



Managers



Australian Government

Australian Public Service Commission

APS Framework and Manager Guide to **Identifying Potential**



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Purpose

This guide is designed to assist managers to make an initial assessment of an individual's potential for roles of larger scale or complexity in the future. Clear identification of potential is critical to understanding the likely ability of an individual to thrive in a more complex and ambiguous environment.

Results from this assessment may also provide insight on whether they would be interested in and benefit from further formal assessments (e.g. 360 degree feedback, formal talent programs) to mitigate any risk of harm or disengagement.

When conducting the assessment, take into consideration the insights already collected through initial career conversations with the individual (*Aspiration Career Conversation Guide*).

2022 Review and update

In 2015, 19 models for identifying high potential were reviewed to identify observable indicators for each quality of potential that are meaningful in the APS context (People Measures, 2015). This review helped shape the original Managers Guide to Identifying Potential as well as the APS Framework for High Potential.

In 2022, the APSC and APS Talent Working Group undertook a review of the guide and framework.

Findings from the consultations with the APS Talent Working Group reflected that:

- The resources were useful and still being used by APS agencies;
- Additional guidance in using the Manager Guide to Identifying Potential would be helpful for managers and HR practitioners;
- Agencies required clearer guidance on how the results from this assessment could be used to inform other talent processes;
- Consolidating the APS Framework for High Potential within the Manager Guide to Identifying Potential would be a helpful reference for managers when using the tool.

These recommendations have been incorporated to create a more accessible guide. In addition, a new visual aid, the Development Indicator (see page 7), has been included to assist to visually identify areas of strength and possible development against the potential model.

Who will use it

- **Managers** – to understand the individual's potential for more senior or critical roles in the future against the APS Framework for High Potential.

When should it be used?

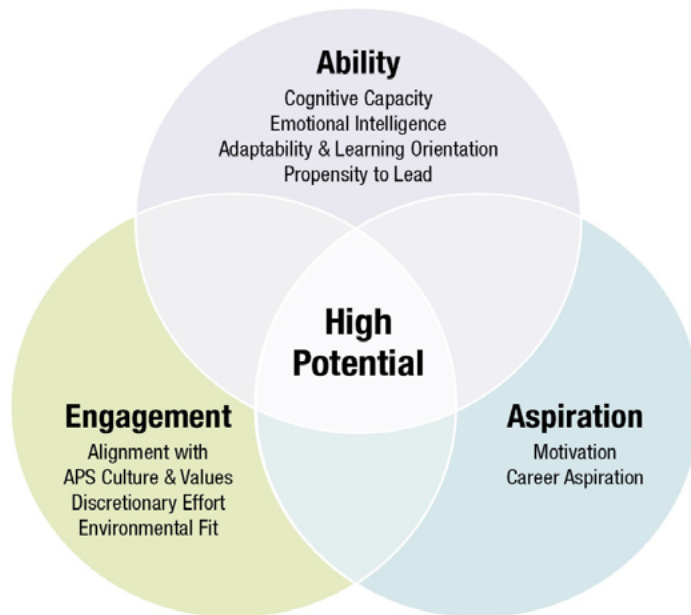
- When used as part of talent segmentation, assessing potential should take place after an aspiration career conversation with each individual. It should guide in mapping the individual on the *APS Talent Segmentation Model*.

What is High Potential?

High potential individuals are consistent high performers who also demonstrate the capacity to move into roles of greater complexity and ambiguity in the future. In the APS, potential is measured against the APS Framework for High Potential.

Defining High Potential – Ability, Aspiration and Engagement

APS High Potential Model



The APS Framework for High Potential has been adapted from the Corporate Leadership Council's definition of potential which includes three qualities: Ability, Aspiration and Engagement (CEB, 2005).

The three qualities are broken down as:

- **Ability** – identifies individuals who have the ability to grow, adapt and develop enough to handle more complex work challenges which come with more senior roles. This includes cognitive capacity, emotional intelligence, adaptability and learning orientation and propensity to lead.
- **Aspiration** – identifies individuals who are interested in working toward more senior positions. This includes exploring their motivations and career aspirations.
- **Engagement** – identifies individuals who are more likely to remain within the organisation once they have succeeded to more senior roles, mitigating 'flight risk'. This includes culture, values, discretionary effort and environmental fit.

Only one in seven high performers also display high potential. This means, that whilst an individual may be a high performer, their ability, aspiration and engagement needs to be assessed to determine if they are also high potential (CEB, 2014).

Note: The assessment of potential is best made by a manager who works closely with the individual and is able to directly observe their behaviours and engage with them about their career aspirations.

Steps to assess potential

STEPS	ACTIONS
1. Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a career conversation with the individual to understand their aspirations, experiences and career history prior to making an assessment of their potential. The <i>Aspiration Career Conversation Guide</i> may be used to support this conversation.
2. Make an assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing on insights from the aspiration focused career conversation, complete the <i>Assessment – Manager Guide to Identifying Potential</i> (see page 4). • Determine the individuals rating (1–5) based on their demonstration of each indicator – Ability, Aspiration and Engagement. • Record any examples or observed behaviours that support your ratings within the comments section. • Once you have completed the ratings, calculate the average of all the ratings to determine the individuals overall score. • For a visual representation of the individuals strengths and development areas, input these ratings into the Development Indicator (see page 7). <p>Note: Calibration of ratings is useful to reduce bias and ensure consistency. Calibration is often conducted with a talent council/senior executive group. Each agency will have it's own governance framework and calibration approach.</p>
3. Post-assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insights from this assessment can be used as data to inform mapping of each individual on the <i>APS Talent Segmentation Model</i>. These insights also inform development planning and/or if individuals will benefit from specific development programs, it is strongly recommended that a development conversation is held following the aspiration focussed career conversation to ensure meaningful actions follow the initiative exploration • The development conversation should be informed by the results of this assessment and insights from the aspiration focused career conversation. This development conversation is important as it will provide the individual with guidance on their areas of development and career next steps. <p>Note: It is important to keep a record of all ratings and comments to support future discussions with the individual or senior executive group.</p>

Assessment – Manager Guide to Identifying Potential

An individual is to be assessed based on how regularly (1=rarely, 5=always) they demonstrate the following, with an average score used to determine the overall assessment of potential.

1 = Rarely **2 = Occasionally** **3 = Regularly** **4 = Consistently** **5 = Always**

ABILITY

How consistently do they demonstrate the following?	1–5
<p>Cognitive Capacity</p> <p>Cognitive capacity is the strongest predictor of potential as it demonstrates the ability to think through and deal with increasingly complex problems and situations. Cognitive capacity includes being able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take in and process new information quickly • Make connections, understand systems, see patterns • Grasp new concepts; formulate ideas and hypotheses • Generate ideas and solves problems 	
<p>Emotional Intelligence</p> <p>Emotional Intelligence is the ability to manage oneself and work effectively with others. This is critical to success in increasingly ambiguous and contested environments and is an important indicator of potential.</p> <p>Emotional intelligence includes demonstrating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resilience and personal courage • Awareness of impact on others • Ability to understand multiple perspectives • Ability to develop personal relationships • Willingness to collaborate and value others' contributions, perspectives and wisdom • Empathy 	
<p>Adaptability & Learning Orientation</p> <p>Adaptability and learning orientation facilitate growth and development. This is an important element in an individual's openness to new roles and experiences, and the likelihood of being able to successfully adjust.</p> <p>It is a combination of mental and behavioural flexibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An interest in learning • Openness to feedback • Willingness to learn from mistakes • Versatility – can deploy themselves in a system in different ways to achieve the best outcome • Adaptability • Translates learning to behavioural change and action 	

● ABILITY (cont.)

How consistently do they demonstrate the following?	1-5
<p>Propensity to Lead</p> <p>The propensity to lead is an important indicator of likely success in more senior and broader roles. It is the degree of comfort with taking charge, holding authority and empowering others:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfort with holding authority • Propensity to set direction • Use influence • Develops and inspires others 	
Comments	

● ASPIRATION

How consistently do they demonstrate the following?	1-5
<p>Motivation</p> <p>Motivation facilitates growth and development. It is the energy, ambition and drive to succeed, demonstrated through the ability to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to goals • Sees goals to completion • Take calculated risks in the interest of achieving outcomes • Achieves in a variety of contexts and settings 	
<p>Career Aspiration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspiration is the desire to progress into broader and more complex roles, demonstrated through: • Expresses a desire to progress their career and make a larger contribution to the APS. • Preparedness to take on greater responsibility • Preparedness to step into new or complex assignments in order to learn 	
Comments	



● ENGAGEMENT

How consistently do they demonstrate the following?	1-5
<p>Alignment with APS Values and Secretaries Charter of Leadership Behaviours</p> <p>Alignment of individual values and behaviours with the <u>Secretaries' Charter of Leadership Behaviours</u> as well as the culture and <u>values of the APS</u> is an important requirement for future success within the APS. This is demonstrated through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates alignment with the Secretaries Charter of Leadership Behaviours • Models the APS Values including Integrity everyday • Demonstrates a commitment to serve the government of the day • Ability to work dynamically and effectively in the agency and APS context • Personal maturity • Building relationships by respecting, valuing and empowering others • Authenticity 	
<p>Discretionary Effort</p> <p>Discretionary effort is the willingness to go above and beyond expectations to achieve a goal. It indicates a high degree of engagement with the work of the agency or of the APS.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to go above and beyond expectations to achieve goals • Contributes corporate citizenship 	
<p>Comments</p>	

Average Rating	1-2	3	4-5
Assessment of Potential	Potential	Moderate Potential	High Potential

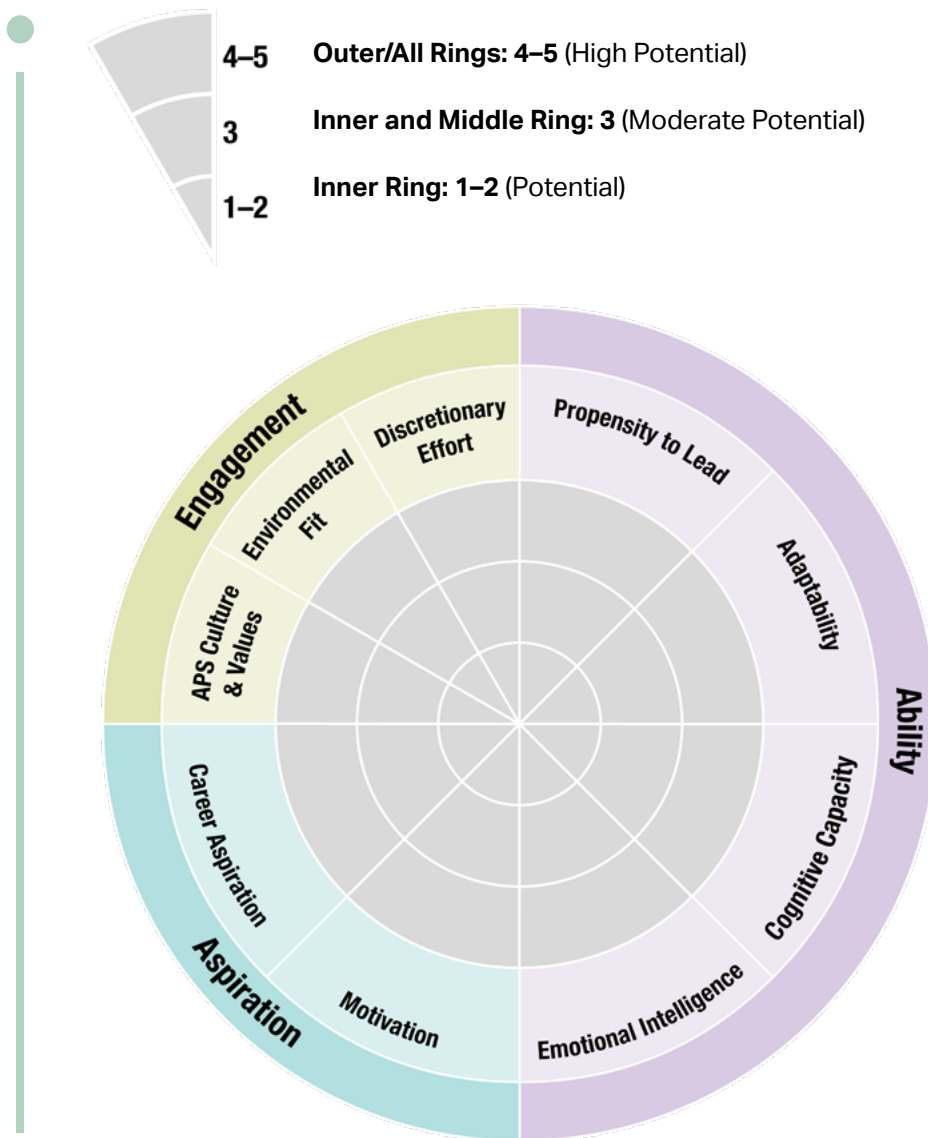
Average Score /5 = /5

For a copy of the full *APS Framework for High Potential*, please refer to the Appendix on page 8.

Development Indicator

Once the above assessment has been completed, this Development Indicator may be used as a visual aid to identify areas of strength and development against the APS Framework for High Potential. This may be valuable to support feedback to the individual (See *Development Career Conversation Guide*).

Shade the areas according to the individual's ratings of potential.



See *Editable Development Indicator*.

Appendix – APS Framework for High Potential

ABILITY (Strong foundation & capacity for growth)

Cognitive Capacity – (consistent and stable, unlikely to change)

Cognitive capacity is the strongest predictor of potential as it demonstrates the ability to think through and deal with increasingly complex problems and situations. Cognitive capacity includes being able to:

- take in and process new information quickly
- make connections, understand systems, see patterns
- grasp new concepts; formulate ideas and hypotheses
- generate ideas and solves problems

Emotional Intelligence – (consistent and stable, some elements can be developed)

Emotional Intelligence is the ability to manage oneself and work effectively with others. This is critical to success in increasingly ambiguous and contested environments and is an important indicator of potential. Emotional intelligence includes demonstrating:

- resilience and personal courage
- awareness of impact on others
- ability to understand multiple perspectives.
- ability to develop personal relationships
- willingness to collaborate and value others' contributions, perspectives and wisdom
- empathy

Adaptability & Learning Orientation – (consistent and stable, some elements can be developed)

Adaptability and learning orientation facilitate growth and development. This is an important element in an individual's openness to new roles and experiences, and the likelihood of being able to successfully adjust. It is a combination of mental and behavioural flexibility:

- an interest in learning
- openness to feedback
- versatility – can deploy themselves in a system in different ways to achieve the best outcome
- adaptability
- ability to translate learning to behavioural change and action.

Propensity to Lead – (consistent and stable, some elements can be developed)

- setting direction
- using influence
- developing and inspiring others
- inclusive and enables people to make their best contribution.

● ASPIRATION (Willingness & desire to take on more responsibility)

Motivation

Motivation facilitates growth and development. It is the energy, ambition and drive to succeed, demonstrated through the ability to:

- commit to a goal and see it through
- take risks
- consistently achieve in a variety of contexts and settings

Career Aspiration

Aspiration is the desire to progress into broader and more complex roles, demonstrated through:

- career ambition
- preparedness to take on greater responsibility
- Preparedness to step into new or complex assignments in order to learn.

● ENGAGEMENT (Career alignment)

Alignment with APS culture and values

Alignment of individual values and behaviours with the [Secretaries' Charter of Leadership Behaviours](#) as well as the culture and [values of the APS](#) is an important requirement for future success within the APS.

This is demonstrated through:

- commitment to serve the government of the day
- acting with integrity and as a role model for the APS values
- being able to work dynamically and effectively in the agency and APS context
- personal maturity
- building relationships by respecting, valuing and empowering others
- authenticity

Discretionary Effort

Discretionary effort is the willingness to go above and beyond expectations to achieve a goal. It indicates a high degree of engagement with the work of the agency or of the APS.

Environmental Fit

Environmental fit will vary from agency to agency depending on specific functional requirements such as:

- Operational requirements
- Professional requirements

Reference list

CEB (The Corporate Executive Board Company) (2005) *High-Potential Employee Management Survey*, Arlington VA. CEB (The Corporate Executive Board Company) (2014) *The HR Guide to Identifying High-Potentials*, CEB.

People Measures (2015) *Defining & Predicting High Potential*, Research paper.