User Services Coordinator (no 398)
One staff member will return to their substantive position on completion of the rotation period.

Lessons learned
While it was agreed in principle by those involved in creating the process that offered rotations to staff was a great developmental opportunity, it was very difficult to be able to get the programme up and running.

There were a number of issues to work through with Human Resources prior to this rotation being offered. The time taken to work through these issues was considerable.

It was heartening that two of the applicants described the rotation exercise either as a remarkable or a rare and unique opportunity to develop new skills sets or by expanding their knowledge and experience within the ANU Library.
Reverting back to the substantive position has been relatively easy to achieve for one of the applicants, however for the other two staff who are staying in the role they rotated to, further paperwork has been required by Human Resources.

This rotation activity was a new venture entered into by the Library as a pilot programme in order to offer staff the opportunity to explore other methods of developing. It has been administratively time consuming process and even though we have two staff who appreciated and enjoyed the rotation process, the value of moving this offering from a pilot programme for alternative staff development is not showing any visible or viable benefits.

Staff who identify themselves as wishing to gain additional skills and knowledge will in the future be moved temporarily into positions that will allow this action to take place.