

Sector role description FAQs

Information on how to use and adapt the sector role descriptions.

The Sector Role Description Library contains roles that are common across the public sector.

The Frequently Asked Questions (below) and Sector Role Description Guide explain how to use and adapt the role descriptions.

Why use sector role descriptions?

The sector role descriptions are quality assured and designed to meet current needs and future directions. They have been:

- extensively researched and developed in consultation with sector human resources and subject matter experts
- independently reviewed and evaluated by job evaluation experts
- endorsed by relevant lead agencies and occupational groups

Sector role descriptions are a practical resource that will save agencies much of the work involved in developing role descriptions. They provide consistency which will support employee mobility, create clarity around work expectations and enable more effective workforce planning.

What kinds of roles are included in the Sector Role Description Library?

The roles included in the library are common in the public sector and found in many agencies. The library includes both non-executive and executive role descriptions and will be progressively expanded.

How have the sector role descriptions been developed?

The sector role descriptions have been developed in suites of occupational groups and functional areas. While the approach has varied for each suite, it has involved some or all of the following:

- analysis of functions and roles in the occupational/functional group, in the NSW public sector, other jurisdictions and the private sector
- establishment of working groups consisting of occupational/functional subject matter experts and HR experts from all clusters
- drafting of the sector role descriptions by external subject matter experts with the input of the working groups
- endorsement by the relevant steering/reference group

How should agencies choose between sector role descriptions at different levels?



The sector role descriptions have been designed in tiers to meet varying organisational needs.

Agencies are not expected to need roles at every level. For example, the library may include role descriptions for a Business Analyst, Senior Business Analyst and Principal Business Analyst. A large agency may require roles at each level, while a smaller agency may only require one. In this instance the small agency may need to combine content from more than one level and re-evaluate to confirm the grade.

What do agencies need to add to sector role descriptions?



Some essential information such as the department/agency overview needs to be added to the sector role description to produce a complete role description. Follow the [**Sector Role Description Guide**](#) to finalise a role description.

Can sector role descriptions be customised to meet individual agency needs?



There is plenty of scope for customising the sector role descriptions to the individual agency context and to meet specific agency needs, although the pre-existing content of the role descriptions should remain fundamentally the same to maintain their value for role consistency and mobility.

What if there isn't a sector role description that meets the agency's needs?



Carefully consider the need to create a unique role rather than using one from the sector role description library. Sector role descriptions provide consistency which will support employee mobility, create clarity around work expectations and enable more effective workforce planning. When looking through the sector role description library it is important to look beyond the role titles to the content to find the role you need. The content may be suitable if customised.

If existing sector role descriptions do not adequately describe the role required, the agency may need to develop its own role description. In this case, refer to the role description development guidelines and use the role description builder.

Agencies can make use of content from the sector role descriptions when developing their own role descriptions.

How do sector role descriptions map to different awards/classifications?



The non-executive sector role descriptions have been independently reviewed and evaluated and are provided with an indicative grade relating to the Crown Employees (Administrative and Clerical Officers – Salaries) Award 2007. Executive sector role descriptions have been developed using the Senior Executive Work Level Standards and relate to a specific band for the NSW Public Service senior executive.

Agencies with different classification structures need to make a judgment on where the sector role description is best placed in their structure, based on their usual job classification/grading practices. For executive roles, agencies will need to undertake a role evaluation using an accredited role evaluation methodology to determine the role's work value and placement within the band and its remuneration range.

What changes can be made to the capabilities?



The capability summary included in each sector role description has been developed in line with the role's primary purpose, key accountabilities, key challenges and key relationships. Capability levels should not be changed, though different focus capabilities can be selected to reflect the content and context of the role. Additional content that is consistent with the level of complexity in the sector role description should not affect the required capability levels.

Focus capabilities are those the employer considers to be the most important for effective performance of the role, and for agencies covered by the GSE Act Recruitment Rules must be assessed in comparative or suitability assessment.

Focus capabilities may be changed by the agency, in line with organisational requirements and the range of focus capabilities suggested in the Capability Comparison Guide. Selection of different focus capabilities should not alter the work value of the sector role description.

Can people management capabilities be added to or subtracted from a sector role description?



The sector role descriptions only include people management capabilities for roles that typically have line management/supervision responsibilities. Therefore, people management capabilities may need to be added or removed to suit the agency context.

Deciding whether a role needs people management capabilities is not always straightforward. For example:

- A role without direct reports may intermittently provide oversight or supervision to project teams on long term projects. In this case the role may require people management capabilities.
- Some agencies create a pool of employees who undertake essentially the same work, sometimes as a sole contributor and at other times with the support of a team of direct reports. In this case, the agency may require all roles in the pool to have people management capabilities, in the expectation that every role will manage a team at some point.

If people management capabilities are added or subtracted from a sector role description the role may need re-evaluation.

When are occupation specific capabilities included in a sector role description?



Occupation specific capabilities are only included in a sector role description when specialised occupational knowledge, skill and abilities are required by an individual for competent performance of a role. Many roles in the sector are adequately covered by the capabilities described in the NSW Public Sector Capability Framework, which apply to everyone.

The following indicators may assist in determining whether a role requires occupation specific capabilities:

- The specialised, occupation specific work occupies a large part of the role
- The job title is strongly associated with the occupational group
- The 'Primary Purpose', 'Key Accountabilities', and 'Key Challenges' contained in the role description indicate a need for occupation specific capabilities to perform the role effectively.

Can additional occupation specific capabilities be added to a sector role description?



If a sector role description includes capabilities from one occupation specific capability set, additional capabilities from the same set may be added, subject to the following considerations:

- is the additional capability really needed to perform the role?
- is the total number of capabilities included in the role description manageable, given that the capabilities need to be assessed for recruitment, performance management and other workforce management practices?

Generally a role description would require capabilities from only one occupation specific capability set, because roles usually belong to one occupational group. For example, a role description will generally not require specialised capabilities from both the Finance Professionals Capability Set and the Procurement Professionals Capability Set.

As a guide most occupation specific sector role descriptions contain no more than five additional occupation specific capabilities.

Can occupation specific capabilities be removed from a Sector Role Description? ▼

Occupation specific capabilities should not be removed from a sector role description because they are considered necessary to achieve the key accountabilities of the role.

The occupation specific sector role descriptions have been developed in close consultation with occupational subject matter experts and HR experts, who determined the required capabilities and levels required for effective performance of these roles.

Is there a requirement that all occupation specific capabilities be selected as focus capabilities? ▼

There is no requirement to select any occupation specific capabilities as focus capabilities. Any that are selected as focus should be assessed in recruitment.

See the Role Description Development Guideline and Capability Comparison Guide for the recommended number of focus capabilities for roles at different grades.

How should sector role descriptions be applied to executive roles? ▼

The process for grading a senior executive role is as follows:

1. Determine the Band by reference to the **NSW Public Service Senior Executive Work Level Standards**
2. Prepare a role description that is consistent with the Work Level Standards for the Band
3. Evaluate the role description using the Mercer CED, Hay or OCR methods
4. Apply the formula for determining the individual discretionary remuneration range for the Senior Executive role within the Band, using the job evaluation points score as an input to this formula. Refer to the **Remuneration Framework**.

When using the sector role description library:

- Select an executive role description that matches the pre-determined Band for the role

Apply the **Sector Role Description Guide** and the **NSW Public Service Senior Executive Work Level Standards** to complete/customise the executive Role Description.

When should non-executive sector role descriptions be evaluated? ▼

Where changes made to the sector role description are in line with the **Sector Role Description Action Guide**, the pre-evaluated grade is likely to be unaffected.

However, key accountabilities, key challenges and role dimensions added by the agency can influence an evaluation outcome, particularly if they are not entirely consistent with the existing content of the sector role description, and significantly add to or diminish the scope or complexity of the role.

If in any doubt as to whether additional and/or contextual content may have affected the work value of the sector role description, seek the advice of a trained job evaluator and re-evaluate if necessary.