

POSITION DESCRIPTION



Position	People and Culture Manager, Employee Relations
Level/Classification	HEW1010
Reports to	Chief People Officer, also receives direction from Head of People Services and HR Systems and Head of Leadership Services and People Strategy
Unit	Employee Relations
Directorate	People and Culture
Positions Supervised	Employee Relations team

Position Purpose

The People and Culture Manager, Employee Relations is responsible for leading the University's Employee Relations (ER) function, providing strategic leadership, governance, and expert advice across complex workplace matters.

The role ensures compliance with legislative and industrial obligations, drives effective case management practices, and leads the University's approach to industrial relations strategy, enterprise bargaining, dispute resolution, and external representation.

Operating as a senior trusted advisor to the Chief People Officer and University Executive, the role balances risk mitigation with a values-led, solution-focused approach aligned to Murdoch University's strategic priorities under *Ngala Kwop Bididi – Building a brighter future, together.*

The position plays a critical role in fostering a respectful, compliant and high-performing workplace culture through proactive ER strategy, policy governance, leadership capability uplift, and constructive union engagement.

About Murdoch University

Murdoch University is a young and dynamic university with a foundational commitment to the environment, social justice and inclusion, and making education accessible to more people. Founded as Western Australia's second university in 1974, today, Murdoch has more than 21,000 students and 1,700 staff across campuses in Perth, Singapore and Dubai. With more than 90,000 Alumni, Murdoch graduates can be found all over the world, making a positive difference.

Our Strategy – Ngala Kwop Bididi. Building a brighter future, together – guides the University's direction and reaffirms our shared purpose to change lives and society for the better through accessible education and research.

The Strategy is focused on three key themes:

- Sustainability: Be a leading university in education, teaching and translational research in sustainability.
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Build a welcoming, diverse and inclusive community.
- First Nations: Become the University of first choice for First Nations peoples.

Murdoch is also committed to building engagement with our local community, State, nation, and global society with a track-record in creating strong partnerships with business, government and industry.

About the Work Area

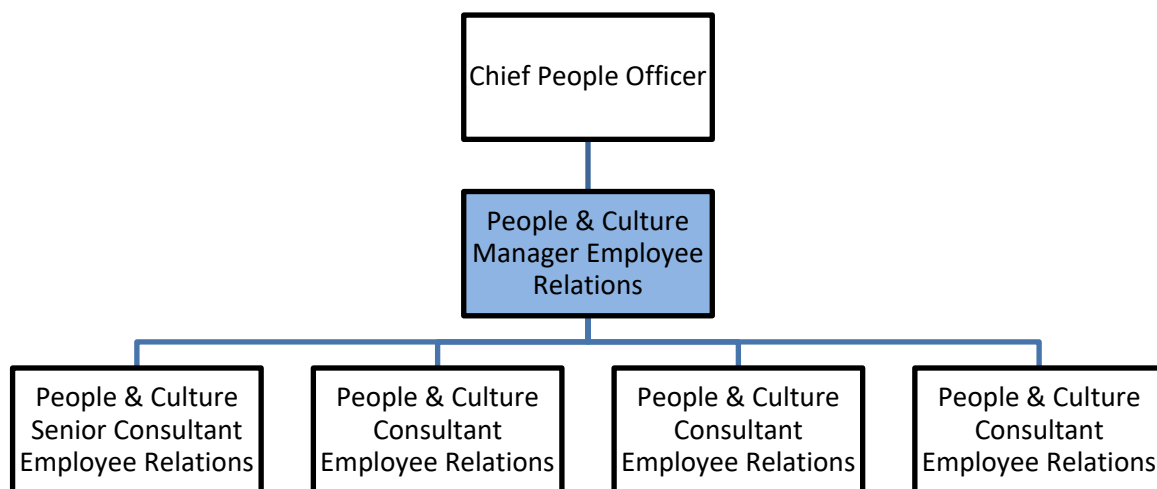
The People and Culture team partners with leaders across the University to enable organisational performance through contemporary people strategy, workforce planning, leadership capability and governance frameworks.

The Employee Relations function operates as a specialist centre of expertise responsible for:

- Industrial and legislative compliance
- Enterprise agreement interpretation and bargaining
- Complex case management and investigations
- Tribunal and court representation
- Policy governance
- Union and external stakeholder engagement
- Workplace relations learning and capability uplift

The team operates with a strong service ethos grounded in integrity, procedural fairness, confidentiality and solution-focused practice.

Reporting Relationships



Key Responsibilities/Duties

1. Strategic Leadership & Governance

- Lead the Employee Relations function, setting strategic direction aligned to the University's People Strategy.
- Provide authoritative advice to the Chief People Officer, Executive and senior leaders on industrial and legislative risk.
- Develop ER frameworks, standards and governance mechanisms that ensure consistent and compliant practice.
- Monitor legislative developments and proactively assess organisational impact.

2. Industrial & Legislative Compliance

- Provide expert interpretation and application of the Fair Work Act, industrial instruments, enterprise agreements, contracts and policy.
- Ensure compliant management of misconduct, underperformance, disputes, grievances, consultation and change processes.
- Oversee quality assurance of complex case management to ensure procedural fairness and risk mitigation.

3. Enterprise Bargaining & Union Engagement

- Support and/or lead enterprise bargaining negotiations and strategy development.
- Maintain effective, constructive working relationships with relevant unions and employee representatives.
- Develop negotiation strategies, briefing materials and Executive advice.
- Represent the University in formal consultation and dispute resolution processes.

4. External Representation & Advocacy

- Represent the University in industrial tribunals, commissions and other external forums as required.
- Prepare submissions, witness materials and briefing documents.
- Liaise with external legal providers and industrial relations advisors where engaged.

5. Case Management Oversight

- Provide expert guidance and escalation support on high-risk, complex or sensitive matters.
- Ensure integrated management of matters in collaboration with Health, Safety and Wellbeing and, where applicable, Student Integrity Services.
- Embed trauma-informed, procedurally fair and culturally responsive practices.
- Direct involvement in specific matters on an as required basis.

6. Policy & Framework Development

- Lead the development, review and continuous improvement of people-related policies, procedures and guidelines.
- Ensure alignment with legislation, enterprise agreements and strategic priorities.

7. Capability Development

- Identify ER capability gaps across leadership cohorts.
- Design and deliver targeted workplace relations training programs.
- Equip leaders with practical tools for effective people management.

8. Team Leadership

- Lead, coach and develop the Employee Relations team to deliver high-quality, timely and consistent services.
- Foster a culture of accountability, collaboration, and professional growth.
- Manage workload allocation and ensure service excellence.

9. Collaboration & Integration

- Partner closely with People Services, HR Systems, Leadership Services & People Strategy and Health, Safety & Wellbeing.
- Contribute to broader People and Culture strategic initiatives and organisational change programs.

Selection Criteria

Essential

- Tertiary qualification in Human Resources, Law, Industrial Relations or related discipline (postgraduate qualifications desirable).
- Extensive senior-level experience in employee and industrial relations within a complex organisation (higher education or public sector desirable).
- Demonstrated expertise in interpretation and application of employment legislation, enterprise agreements and industrial instruments.
- Proven experience in enterprise bargaining strategy and union negotiations.
- Demonstrated experience representing organisations in tribunals, commissions or formal dispute processes.
- Strong risk assessment capability and sound judgement in complex, sensitive and high-impact matters.
- Exceptional written communication skills, including preparation of Executive briefings, submissions and formal correspondence.
- Highly developed interpersonal and influencing skills with the ability to build credibility with senior leaders and union representatives.
- Demonstrated ability to lead and develop high-performing teams.
- Strong project management and organisational capability.

Desirable

1. Experience in a large, complex organisation or higher education institution
2. Experience within the Australian higher education sector.
3. Demonstrated understanding of contemporary workplace relations trends and reform directions.
4. Experience in leading large-scale organisational change from an industrial and ER perspective.

Work Requirements

1. The occupant of this position will be required to undertake a criminal record check in accordance with the University's Employee Background Checks Procedure.
2. Some after hours work may be required
3. Ability to work outside of normal office hours when required.

General Obligations

- While at work, an employee must:
- take reasonable care for their own health and safety and ensure that their acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons;
- report incidents, injuries and hazards;
- comply with any reasonable instruction that is given by Murdoch University; and
- comply with Murdoch University policies and procedures.

Guiding Principles and Values/Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct

Our Values

- Authenticity
- Integrity
- Respect
- Inclusivity
- Openness

Our Principles

- Act with justice, respect and responsible care.
- Be collegiate and respectful of other points of view.
- Protect academic freedom.
- Be agile, flexible and resilient.
- Make decisions at the most appropriate level.
- Be transparent in decision-making and with information.
- Adopt common approaches to common tasks.
- Be careful stewards of our resources.

All staff will comply with the University's Code of Ethics and Code of Conduct and demonstrate a commitment to its Equity, Diversity and Safety principles and the general capabilities of personal effectiveness, working collaboratively and demonstrating a focus on results.

All Staff complete a Development Review Annually. A Commencing Development Review should be completed within 3 months of commencement.

We acknowledge that Murdoch University is situated on the lands of the Whadjuk and Binjareb Noongar people. We pay our respects to their enduring and dynamic culture and the leadership of Noongar elders past and present. The boodjar (country) on which Murdoch University is located has, for thousands of years, been a place of learning. We at Murdoch University are proud to continue this long tradition.