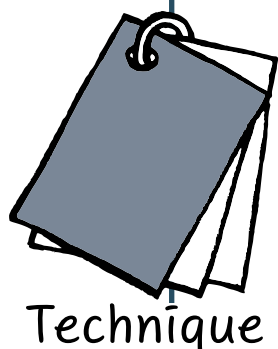# Job design

Writing position descriptions

A good position description is closely linked to the job level of the role, as set out in the **Workforce Capability Framework**.

Well-developed position descriptions save time in the long run. More importantly, a good position description will:

* Support clear communication with customers about the requirements of a role.

* Support the effective recruitment of staff with the appropriate capabilities.

* Provide a reference point for performance feedback, training and development planning and conducting of regular performance reviews.

Technique

Process

Once the job analysis and design/re-design of a role has been completed, the job level and job family are determined. The position description can then be developed. The Workforce Capability Framework is used as the primary source of content for the position description.

Use the **position description template** and follow the steps below to easily incorporate the relevant job level content from the framework. The position description template allows for the development of performance measures that will enable the manager/supervisor and employee to monitor achievement and ensure the application of the required capabilities on the job.

Step 1: Strategic core requirements and functional requirements

Use the relevant job level and job family content from the Workforce Capability Framework for each position description. For example, a role may have been analysed and graded to be at level 3 in the **Direct Service Delivery** job family.

The key responsibility areas and capabilities for level 3 in this job family are transferred into the position description template.

Include all the **strategic core requirements** from the Workforce Capability Framework for level 3 in the position description. See the **communication** example below.

Job design

Strategic core requirements

Key responsibility areas	Capability requirements	Key performance measures
Communication	* Deals with non-routine enquiries. * Uses effective listening skills and seeks, provides and/or shares information with people appropriately. * Can adapt communication style to meet people's needs. * Able to resolve conflict with assistance. * Has a network of internal and external contacts relevant to the role. * Deals with practical issues presenting and enlists a more experienced person as needed.	

Include all the **functional requirements** that are relevant to the role. Note that not all functional requirements will apply to all roles within the same Workforce Capability Framework job family. See the participation and inclusion example below.

Functional requirements

Key responsibility areas	Capability requirements	Key performance measures
Participation and inclusion	* Supports a person with a disability and their family/carers in the areas of life learning, participation, employment and inclusion. * Supports the achievement of life learning, recreation, employment and educational goals and aspirations. * Supports people and families in identifying and accessing community activities, education/ training and employment. * Advocates for a person as required.	

You can add any other key responsibility areas and capability requirements to the position description that are unique to the role or environment, if you need to. In most cases there will be minimal additions but, for example, the role may be for a team leader and the team will be re-locating during the period so there are some clear and specific responsibilities associated with the move that are appropriately reflected beyond the standard strategic core requirements and functional requirements.

Step 2: Position details and purpose

In this example, the role has been determined to be at level 3 from the Direct Service Delivery job family and has had the following information included in the title page of the position description template:

Disability Support Worker

Job family	Direct service delivery [DSD]
Workforce capability framework level	DSD3
Reporting to	Service team leader
Directly supervising	Not applicable
Date prepared	November 2014

The **position purpose** section then needs to be drafted. This section is a succinct summary of the primary responsibilities and context of the role. The language used should be consistent with the job level, in this case level 3, Direct Services Delivery.

Position purpose

This position works under minimal supervision and involves assisting people with daily living skills and community inclusion and participation activities. Work is undertaken in the context of supporting the person to maintain their wellbeing, explore opportunities and work towards agreed outcomes that are important to, and for, the person.

Step 3: Performance measures

Performance measures that reflect whether the job holder of the position is performing at the capability level required are then drafted and inserted.

Use relevant information from the work area, input received from key stakeholders and your knowledge of the role. For example, organisation or team work plans, project timetables, funding provider requirements, existing position description targets or other information on deliverables can all be used where relevant.

The following example shows the performance measures that have been drafted for the Level 3 role in the key responsibility area (Strategic Core Requirement) of "Communication" from the Workforce Capability Framework.

Job design

Key responsibility areas	Capability requirements	Key performance measures
Communication	✱ Deals with non-routine enquiries. ✱ Uses effective listening skills and seeks, provides and/or shares information with people appropriately. ✱ Can adapt communication style to meet people's needs. ✱ Able to resolve conflict with assistance. ✱ Has a network of internal and external contacts relevant to the role. ✱ Deals with practical issues presenting and enlists a more experienced person as needed.	✱ Understands what is being expressed or communicated by each person supported and is able to determine what is important to them. ✱ Achieves a positive relationship with each person supported using appropriate communication strategies and tools. ✱ Adapts communication to meet and if necessary de-escalate situations; seeks assistance when needed ✱ Advocates in specific situations on behalf of each person supported, e.g. at medical appointments; in the community; assisting at a social or recreational event ✱ Uses clear and concise communication. ✱ Provides relevant, clear and factual written information. ✱ Relates effectively to and has productive relationships with relevant people associated with the person that will benefit the support provided.

Job design

Note that the Strategic Core Requirements are the same in every job family. However, the performance measures can be drafted to reflect the specific nature of the role. In the example above, the performance measures for the Level 3 role have been drafted to reflect the direct service nature of the role. A level 3 role from the **Corporate and Service Support** job family might have performance measures with a different emphasis, as shown below, even though the strategic core requirements capabilities are the same

Key responsibility areas	Capability requirements	Key performance measures
Communication	* Deals with non-routine enquiries. * Uses effective listening skills and seeks, provides and/or shares information with people appropriately. * Can adapt communication style to meet people's needs. * Able to resolve conflict with assistance. * Has a network of internal and external contacts relevant to the role. * Deals with practical issues presenting and enlists a more experienced person as needed.	* Shares knowledge and information. * Understands processes and procedures of the business area. * Understands and responds to customer enquiries. * Makes judgments based on capability and responsibility. * Escalates conflicts or complaints when necessary. * Shows flexibility in accommodating different communication styles. * Receives positive. feedback on written and verbal communication.

Step 4: Other relevant information

Other information that puts the role into context e.g. key customer relationships, referring to the strategic and operational plans of the organisation or team, service delivery standards and other relevant or additional information can also be included.

Step 5: Finalise and complete the draft

Finalise the draft position description by adding any other necessary position description information required by the template or by the organisation's policies e.g. financial or other decision-making authorities, compliance with policies for the prevention of harassment and bullying, etc.

Review the draft and consult with relevant stakeholders.

Considerations

Content that is specific to the role in a particular period, for example, a project that a role is responsible for, can be added either in an additional key responsibility area or as part of an existing one.

The performance measures should be as specific and concrete as possible. Measures that are based on quantifiable data or results will make assessment clearer, provided the data is reliable and readily available. In some cases observation by the position's manager or feedback from customers and other stakeholders will be the primary measure.

Some data or information sources may be useful in the assessment of more than one performance measure, for example, organisation culture survey results.

It is best to take a consistent approach to the writing of performance measures across like roles and as appropriate to all position descriptions in the team. This will enable managers to provide feedback on achievement and performance to all their staff in a consistent, efficient and fair manner.

The technique for writing position descriptions is applicable to all roles within the organisation, both paid and unpaid, and supports the alignment of the workforce with business strategy.
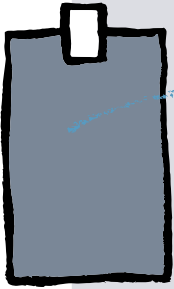
Tips

Good position descriptions set out how a role needs to function and at what level of complexity and how good performance can be achieved. Using the Workforce Capability Framework to reinforce the job level of the role in a position description will ensure that the full complexity of the role can be captured. This is crucial to matching the right employee to the requirements of the role and when managing performance on an ongoing basis.

The position description is a key resource for the manager, employee and individual with disability. It enables everyone to document the responsibilities of the position and the measures that they and the employee will use over time to know that the requirements of the role are being met at the appropriate level of performance.

Using the what's working / not working tool enables everyone to reflect on any existing position description before making changes. Using this tool will gain different people's perspectives and aid the analysis of the role in its current form.

Using language in the performance measures that is consistent with the language in the Workforce Capability Framework for the job level helps to reinforce the performance standards required.

When writing performance measures for inclusion in the position description it is not always necessary to spell out all the detail if it is clear where the detail can be found.
For example, you could use a measure like 'achieves desired outcomes, changes and benefits for customers in each reporting period'. The position description does not need to spell out the services, the number, the mix or the reporting period, as these things are defined in customer agreements, other team or organisation resources, etc. and may be subject to change from time to time. However, it is important that the employee has easy access to this other information.

Stakeholders and other team members already performing similar jobs will have good ideas on performance measures. Work with them to get their input into the most meaningful and appropriate performance measures to use for different roles.
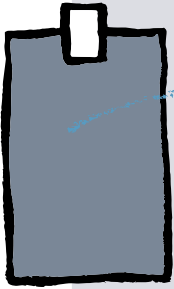
Tips

Where appropriate, customers (this may be both internal and external customers) and key stakeholders of the role in question can also be consulted in the drafting of performance measures. For front-line roles, the performance measures should directly link to the goals in the plan of the person being supported.

Keep position descriptions up to date by checking them regularly, then make necessary changes and discuss any amendments with the job holder to make sure they understand. In most other cases, because using the Framework provides consistency, it will only be necessary to review and adjust the performance measures to reflect any changes to availability of data, reporting periods, etc.

With the continual change in the disability sector, particularly in relation to changing customer expectations and requirements, it is more important than ever to keep position descriptions up to date so that customer expectations and business goals are properly reflected in terms of the expected performance of the job holder.
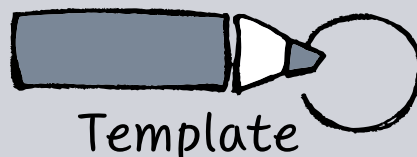
Position description

(Insert organisation name/logo)

Position description

Insert job title

|	
Job family	
Workforce capability framework level	
Reporting to	
Directly supervising	
Date prepared	

Position purpose

Template

Position description

Key responsibility areas	Capability requirements	Key performance measures
Sector and organisation purpose and values		
Leadership and teamwork		
Communication		
Customer relationships		
Personal accountability		
Innovation		
Experience and qualifications		

Template
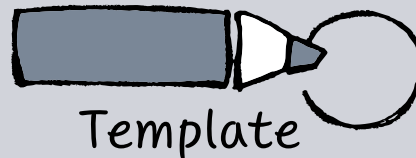
Position description

Functional requirements

Key responsibility areas	Capability requirements	Key performance measures

Template

Position description

Customer relationships

Additional position information

Signatures

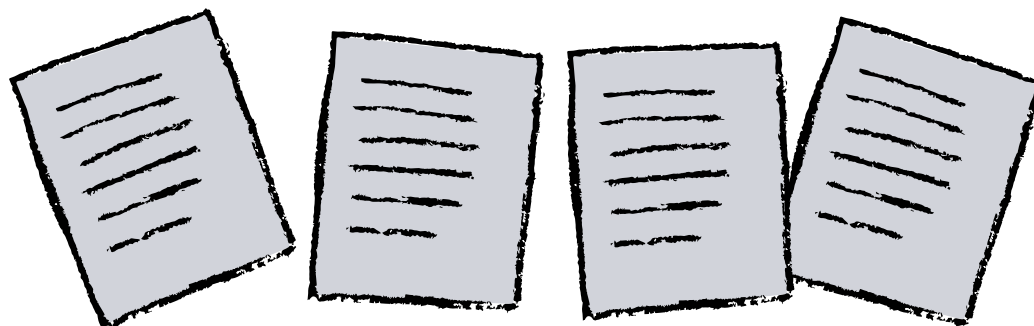| Job holder	Date
Manager/supervisor	Date
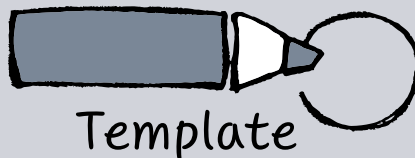
Template

Job design
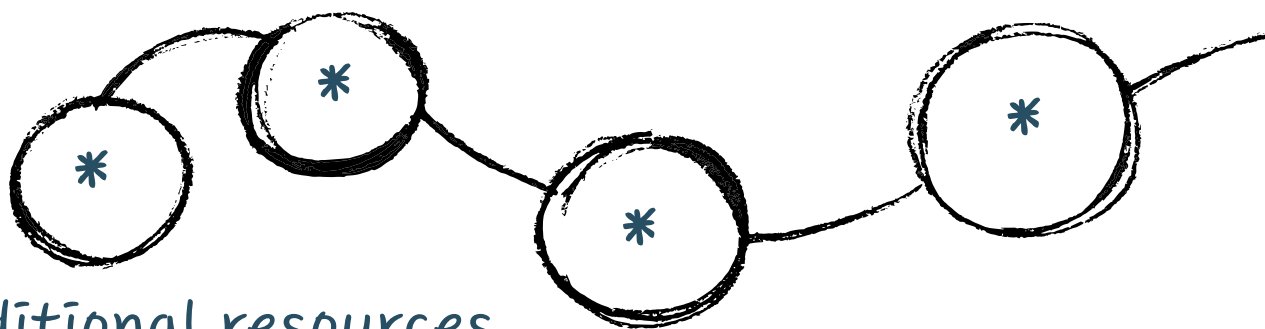
Additional resources

* The Workforce Capability Framework.
* The disability career planner and capability framework implementation guide.
* Tool, tips and template – using the 'donut' to clarify roles and responsibilities
* Tips – designing, redesigning and grading jobs.

Definitions

The term **individual(s)** refers to an individual with a disability and their family and/or circle of support.

The terms **staff/employee(s)** refer to paid or unpaid members of the workforce regardless of their employment relationship with their employer i.e. permanent, casual, full-time, volunteer, etc.