

# Role analysis

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A role analysis is a systematic examination of the purpose, responsibilities and scope of a role in supporting business objectives.

Role analysis is the foundation for informing the role description and establishing the standards (capabilities, knowledge and experience) and other essential requirements needed to perform the role.

A thorough role analysis will support you to:

- produce a high-quality role description that gives clear information to potential candidates, assessors and managers and informs how the role is graded
- attract suitable candidates and select the best person for the role
- consider ways to structure the role (how, where and when work is performed) to enable flexible working and workplace adjustments
- develop appropriate, non-discriminatory pre-screening and disqualification questions
- design capability-based assessments around the pre-established standards for the role.

## When to do a role analysis

The initial role analysis is done when the need for a new role is identified. In many cases there may be an existing role description that can be adapted for the new role.

Vacancies provide an opportunity to review existing roles to decide whether they are still required, or if their outcomes can be delivered in some other way. Because roles are not static, it is important to take the opportunity to review and update an existing role description to reflect changes including the organisation's regulatory framework, strategy, structure, operating environment or technology, or your agency's diversity and inclusion goals.

## Recommended approach

An effective role analysis draws on a range of information such as:

- the hiring manager's description of their needs in the context of the needs of the team and organisation
- interviews with stakeholders who understand the purpose and outcomes of the role (such as supervisors, customers, persons currently in the role or similar role)
- review of an existing role description or similar role description in the **sector role description library**
- research and comparisons with roles in other agencies, clusters, or external organisations.

A multi-method approach is recommended to give a fair picture of the role and the required capabilities. Well established role analysis techniques include:

- critical incident interviews – interviews that seek information on behaviours that differentiate between success and failure
- visionary interviews - forward-looking interviews with leaders to anticipate future directions
- structured role analysis questionnaires - questionnaires to add rigour to the job analysis
- review of existing role-related documentation (including a role description, where available)
- direct observation of a person performing the role (useful for roles involving manual tasks).

If you have not done a role analysis before, seek advice from an experienced HR advisor in your agency.

## Outputs of the role analysis

The main output of a role analysis for recruitment is the **role description**. Guidance on what to include in role descriptions is provided in the **Role Description Development Guideline**.

Inclusion of essential requirements in a role description or job advertisement needs careful thought. If these are not necessary to achieve the outcomes of the role they may be discriminatory. See: **Essential requirements factsheet**.

You may wish to consult with your agency's HR or diversity and inclusion contacts to consider whether the role can be targeted towards the employment of eligible persons under **GSE rule 26** as a way of improving diversity.

# Role analysis for senior executives

Work level standards have been developed to help HR specialists to classify and evaluate senior executive roles by setting out the expected work to be performed by senior executives for each band. See [NSW Public Service Senior Executive Work Level Standards](#) for more information.

## Tips for doing a role analysis

The role analysis should:

- be based on regular reviews and workforce planning projections of needs
- focus on the business outcomes to be delivered by the role and the ways in which the capabilities, experience, knowledge and other **essential requirements** support this
- consider any **essential requirements** needed to perform the role from day one
- be objective and be based on a range of evidence
- rethink the where, when and how work can be done. Also consider who can do it. Consider modern ways of working, flexibility and allowing for adjustments to accommodate people with disability
- look beyond the current role structure and consider options for reshaping the role to open it up to other candidates (e.g. eligible persons referred to in **GSE rule 26**)
- use or adapt existing role descriptions when the new role is similar to an existing role or role type to maintain consistency across your agency's role descriptions
- be centred on the requirements of the role and how they help to meet business outcomes to develop a high quality role description and fit-for-purpose assessment approach.

## Resources

- [O\\*Net Resource Center](#) with generic questionnaires to assist with your role analysis
- [CIPD: Fact sheet on job design](#)
- [Office of Personnel Management \(United States Government\): Job analysis](#)
- [Australian Human Rights Commission: A step-by-step guide to preventing discrimination in recruitment \(Part 2. Creating the job description\)](#)