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Guidelines introduction

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Workforce planning context

The GSE Act assignment provisions are important enablers of effective workforce planning and management. Pro-active workforce planning is essential to achieve optimal development and deployment of a workforce capable of responding to current and future agency priorities. Workforce planning requires managers to translate the strategic direction and priorities for their organisation into the capabilities required in the short and long term to deliver on objectives; to have a deep and current understanding of the current workforce's capabilities; and, based on these, to plan and manage the recruitment, development, deployment and performance of staff to optimise outcomes.

Workforce planning includes:

- organisational and role design based on analysis of what needs to be delivered and the mix of capability types and levels needed to deliver it;
- decisions about short and long term capability needs as a basis for determining the mix of employment types required (ongoing, temporary, casual, contingent);
- encouraging employees to nominate roles or work areas they want to work in next;
- allocation, recruitment and mobility decisions that take account of organisational priorities, employee capability levels and employee development needs;
- development of the workforce pool to ensure the right capability mix to deliver high quality services to customers.

Workforce planning should be undertaken as a matter of course at all levels of the organisation. In addition to cyclical corporate planning, every vacancy is an opportunity to consider whether the role is still needed in its current form and/or whether there is an opportunity to assign a staff member who would benefit from experience in the relevant area. Day to day interactions with staff and the more formal cyclical reviews of performance management are the basis for understanding development needs, identifying employees who are ready for, or would benefit from, work in a new area, and any capability gaps within the existing workforce. Assigning an employee to a different role should not be used as a means of dealing with poor performance.

What is a role?

Section 3 of the GSE Act defines a role as the duties and responsibilities of an employee.

Organisational structures and the roles within them reflect the priorities of an organisation at a point in time, including what is needed to meet the priorities (the deliverables), and how work should be undertaken (the capabilities to be displayed). Roles may be created for short term priorities or ongoing work.

Guidance on what should be included in role descriptions is provided in the Role Description Development Guideline. A web based role description template is also available on the PSC website.

Reviewing Roles

Reviewing roles may arise from a vacancy, a change to organisational priorities, or as part of agency wide workforce planning. Role vacancy is an opportunity for managers to review whether there is a continued need for the role in its current form, whether a different combination of roles at particular classifications is better suited to deliver required organisational outputs and outcomes, whether the selection of focus capabilities is still appropriate, etc.

If an employee is to be assigned to a different role as a result of role review, the consultation requirements in section 4.4 and the assessment requirements in section 4.3 of these guidelines apply.

If role review will affect a significant number of employees, the Managing Excess Employees provisions and the Agency Change Management Guidelines apply.

What does "classification of work" mean under the GSE Act?

The GSE Act provides (s45 and s46) that non-executive employees are employed within a classification of work determined by the agency head and can be assigned to roles within that classification of work. The GSE Act says a classification of work extends to any kind of work and any grade of that work.

For the purposes of assignment under section 46 of the GSE Act, 'classification of work' should be regarded as including roles within the agency that are of similar grade, remuneration and capability requirements, as determined by the agency head.

In broad terms, this means that a non-executive employee may be considered for assignment to any role within their agency which has similar remuneration, requires essentially the same capability levels as those required of the employee in their current role or a previous role, and for which the employee meets any essential requirements and focus capabilities. The focus capabilities in the new role may be different to the focus capabilities in the current role.

Roles in a classification of work have different essential requirements and different focus capabilities. Not all employees in the classification of work will be suitable for assignment to all roles. For example, roles in a classification of work may include Administrative and Clerical clerk grade 7/8 project officers, policy officers, customer service officers, human resources officers, communications officers, finance officers and executive support officers, among other role types. If finance officer roles in this classification of work require a chartered accountant qualification as an essential requirement, only employees in the classification of work that have the qualification are able to be assigned to these roles. Classification of work may include roles that require comparable capabilities and are at comparable grades, but have their remuneration determined through different industrial instruments.

Where the capability requirements and work value of the roles are comparable but the remuneration of the roles is different, an assignment to a role with a different remuneration in the same classification of work should meet the following criteria.

- The maximum salary of the grade in the new role is no more than 5 per cent greater than the maximum salary in the grade of the current assigned role.
- The employee's current salary point is within the salary range for the role to which the employee is being assigned.
- The employee is to be assigned to the closest salary point in the new salary scale that is the same or greater than the employee's current salary.
- The employee's salary is not to be reduced by the assignment without the written consent of the employee.
- If the maximum salary for the grade (i.e. the highest increment the employee may progress to in that grade) in the new role is less than the maximum that the employee could progress to in the employee's current role, the employee's written consent is required.

Refer to the Glossary in Appendix 1 for an explanation of terms used regularly throughout these guidelines.

What is a temporary assignment? (GSE rule 11)

Temporary assignment (rule 11) is used instead of assignment (GSE s38 and 46) when two conditions are met:

1. the assignment is for a defined period (usually short) with a specified end date; and
2. the employee is expected to return to their most recently assigned role at the end of the temporary assignment.

Temporary assignment may be at level, or to a higher or lower classification of work or band.

Non-executives may be temporarily assigned to another role within the same Public Service agency. Senior executives may be temporarily assigned to another role in the same Public Service agency or another Public Service agency.

All references to temporary assignment in this document refer to rule 11.

Further details on temporary assignment are set out in section 5 of these guidelines.

Refer to the Glossary in Appendix 1 for an explanation of terms used regularly throughout these guidelines.

Note

While GSE Act s64 and s66 could be used for senior executive movements between government sector agencies, the policy intent is that movements between Public Service agencies should be made as assignments under s38. The use of s66 should be limited to movements between the government sectors and a non-government sector body as defined in s 66(6) and s64 should be used for transfers and secondments between government sector (non-Public Service) agencies.

For information on transfers, secondments and temporary assignment of staff between NSW government sector agencies and other relevant bodies, refer to GSE Act s64 and 66, and Part 6 of the GSE Rules.