

How to write a role description

Template and guide

Role descriptions are used to support the advertising process, providing information on the current context of the role and how applicants will be assessed.

Role descriptions should generally not be longer than two pages.

General considerations

- Clause 9.4 of [Directive 15/13](#) sets out the information that must be included when a vacancy is advertised. The agency decides whether it is in the job ad or an attachment, such as the role description.
- Be honest in describing a job opportunity. Provide applicants with realistic information about what the job involves; the work to be undertaken, the job environment, the benefits, and the challenges.
 - Accurate information can assist applicants in appropriate self-selection (in or out).
 - Inconsistency between the marketed opportunity and the reality of the job can lead to employee dissatisfaction and, particularly with high calibre employees, early exit.
- Be clear and concise, avoiding the use of jargon and ‘public sector speak’. Consider whether the terms you’re using will be equally understood by internal and external candidates.
- References to location should be the city / town / region.
- Have a look at what else is out there—what works and what doesn’t?
- While it is important to avoid simply duplicating information from the job ad, recognize that applicants will print / download copies of the role description, therefore it may be appropriate to repeat some key information from the ad.

The following template is designed as a guide for agencies to use with their own branding and colours.

[Agency Name]	
[Role title, business area] (level)	
Duration	[Permanent, Temporary until <date>]
Location	[Brisbane CBD]
Fortnightly salary	[\$x,xxx.xx to \$x,xxx.xx]
Total annual remuneration	[\$x,xxx.xx to \$x,xxx.xx]
Contact	[Name] [Position title] [Business area] [Phone or email address]

Your Opportunity

Irrespective of the job they're doing, the agency they're engaged with or the legislation they're engaged under, people working for the Queensland Government are public servants, with the responsibilities that go with that.

The role description provides the opportunity to show people where they will fit in the bigger picture; how the role they're considering applying for contributes to outcomes for Queenslanders, whether they work in a direct client contact role or otherwise. Understanding that they are part of a broader cohort (rather than just an employee of a particular agency) also aligns with the government's commitment to greater mobility within the sector.

A suggested structure and partial content are included below. The section entitled "Your Contribution" should fit on the first page.

You have the opportunity to join the Queensland public sector in a position of trust where you will contribute to better outcomes for Queenslanders by implementing the policies, priorities, services or programs of the elected government.

Government goals and vision

Our objectives: to work closely with all Queenslanders to create jobs and a diverse economy, deliver frontline services, protect the environment, and build safe, caring and connected communities.

Our actions: are underpinned by integrity, accountability, and consultation.

Our values: customers first | ideas into action | unleash potential | be courageous | empower people.

Agency Name

Example: We are a small, dynamic, central agency dedicated to ensuring the Queensland public sector is the very best it can be.

Our vision: [insert Agency vision]

Our purpose: [insert Agency purpose]

Your team – [insert team area]

[This section should give an indication of the work focus and deliverables of the team.]

Contribution: [insert short description]

Key strategies: [insert short description]

Your contribution

[This section should outline the main responsibilities that the role has, focusing on priority areas and not every task a person may be required to undertake. You may choose to use the same key responsibilities outlined in your job advert.]

- [insert what role will be expected to deliver]
- [insert what role will be expected to deliver]

What we are looking for

[How you describe the role can have a significant impact on the quality of candidate you attract and even the gender composition of the pool. Be sure to use gender-neutral terminology and be clear and concise on what is expected of the role. The quality of candidates will be enhanced by appealing to a broad range of applicants, from diverse backgrounds and work experience.]

The directive on recruitment and selection requires that applicants be provided with information on the key capabilities against which they will be assessed. Agencies can determine the appropriate capability framework/model for their agency/roles.

[How applicants will be assessed and the key capabilities against which they will be assessed is required.]

Appointments in the public sector are merit-based and will be assessed by looking at what you have done previously—the knowledge, skills and experience you have built, your potential for development, and your personal qualities.

For this role, we will consider how well you:

[List the capability/attributes applicants are being assessed against.]

- Keep the list to a reasonable amount (no more than five) and avoid describing each attribute as having a multitude of diverse components. Focus on the most important attributes rather than every desirable competency for the role. Distinguish between what the person must bring to the role and what they can learn on the job.
- Ensure the statements are drafted to reflect the sought after capability – not drafted to suggest or require direct experience in the advertised or other public sector role.
- Be clear and consistent in your use of terminology. For example:
 - **Proven** or **demonstrated** means someone has performed the activity / used the skill.
 - **Ability to (rapidly) acquire** means someone has skills / abilities that will allow them to undertake a task or gain specific knowledge.
 - **Thorough** or **high level** means an advanced level of skill or knowledge. Use this where the advanced level is necessary for the successful performance of the role. If the higher level of

knowledge / experience is desirable but not necessary, don't ask for this; instead use the level of knowledge is a way to distinguish the merit of different applicants.

[Examples adapted from the Department of the Premier and Cabinet (South Australia) Job Description Guide].

[insert details of any mandatory requirements. If no mandatory requirements state:]

While there are no mandatory qualifications for this role, practical experience in a <insert> or qualifications in these fields <insert> and <insert> will be favourably regarded.

Conditions and benefits of the role

Your employment experience with [Agency name] will include [(for example) work-life balance with flexible working options, competitive salary and benefits (including up to 12.75 per cent superannuation contributions by your employer), generous leave entitlements, career progression opportunities and the chance to make a difference to the people and communities of Queensland.]

[Agency name] supports work-life balance. Flexible working options include part-time work, flexible start times and telecommuting. Applicants seeking flexible work options are supported by [Agency name] and are encouraged to apply.

Your home base will be [Agency address].

Your employment conditions are set out in the [relevant Act, for example, *Public Sector Act 2022 (PS Act)*], [relevant industrial award for example, *Queensland Public Service Officers and Other Employees Award – State 2015*], and [relevant certified agreement for example, *State Government Entities Certified Agreement 2019*]

Conditions include:

Highlight a few of the key conditions/entitlements of the role or the working environment; focusing on things you think will help attract applicants, for example, hours per week / work-life balance /potential for flexible working arrangements/leave entitlements (including additional leave for remote/regional areas).

For hard to fill roles, consider whether the directive on attraction and retention incentives should be applied. If so, this is the appropriate place to highlight the extra 'incentives' applicable to the role.

Interested in applying?

[This section explains the process for applying for the role, including what the application should contain.]

Considerations:

- The information requested for the application is at the discretion of the Agency – there are no mandatory items. In deciding what to request, consider what information will assist the panel in confirming any mandatory requirements are met and will facilitate the first phase of assessment.
- When asking for a resume, consider whether you should be requiring referee details at this point. Potential private sector applicants may be reluctant to provide referee details at such an early stage, preferring to provide such information later (for example, if offered an interview).
- If asking for a cover letter, emphasise that this should not be a restatement of the resume, but an opportunity for the applicant to tell you about themselves, why they're interested in the role and what they will bring to it, including highlighting the transferability of skills and experience.]

To enable us to assess your merit, your application should include:

- Your current resume.
- A brief letter (1 -2 page) telling us why you are interested in this role. This should not be a restatement of your resume and does not require you to respond to each of the attribute areas; it is your opportunity to tell us about yourself, what you'll bring to the role and what you'll get out of it.

[Remove if not required:] An online application via www.smartjobs.qld.gov.au is preferred, however if you are unable to apply online please contact customer support on 1300 146 370 (listen to the prompts for 'recruitment'), between 9am and 5pm Monday to Friday.

[Explain the broad selection approach to applicants, for example:]

The selection process will start with short-listing, where we assess the information provided in your application. Based on this, we will select applicants to proceed to the next phase of assessment, which could involve a work test, an interview or other selection techniques.

Referee checking will be undertaken, and other pre-employment checks may occur prior to any offer of employment. Checks may include (but are not limited to) proof of eligibility for appointment to the Queensland public sector, a criminal history check and a serious discipline history disclosure check.

[If there are mandatory requirements for the role explain that screening will occur on these requirements, for example, the selection process will start with screening, to ensure that applicants meet the mandatory requirements outlined above. Applicants who do not meet the requirements will not be considered further. We will then short-list applicants by assessing the information provided in your application.]

Additional information

- [Agency name] values diversity and cultural capability and is an equal opportunity employer which supports a healthy working environment.
- A mobile, flexible and agile workforce supports service delivery and employee development. You may seek or may be required to work in alternative locations or undertake alternative duties on a temporary or permanent basis.
- Applications will remain current for a period of up to 12 months and may be considered for other vacancies (identical or similar) which may include an alternative employment basis (temporary, full time or part time).
- Within one month of commencing employment, the successful applicant is required to disclose any employment as a lobbyist in the preceding two years.