



Integrity and Political Savvy

Leading

Exhibits and navigates the principles and values required of public servants, including while working with sensitivity to the political context.

- Sustains trust-based relationship with ministers, other decision makers and key stakeholders. Can have respectful and sometimes ‘uncomfortable’ conversations without damaging those relationships.
- Highly adept at building alignment and alliances between competing interests and agendas.
- Helps shape the authorising environment by being able to influence the thinking and behaviour of others.
- Anticipates and times advice for when it can have the most influence and impact.

70% on-the-job learning

Be sensitive to who you need to engage with in your organisation and externally to influence decisions and deliver outcomes. This includes political and communications advisors in your minister’s office.

Lead discussions with the minister on your projects and areas of expertise.

Lead advice to your agency’s executive leadership team.

Lead expert advice to Cabinet committees or select committees on policy projects that require clear and persuasive advice.

Be the lead advisor to a select committee on draft legislation or an inquiry and present the departmental report.

Lead commissioning discussions for policy work.

Coach policy staff on matters such as:

- the delivery of free and frank advice and boundaries for engaging with ministers
- the positions and commitments of the Government and political parties, and how these relate to your agency’s work.

Share insights with colleagues on the minister’s style and preferences.

Coach policy staff on how to present to the minister (e.g. role plays).

Seek opportunities to attend meetings of Cabinet committees or ministerial groups to understand how your minister interacts with other ministers.

20% learning from others

Seek feedback from peers and senior colleagues on your interaction with ministers and stakeholders, including how you manage tricky conversations or sensitive issues.

Role play with senior colleagues how to deliver difficult messages, or take part in ‘uncomfortable’ conversations.

10% formal training

Consider courses aimed at the skills needed by a principal to navigate issues, relationships and situations with sensitivity to the political context.