# Victorian Public Service (VPS) executive classification framework

Tools and materials relating to VPS executive classification.

# Contents

# Appendix 1 - Executive work level standards and streams by band

The complete executive work level standards and streams by VPS executive band.

**Senior Executive Service Band 1 Work value standards**

| Competency | Description |
|---|---|
| Knowledge | • Apply comprehensive knowledge and skills, acquired through formal (tertiary) training or relevant professional, technical or management experience.<br>• Be considered an authoritative source of strategic advice and expertise which has influence on organisation decision making in an area of knowledge or practice.<br>• Apply a highly developed understanding of policy, service delivery, regulatory, and/or legislative processes gained through experience in public or private sector management or specialist roles, with commensurate understanding of the social, political, environmental and economic contexts, including State-wide, national or international matters in a specific area of expertise. |
| Relationships | • Facilitate and lead relationships; liaise, engage and influence internal and external stakeholders in relation to a specific area of responsibility.<br>• Negotiate outcomes, enlist cooperation, consult and resolve conflict while maintaining relationships and collaborative networks.<br>• Develop and maintain effective senior relationships within government and non-government sectors to integrate and coordinate policy, regulation, and delivery of services.<br>• Interact, liaise and engage with senior management of the organisation and provide strategic advice to senior management and ministerial advisers in order to influence and persuade.<br>• Participate as a member of a range of committees, working groups and other fora, including inter-organisation groups and industry/community sector groups, and represent the organisation at conferences, meetings and seminars.<br>• Engage stakeholders during times of change, resolving conflict and managing sensitivities within constrained timeframes. |
| Judgement and Risk | • Apply astute judgement in decision making about issues affecting the business unit with sensitivity to issues impacting the organisation and across government.<br>• Make effective judgements under pressure, consider alternative courses of action, devise action plans and advocate new approaches to complex issues.<br>• Resolve problems, taking into account established management systems, professional standards, budget parameters or known equipment capacity.<br>• Make judgements and assess risk under guidance provided by policy, service delivery and/or regulatory frameworks, guidelines and precedents.<br>• Identify, anticipate and manage complex risk, undertaking risk mitigation and management activities to ensure the achievement of business unit and organisational goals. |
| Independence | • Make decisions that impact the business unit and other areas of the organisation, with the potential to flow into industry or other non-government sectors in the short to medium term.<br>• Approve decisions and recommendations of others within the area of responsibility and provide recommendations to higher level senior management which are relied upon in wider organisational decision making.<br>• Exercise high level delegations in relation to legal, governance, human resource management, project and program, and regulatory decisions for a discrete number of functions.<br>• Create and implement annual business plans for a business unit and adopt a 2 to 3-year horizon, ensuring alignment with whole-of-organisation planning. |
| Strategic Change | • Manage change associated with government reforms and transformational change, and take responsibility for continuous improvement processes within the business area.<br>• Regularly monitor and respond to a changing operating and/or policy environment, working with an understanding of the relevant context and emerging social, political, environmental and technological change.<br>• Provide a significant contribution to strategic change management within an organisation, including longer term planning for major change initiatives, and/or changes in the strategic, long term vision of an organisation.<br>• Manage change projects and programs that constitute a major piece of work over an extended timeframe and where this is the primary responsibility of the position. |
| Impact | • Influence policy and strategic direction of an organisation through contribution to executive leadership and advice to higher level positions, including the Secretary and Minister where required.<br>• Have some impact into industry or the wider community through ensuring the effective delivery of services and/or through engagement with government bodies, external peak bodies, groups and associations at an equivalent level.<br>• Contribute to the organisation's strategic planning and culture, as a member of the senior executive, and take full responsibility for developing the strategic direction for the business unit, ensuring elements integrate to support higher organisational strategic goals. |
| Breadth | • Be responsible for a wide range of activities that relate to an area of responsibility or, in a smaller organisation, a number of areas of responsibility.<br>• Manage staff and/or activities that may be geographically dispersed such as across offices in different parts of a city, or that occur in offices in regional areas. |
| Resource Management | • Manage the staff and resources of a portion of an organisation, such as a business unit/branch.<br>• Manage a resource base which may include operational, capital and/or project/program/grants funding and be accountable for the development and management of budgets, finances, procurement and expenditure within a business unit/branch. |

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# Senior Executive Service Band 1 Work Streams

Positions at this level lead and manage in one or more of the functional streams below and may undertake any of the following tasks and responsibilities:

| Stream | Definition |
|---|---|
| Delivery | • Provide comprehensive, authoritative advice and expertise in relation to the effective delivery of services.<br>• Lead and manage a business unit responsible for effective delivery of services.<br>• Oversee the management of contracts in relation to the delivery of services and provision of regular performance and compliance reports in accordance with specified standards, terms and conditions.<br>• Manage one or more of a range of functions to deliver services to staff of an organisation, including HR services, financial services, and ICT services<br>• Ensure the effective delivery of services to a range of customer bases, including specialist services.<br>• Oversee the development, measurement and analysis of customer service standards, systems and processes to ensure continuation of a high level service culture. |
| Policy | • Lead the development and review of policy and implement policy frameworks within area of responsibility.<br>• Review policy drafted by others for sign-off.<br>• Maintain policy frameworks, in line with wider government direction.<br>• Monitor legislative context and ensure policies align with changes or implementation of new legislation.<br>• Develop and review draft papers and briefs for presentation to more senior staff and/or Ministers.<br>• Liaise with government, industry sectors, community and other stakeholder groups in relation to legislative and policy direction and development.<br>• Negotiate policy outcomes and options with a range of internal and external stakeholders.<br>• Provide comprehensive, expert advice on an area of expertise in relation to policy development. |
| Portfolio & Program | • Assume responsibility for a project of large scale or major program significance.<br>• Lead organisational business unit in implementing programs, major projects and initiatives.<br>• Liaise across the organisation to build collaborative approaches to portfolio and program initiatives.<br>• Assume overall project/program delivery responsibility, including the co-ordination of resources and expertise and maintaining project/program within agreed policy, project specification and budgetary constraints.<br>• Report regularly on progress of projects to the Secretary (delegate) and relevant project steering committees, recommend action, identify and refer major policy issues.<br>• Ensure that each project complies at all stages of implementation with government financial, social, budgetary, audit and procurement policies and probity requirements. |
| Regulatory | • Lead a business unit that is responsible for compliance, enforcement, audit, investigation and/or regulatory policy.<br>• Contribute to the development and maintenance of governance frameworks.<br>• Oversee the implementation of compliance programs, including audit and investigation activities.<br>• Oversee intelligence programs, managing risk and assessing threat.<br>• Be responsible for high-level delegations in relation to compliance and enforcement decisions.<br>• Oversee and manage complex compliance, investigation and enforcement activities, applying significant work knowledge and established legislation and policy to sensitive situations.<br>• Liaise, engage and negotiate with key stakeholders to establish standards, policy, and precedent in a regulatory environment. |
| Professional / Specialist | • Act as a chief point of professional advice to key stakeholders within and outside the organisation.<br>• Show intellectual leadership by providing specialist input to policies, new legislation, program reform and business improvement initiatives.<br>• Provide specialist expertise and professional knowledge and skill in relation to specific areas of organisational responsibility.<br>• Oversee a business unit performing specialist or technical work in a profession or area of practice.<br>• Engage with and participate in relevant professional bodies and associations to ensure information exchange and continuing professional development.<br>• Oversee the provision of specialist and technical training and the development of education products in a technical or specialist field, including guidelines, manuals, policies and processes. |

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# Senior Executive Service Band 2 Work value standards

| Competency | Description |
|---|---|
| Knowledge | • Apply extensive knowledge and skills, acquired through formal (tertiary) training or relevant significant professional, specialist or management experience, including knowledge and skills over a broad range of activities or very deep technical and specialist knowledge pursuant to a senior expert in a field.<br>• Provide strategic, evidence-based advice and recommendations and act as an authoritative source of critical advice which impacts organisational decision making in a functional area.<br>• Apply an extensive understanding of policy, service delivery, regulatory, and/or legislative processes gained through substantial experience in public or private sector senior management or specialist positions, with commensurate understanding of the social, political, environmental and economic contexts, including statewide, national or international matters across one or more functions, specialisations or areas of practice. |
| Relationships | • Lead and oversee critical stakeholder engagement, including the need to engage, inform and advise a diverse range of very senior stakeholders in relation to highly complex issues.<br>• Negotiate major outcomes, and provide persuasive advice in the face of divergent views or conflicting agendas while maintaining strong relationships and collaborative networks with key stakeholders at senior levels across government and non-government sectors.<br>• Interact, liaise and engage with the senior executives of the organisation and provide highly influential, strategic advice to Secretaries, Deputy Secretaries and Ministers, and, where relevant, advocate for a position or viewpoint.<br>• Participate as a member or chair a range of committees, working groups and other fora, including inter-organisation groups and industry/community sector groups, and represent the organisation or the government in negotiations.<br>• Engage and manage stakeholders through change, resolving conflict and managing sensitivities in a complex environment. |
| Judgement and Risk | • Make judgements and assess risk in the context of uncertainty and innovation.<br>• Apply lateral thinking and develop innovative solutions that impact onto the area of responsibility and influence decision-making across the organisation.<br>• Identify, anticipate and manage highly complex issues and problems, and develop strategic risk minimisation plans and risk frameworks using guidance that is less defined within the context of broad policy service delivery and/or regulatory frameworks, priorities and strategic direction.<br>• Use robust investigation to consider a wide range of alternative courses of action in highly complex and sensitive situations.<br>• Identify and take into account emerging statewide and national issues and formulate long term plans to mitigate risk and ensure the achievement of the wider government agenda; be aware of the international context where relevant. |
| Independence | • Work with a high level of independence and the freedom to make critical decisions about the way in which goals are achieved and priorities are defined.<br>• Make decisions that impact other areas of the organisation, and flow into industry or other non-government sectors in the medium to long term with the authority to make statements on behalf of the organisation.<br>• Work with a high level of credibility and standing in the area of responsibility.<br>• Exercise high-level delegations in relation to legal, governance, human resource management, project and program, and regulatory decisions.<br>• Adopt a 2 to 3-year focus for primary planning with an understanding of longer term implications where applicable.<br>• Act with full accountability for the integration of strategic policy, regulatory, delivery and/or program initiatives for a group of business units or functions. |
| Strategic Change | • Regularly manage change associated with critical or large-scale organisational reforms.<br>• Identify and coordinate responses to widely impacting organisational change, working with a strategic understanding of the relevant context and emerging social, political, environmental and technological issues.<br>• Oversee multiple, integrated change initiatives with outcomes that have a significant impact on communities, stakeholders and services, or undertake the management of large-scale change projects and programs that constitute a significant piece of work over an extended timeframe and where this is the primary responsibility of the position. |
| Impact | • Strongly influence policy and strategic direction of an organisation through membership of the executive leadership and contribute to organisation-wide goals.<br>• Provide advice and recommendations to the senior executive and the Secretary, and directly to the Minister when required.<br>• Have impact into industry or the wider community through oversight of the delivery of major services and/or through leading engagement with external peak bodies, groups and associations at senior levels.<br>• Contribute to shaping the organisation's strategic vision and culture as a member of the senior executive, and take full responsibility for developing the strategic direction for the area of responsibility, integrating a range of activities, programs and functions to support organisational goals and priorities.<br>• When supporting the work of an organisation through the provision of corporate services or the setting of overarching policy and regulatory frameworks, actions and decisions will impact across the organisation as a whole. |
| Breadth | • Be responsible for an extensive range of activities that relate to a specific major function such as human resource management, information and communication technologies, financial services in a larger organisation, or a number of functions that are interrelated and of high complexity such as both policy and program responsibilities.<br>• Operate within multiple frames of reference and have accountability for a number of business areas.<br>• Manage staff and/or functions that are geographically dispersed such as across offices in different parts of a city, or offices in regional areas. |
| Resource Management | • Manage the staff and resources of a division/group or set of business units within an organisation.<br>• Manage a large resource base which may include operational, capital and/or project/program/grants funding, tactically balancing resources across areas of responsibility.<br>• Be accountable for the development and management of budgets, finances, procurement and expenditure for a division/group or set of business units and influence the allocation of resources over the long term. |

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# Senior Executive Service Band 2 Work Streams

Positions at this level lead and provide direction in one or more of the functional streams below and may undertake any of the following tasks and responsibilities:

| Stream | Definition |
|---|---|
| Delivery | • Provide expert, high level authoritative advice and expertise in relation to the planning, establishment and implementation of services.<br>• Establish, lead and direct the delivery of services, products and systems.<br>• Lead and manage a group of business units that undertake service delivery in one or more specified areas.<br>• Oversee one or more of a range of functions to deliver services to staff of an organisation, including human resources services, financial services, and information and communication technology services.<br>• Provide strategic management and corporate direction to the provision of portfolio support and advice services, policy development and implementation and leadership in the delivery of services.<br>• Continually monitor and review current systems and practices and develop innovative strategies for the realisation of organisation priorities and goals. |
| Policy | • Lead the development and review of policy frameworks over a range of policy areas, including highly complex and sensitive contexts.<br>• Ensure that policy frameworks and accompanying policy documents align with current and future government direction.<br>• Lead and manage a group of business units undertaking policy functions in a range of generalist or speciality areas.<br>• Provide expert and high-level advice to heads of agencies and Ministers in relation to a range of policy development and review.<br>• Engage and consult with senior government, industry sector, community and other stakeholder representatives to achieve consensus in critical areas.<br>• Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of policy initiatives and provide advice regarding social and economic impacts of policy changes or new policy. |
| Portfolio & Program | • Lead the strategic implementation of programs and initiatives.<br>• Take full accountability for major projects.<br>• Undertake program development and planning, including resource negotiation.<br>• Initiate new programs and be responsible for major change initiatives.<br>• Provide leadership on a range of cross-functional project teams and taskforces designed to deliver breakthrough outcomes critical to the integrated delivery of programs across an organisation.<br>• Provide leadership and direction on matters associated with financial, budget and output management, strategic and business planning, particularly for evidence-based new initiative proposals. |
| Regulatory | • Establish and maintain strong and effective governance and regulatory frameworks.<br>• Provide leadership and strategic management for a group of business units that are responsible for regulatory activities.<br>• Oversee the development and implementation of intelligence and compliance programs, including audit and investigation activities.<br>• Oversee very complex compliance, investigation and enforcement activities, applying significant work knowledge and established legislation and policy to highly sensitive situations.<br>• Lead engagement and negotiation with non-government and government stakeholders to ensure the government's regulatory objectives are met.<br>• Provide leadership and strategic management for a diverse range of infringement and enforcement services. |
| Professional / Specialist | • Act as the chief point of professional advice to critical stakeholders within and outside the organisation.<br>• Provide expert advice on specialist and technical issues to Departmental Secretaries, or Head of Organisation, requiring considerable depth and breadth of knowledge and experience in a complex, professional field.<br>• Show intellectual leadership by providing specialist input that shapes the development of policies, new legislation, program reform, and underlying infrastructure.<br>• Provide specialist expertise and professional knowledge and skill in relation to highly complex and critical areas of importance for the organisation.<br>• Oversee a group of business units performing specialist or technical work in a profession or area of practice.<br>• Engage with and participate in relevant professional bodies and associations to ensure information exchange and continuing professional development. |

# Senior Executive Service Band 3 Work value standards

| Competency | Description |
| --- | --- |
| Knowledge | • Provide whole-of-organisation leadership through advanced knowledge and skills, acquired from extensive professional or executive management experience.<br>• Apply cumulative knowledge and extensive expertise to a broad and diverse area of responsibility that encompasses a large portion, or the whole of, an organisation.<br>• Provide highly complex, strategic and critical advice in relation to issues that impact on government policy, services and programs, and act as the principal source of strategic advice for organisational decision-making on which the organisation or the government is dependent.<br>• Act as the major source of advice to ministers and set the parameters under which others advise. |
| Relationships | • Lead and oversee highly critical stakeholder engagement, including the need to engage, inform and advise a diverse range of very senior and highly influential stakeholders in relation to extremely complex, high-profile, high-risk, and sensitive issues.<br>• Negotiate major outcomes, and provide persuasive advice in the face of divergent views or conflicting agendas while maintaining strong relationships and collaborative networks across government and non-government sectors at the highest levels.<br>• Have the authority to present and negotiate highly contentious issues, with technical, policy and/or legal complexity, and represent the organisation, Minister and government at the national and international level.<br>• Chair or act as a senior member of a range of critical stakeholder groups and committees.<br>• Lead stakeholder relationships through complex change, resolving conflict and managing contextual and political sensitivities. |
| Judgement and Risk | • Make judgements and assess very complex risk in the context of uncertainty and innovation.<br>• Give guidance on the development of new policy frameworks and make judgements about the integration of information provided by specialists.<br>• Focus on whole-of-organisation and whole of government issues that are usually sensitive and/or contentious and which impact across sectors, industry and/or the wider community in situations where there is an absence of guidelines or precedents, and where analysis requires very complex investigation.<br>• Identify critical long-term risks and strategies for mitigating these in the context of significant ambiguity, including making judgements about the appropriateness and integrity of legislation, policy, service standards and regulation.<br>• Set or influence emerging statewide or national issues and formulate long-term plans which shape the achievement of the wider government agenda; identify and take the international context into account. |
| Independence | • Work with significant independence and freedom to make critical decisions about the way in which goals are achieved and priorities are defined for the organisation as a whole or a substantial part of an organisation.<br>• Make decisions that impact all areas of the organisation, and flow into industry or other non-government sectors in the long term.<br>• Exercise the authority to make statements and decisions on behalf of the organisation and have a very high level of credibility and standing.<br>• Exercise full delegated authority in respect of management of a major component or the full range of an organisation's functions or programs and provide a governance focus that is fundamental to the organisation's performance in delivering policy or program outcomes.<br>• Adopt a 3 to 5-year focus for primary planning with an understanding of longer-term implications where applicable.<br>• Be fully accountable for the integration of strategic policy, regulatory, service delivery and program initiatives across an organisation. |
| Strategic Change | • Regularly manage change associated with highly critical or very large-scale government reforms.<br>• Regularly identify and coordinate responses to change, working with a strategic understanding of the relevant context and emerging social, political, environmental and technological issues.<br>• Oversee very complex, multiple, integrated change initiatives in the context of innovation, political sensitivity and high levels of risk.<br>• Undertake the management of very large-scale change projects and programs that constitute a highly significant piece of work over an extended timeframe and where this is the primary responsibility of the position.<br>• Manage change in an environment of innovation with government-wide, community-wide or whole-of-sector impact. |
| Impact | • Lead policy development and the strategic vision of an organisation through membership, or as head of, the executive leadership.<br>• Routinely provide very high-level, strategic and critical advice and recommendations to the Secretary, and directly to the Minister.<br>• Have impact into, sector, industry or the wider community, through leading engagement with external peak bodies, groups and associations at the most senior levels.<br>• As a lead member of the senior executive, be accountable for leading the development of the organisation's strategic vision, culture and direction, integrating a range of activities, programs and functions to achieve organisational goals and priorities.<br>• Lead initiatives that impact statewide and/or that may influence policy and program development or service delivery nationally or internationally. |
| Breadth | • Lead multiple functions in a large organisation or manage all functions within a small or medium-sized organisation.<br>• Operate within multiple frames of reference and have accountability for a number of integrated functions or operations.<br>• Manage staff and/or functions that are widely geographically dispersed, including management of a number of regional offices and/or functions that are delivered regionally. |
| Resource Management | • Manage a substantial proportion of the staff of a larger organisation or manage the whole of a smaller one.<br>• Manage a very large resource base which may include operational, capital and/or program funding across multiple areas of responsibility or for a whole organisation.<br>• Be accountable for the development and management of very substantial budgets, finances, procurement and expenditure for a substantial portion of an organisation and plan the allocation of resources over the long term. |

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# Senior Executive Service Band 3 Work Streams

Positions at this level provide leadership and strategic vision in one or more of the following functional streams:

| Stream | Definition |
| --- | --- |
| Delivery | • Lead the development of service delivery strategy and new initiatives, and manage large-scale strategic change with substantial impact on service delivery models and implementation.<br>• Oversee and manage service delivery issues that are highly sensitive and extremely complex to ensure that critical risks are minimised.<br>• Lead and promote a culture of innovation and adaptability, taking into account leading edge technology, best practice approaches and key strategic service delivery outcomes. |
| Policy | • Provide thought and corporate leadership to matters of strategic planning, quality management strategies, governance, establishing organisational priorities and direction, and the development of key whole of government policies.<br>• Provide highly complex, strategic, expert advice to ensure the development of evidence-based policy frameworks, recommendations and decisions.<br>• Lead and maintain long-term strategic partnerships with critical government, industry and community stakeholders at the highest level to inform policy construction. |
| Portfolio & Program | • Lead the development of new program initiatives and manage large-scale strategic change with substantial program impact.<br>• Direct the implementation, review and evaluation of programs, set expectations and performance standards at a whole-of-organisation level.<br>• Drive program evaluation frameworks and program planning to ensure return on investment at a financial, human resources and infrastructure level. |
| Regulatory | • Endorse government frameworks and make determinations regarding the application of regulatory interpretations, ensuring the integrity of legislative systems.<br>• Drive the development and implementation of regulatory frameworks and substantial, highly complex regulatory programs, ensuring alignment with government direction and organisational vision.<br>• Lead and manage responses to highly complex regulatory, enforcement, and compliance issues, managing and mitigating risk, including financial, reputational, and safety risks.<br>• Oversee a substantial portion of an organisation, or whole organisation that is responsible for regulatory, compliance and/or enforcement activities, including policy and delivery. |
| Professional / Specialist | • As a specialist, provide strategic and critical advice based on extensive and advanced professional and technical experience in a highly complex field.<br>• Drive the development of specialist knowledge, through the leadership of a significant portion, or whole, of an organisation, undertaking specialist functions, including the delivery of professional services, education services, research and analysis, and the provision of highly complex professional advice and information. |

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# Appendix 2 – Executive work value assessment methodology and guidelines

These materials support the process to define the work value of an executive position at a particular level, providing a consistent and transparent framework for classifying public service executives.

## Work value assessment methodology

The work value of a position is assessed through a process of position analysis. Position analysis is an evidence-based methodology that gathers information about a position in a structured and systematic way.

The information is compared to the standards that have been agreed for each of the executive classification levels in the Work Level Standards (WLS) through the use of the work value assessment tool.

The work value assessment tool uses the descriptors from the work value standards. The different sets of descriptors are assigned a score.

The assessor examines the information gathered through the assessment process, compares it with the descriptors in the tool, and allocates a score for each factor.

The combined score will sit within a range indicating the appropriate executive classification. Positions may sit anywhere within the range. This reflects the diversity of positions within each classification level, with more diversity expected at the lower levels, reflected by a wider score range for these positions.

| Classification | Scores |
|---|---|
| Senior Executive Service Band 1 | 21 to 35 |
| Senior Executive Service Band 2 | 36 to 47 |
| Senior Executive Service Band 3 | 48 to 56 |

## Principles of evaluation

There are a number of important principles that should be followed when conducting a work value assessment and when using the work value assessment tool.

1. **Evaluate the position, not the person.** When assessing the classification level of a position, it is important to focus only on the position itself and not on the performance, strengths, and/or specific expertise that the incumbent may bring to a position. If the incumbent leaves the position, the responsibilities and complexities of the position remain the same. If these change, the position should be re-evaluated based on the new expectations.

2. **Work value (and therefore classification level) does not equal remuneration.** Do not use classification level to address a remuneration issue such as the need to offer higher salaries to attract critical skills. Where there is a market shortage, it is better to negotiate remuneration separately, not increase the classification level of the position.

3. **Ignore the existing classification of current executive positions.** It is important to ignore the current classification of the position and focus on assessing the work value of the position as it is presented in the information gathered.

4. **Determine the classification according to the highest function(s) undertaken by the position.** Most positions will comprise work (duties and responsibilities) with a range

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of work value. It is important that the position is assessed according to the highest function(s) undertaken, taking into account the percentage of the position that these functions comprise. For a position to be classified at a particular level, 70-80 per cent of the work undertaken by the position must equal the work value of that level.

5. **Take into account both importance and frequency of tasks undertaken.** Related to the principle above, this principle states that the assessment of a position's work value should be a balance between the importance of the tasks and the frequency of their occurrence. An assessment should not overly focus on tasks that are done infrequently, even if they are considered important.

6. **Avoid duplication.** When allocating scores for each of the factors, avoid using the same information about a position to give 'credit' over more than one factor. It is important to separately assess the different factors and evaluate each aspect of the position on its own merits.

7. **Workload does not equal work value.** Workload (the 'busyness' of a position) is not related to work value and should not be used as a basis on which to classify a position. Where there are workload issues for a position, these are best dealt with via a structural adjustment in the overall working environment and a consideration of the FTE required to complete the work

8. **Fully understand the position.** The most important principle of evaluation is that of understanding the position to be evaluated. It is not possible to conduct an accurate and reliable analysis and evaluation of a position when the position is not fully understood. It is imperative that the information gathered about the position gives a full and detailed view of the current activities, duties, accountabilities, complexities and relationships that the position is responsible for now and for the foreseeable future. Information should be gathered from a range of accurate and detailed sources, with a critical source of information being the interview(s).

## Step by step evaluation

Position evaluation is a multi-step process, however there are two main phases. First, the assessor collects the relevant information. Secondly, the assessor analyses the position against the factors using the work value assessment tool and compares the position with the expected standards in the WLS. Once the assessment is complete, then the assessor can make a recommendation about the appropriate classification level of the position.

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# Phase One: Information gathering

## Step One – Documentation

A skilled assessor will collect the relevant information on the position. There are usually a number of corporate documents that are relevant to understanding the position. These include the following:

- organisational chart (either existing or proposed)
- position description (current or proposed)
- business plans for the business unit/division/area of responsibility
- performance agreement (for existing positions)
- list of delegations held by the position
- list of committees or working groups with which the position is involved (as either member or chair)
- budget or cabinet papers/new policy proposal documentation
- government or ministerial statements
- press Releases or other media material
- annual report

## Step Two – Interview

During the information-gathering stage it is important to source as much information as possible, from as many relevant sources as possible, in order to fully understand the position. One of the most important sources of information is an interview with a person who knows detailed and accurate information about the position. This is usually the incumbent and/or the supervisor, however it could be any person who knows the position well such as a former incumbent or manager-once-removed. Where a position is new, any person such as the proposed supervisor of the position can be interviewed. It may also be useful to interview stakeholders and/or clients or colleagues of the position. An Interview Protocol document is included that will help guide the interview process.

During the interview, remember to:

1. Use the Interview Protocol document, starting with the initial questions and moving through to the key responsibilities. At this point, use the interviewee's responses to guide the use of the other questions. As the interviewee talks about their key responsibilities, they will often cover off on other information such as their accountability, decision-making, authority etc. It's not necessary to ask each question separately, or in the order presented in the protocol, if these areas have already been covered. However, it is essential that enough information is gathered to assess the position accurately.

2. Ask as many clarifying questions as possible to ensure that you fully understand the position and all its responsibilities. Even if the position is one that seems familiar, ensure that no information is missed as there may be aspects of the position that are different to other positions of the same 'type'. Do not be concerned that the interviewee may expect you to understand the position. If there is any aspect of the position or 'jargon' used that you do not fully understand, ask questions to clarify your understanding.

3. Ensure that the interviewee has given enough information to cover off on all of the work value factors in the work value assessment tool. This includes staffing numbers, budgets, a list of key stakeholders, as well as information about the complexity and accountability of the position and its upward reporting lines.

4. Take notes during the interview. Do not rely on memory to assess the position. The position must be assessed according to the evidence gathered during the interview and through the examination of the documentation. Notes are the only source of evidence for the interview so ensure they are detailed.

5. Concentrate on the tasks and responsibilities of the position NOT the capabilities required. Technical knowledge and experience needed to competently perform the position should be covered, however 'soft' skills are focused on the person, not the position. Use the 'Knowledge' factor definition to understand the information needed for the assessment of technical knowledge and experience.

## Phase Two: Assessing the position

## Step One – Use the work value assessment tool

In phase two the assessor analyses the position in relation to the work level standards, using the work value assessment scoring template. The process is explained in detail

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below.

1. Assess each factor separately, comparing the information gathered with the descriptors for each score. Use the work value factor definitions to better understand what dimensions of the position are being assessed by each factor. Choose the set of descriptors that most closely match the information about the position.
2. Score each factor by allocating the score (1, 3, 5, 7) indicated by the set of descriptors. 'Half' scores may be allocated (e.g., 2, 4, 6) where the position appears to fit some of the higher-level score, but not all.
3. Add up the scores to arrive at the total score for the position.
4. Use the scoring sheet template to find the recommended classification level for the position (band 1, band 2 or band 3).
5. If the total score is below the cut-off point for EXECUTIVE band 3, the position is said to be 'below band 3' but should not immediately be assumed to be VPS 6 or STS 7. The position needs to be compared against the VPS6 and STS7 grade descriptors in the Victorian Public Service Enterprise Agreement.

## Step Two – Final comparison with work streams

Compare the WLS evaluation with the information in the work streams, which provides typical tasks and responsibilities for each of the executive bands. This step helps to confirm that the assessment against the factors has been accurate.

## Step Three – Consider any special circumstances

At times there may be factors other than those in the work value assessment tool that warrant a classification level for a position that is not apparent through the assessment process. This situation is expected to be rare, and usually applies to positions that are created for special purposes in the context of very high risk and political sensitivity. Positions such as these are often time limited.

## Step Four – Report

At the end of the process, a recommendation regarding the appropriate classification level for the position can be made. Use the work value assessment scoring sheet

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template to outline the scores chosen for each factor and the rationale for each choice.

## Post-evaluation

After the evaluation process has been completed, there are three possible outcomes.

1. The position is at the expected classification
2. The position is lower than the current classification i.e over classified
3. The position is higher than the current classification i.e under classified

If the position is found to be at the expected classification level, no further action is needed.

Other outcomes that are possible include 'under-classification' or 'over-classification', where the score for the position fits within the range either above or below the current classification of the position. Where this occurs, it is necessary for the organisation to make decisions about how this can be corrected. Some options are:

- remove or add certain tasks and responsibilities or accountabilities to match the work value to the assessed classification
- restructure the work area to create a better fit of the position to its current classification
- reclassify the position to fit the recommended classification (and transfer the incumbent if necessary)
- take no action until the current incumbent leaves the position and then redesign the position to ensure a better fit with the intended classification.

Organisations are best placed to make a decision about options for change within the context of current and future planning, strategic direction and organisational goals. There may be other factors that influence these decisions or a decision to take no action for the foreseeable future.

## Dispelling evaluation myths

There are a number of areas of misunderstanding that occur in the evaluation process.

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These include:

1. **A position cannot be evaluated if there is no incumbent.** This applies to both new positions and positions where the position is vacant. It is still possible to evaluate the position using other sources of information such as interviewing the (potential) manager, colleagues, the past incumbent or clients/stakeholders, and examining documentation such as position descriptions, business plans, and other corporate materials.

2. **You should only talk to the manager.** Although the manager is a good source of information about a position, it is always important to talk to an incumbent where possible as it is the incumbent that should best understand the details of the position.

3. **You should only talk to the incumbent.** The incumbent is usually one of the best sources of information about a position, however there are times when the incumbent may not be performing at the level expected of the position or may be bringing individual strengths to a position that would not be expected if the position was re-advertised and filled by a new person. It is always best to interview both the incumbent and the manager and, where relevant, colleagues or stakeholders to get a full understanding of the position.

4. **The process is completely objective.** Although the work value assessment tool uses a scoring mechanism to arrive at a recommended classification level, the judgements made by the assessor are necessarily somewhat subjective, as they involve interpretation of the descriptors and the full WLS. The work value assessment tool and the WLS help to make the process more objective than pure guess work alone.

5. **The higher the score in the range, the better.** There are some managers and incumbents that believe that a 'higher' score in a range is a better one. It is expected that, across an organisation, positions will score variably within their classification levels and this is reflected in the rationale for the scoring ranges with lower level positions having more room for diversity (and therefore a larger 'range' of scores) than higher level positions. Positions would also be expected to score variably across factors, with, for example, more specialist positions scoring higher in the knowledge factor and independence factor, and policy positions scoring higher in the judgement and risk factor and impact factor. This further reflects the diversity of positions that can be expected within an organisation.

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# Appendix 3 – Victorian Public Service executive work value assessment tool

How to analyse an executive position in relation to the work-level standards.

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