

## APPENDIX 5: PROFESSIONAL OFFICER WORK LEVEL DEFINITIONS

### DEFINITIONS

The following definitions relate to the meanings of the words within these work level definitions.

**“Broad guidelines”** means instructions received essentially in the form of broadly stated objectives which require competent and professional experience to apply both initiative and *professional judgment*.

**“Clinical”** means relating to or founded on observation and treatment of participants.

**“Complex”** means professional work which is characterised by ambiguity and/or novelty.

**“Crucial”** means that a component, an issue, or a decision is fundamental to subsequent actions, considerations and decisions.

**“Innovative”** means the extent to which there is a requirement to vary from, or make changes to, established professional processes, systems and/or standards.

**“Limited complexity”** means work which involves the application of established principles, practices and procedures. Generally, such comprises actions and responses which can be readily identified and repeated from previous experience.

**“Managerial responsibilities”** means an employee:

1. is required to determine operational policy and procedures for a work unit within the framework of an agency's (or health unit's) requirements; and
2. is required to ensure the timeliness, effectiveness, quality and efficiency of a work unit; and
3. has significant independence of action including the use or allocation of both financial and human resources within the constraints or guidelines laid down by executive management; and
4. undertakes human resource management functions including planning, developing and implementing programs associated with equal employment opportunity and occupational health, safety and welfare within the functional area of responsibility; and
5. trains staff, coordinates workflow processes, ensures quality of output of the work unit, conducts performance assessment and review, staff counselling, career planning and development.

**“Multi-discipline”** means the combination of several *professional disciplines*.

**“Novel”** means the nature of professional work which requires the extension and application of theories and concepts beyond established principles. Such may include, for instance, creative research or the introduction of new technology.

**“Papers”** means published refereed papers and refereed conference papers of operational or theoretical interest to other discipline based *professional officers*.

**“Professional direction”** means the form of control exercised, and may include guidance and monitoring, over other *professional officers* demanding *professional judgment*, including:

- Assessing the application of discipline standards;
- Weighing and discussing professional approaches used;
- Determining professional solutions; and
- Verification and validation of results.

**“Professional discipline”** means a non-repetitive field of activity which requires a degree in a professional discipline, is exercised with increasing levels of autonomy and accountability, and is governed by standards, ethics and objectives prescribed by a representative professional body and, may interdependently, by the employing agency (or health unit).

**“Professional independence”** means the level of accountability within a *professional discipline*.

**“Professional judgment”** means the application of an amalgam of *professional knowledge* and experience to derive appropriate resolutions within prescribed standards, ethics and objectives.

**“Professional knowledge”** means an understanding of theory, techniques, practices and principles gained through degree-level discipline-based study.

**“Professional officer”** means an employee engaged in one of the occupational groups specified in Schedule 3 of the S.A. Public Sector Salaried Employees Interim Award and classified within the Professional Officer Stream.

**“Specialist”** means a *professional officer* who has acquired through study and application special subject knowledge which is recognized by peers to be different, distinctive or unique.

**“Statutory action”** means action taken or authorized by statute.

**“Straightforward”** means work which is without difficulty and is uncomplicated to a person qualified within the *professional discipline*.

**“Very complex”** means the application of a soundly based working knowledge of established professional principles, practices and procedures as they affect all aspects of the range of operations, or an in-depth *professional knowledge* of an operation which feature both ambiguity and novelty. Generally responses require the exercise of high levels of analytical skill.

## PROFESSIONAL OFFICER LEVEL 1 (PO1)

The *professional officer* will have attained through discipline based, degree level study a combination of theoretical concepts and practical techniques to enable professional work to be undertaken within a *professional discipline*. In many disciplines, formal professional registration will be expected or will have been acquired. This may require post-graduate qualifications (necessary for registration) to be pursued in a professional development year while employees are engaged at this level.

Contributions are essentially operational in nature, and deal with non-repetitive projects, cases and/or situations which will, with experience, become increasingly *complex*, and which contain competing and sometimes conflicting factors. Resolution and/or end results will require the application of acquired experience together with a range of learned professional techniques and theory.

The *professional officer* will accept responsibility for professional actions, and be expected to seek professional support if there is a concern. *Professional direction* will be provided to the *professional officer* who may operate individually, as a team member, or within a work group. *Professional direction* will decrease over time from very close to general as the *professional officer* acquires experience and in accordance with the complexity and variety of projects undertaken.

Employees at Level 1 will be encouraged to progressively obtain greater levels of discipline and specialized knowledge through post-graduate qualifications and studies, and/or personal contributions to the development of the *professional discipline*.

### Knowledge and Experience

- *Professional knowledge* attained through a study of discipline theory and limited experience.
- A developing level of operational competence.

### Operational Outcomes

To contribute to the operational objectives of the work group, a position at this level may include a combination of the following:

- The execution, analysis and interpretation of findings as they relate to elements of the work.
- The selection and adoption of professional techniques and standards which are generally well established and *straightforward*.
- The exercise of *professional judgment* within prescribed areas.

## Work Level Definitions subject to further discussion

- With experience, the *professional officer* may review aspects of the work of *professional officers* and others within the same environment.
- Discussing techniques, procedures and results with clients on straightforward matters.
- The undertaking of tasks of limited scope and complexity, comprising in some situations a minor phase of a broader or *complex* project.
- The provision of reports on progress of project activities including incorporating recommendations.
- Undertakes projects and/or therapeutic interventions involving assessment, analysis and interpretation and communication of findings, results and projected solutions.
- With experience, the supervision of assigned employees.
- With experience, responsible for *straightforward* projects.
- Organises, maintains, develops and promotes collections and information sources.
- With experience, provides professional guidance or advice to more recently employed *professional officers* within the same discipline, or provides operational or organizational context to situations, and monitors professional services to ensure appropriateness.
- Exercises *professional judgment* through the selection and application of procedures, methods and discipline standards within prescribed areas, with results being subject to verification and validation from other experienced and readily available *professional officers* or equivalent.
- Assists in the conduct of discipline based research through data collection, collation, processing data management, and data analysis using (for instance) statistical packages.
- Contributes to preparing reports and manuscripts for publication.
- Conducts clinical and consultative services, one-on-one and group activities, and discipline promotion programs.
- With experience, undertakes referrals with general *professional direction*.
- Provides advice regarding *statutory action* when requested.
- May contribute to discipline knowledge
- Manages and prioritizes personal work load and develops plans and processes for handling cases and/or projects.
- The analysis and interpretation of findings as they relate to the elements of the work, on occasion preparing reports incorporating recommendations on basic operations.

### Working Environment

- Applies *professional knowledge* attained through formal studies, to projects, cases, situations or minor phases of broader assignments.
- Performs non-repetitive tasks, governed by established procedures, specific guidelines and standardized instructions.
- Initially works under close *professional direction* from an experienced *professional officer*.
- Operates individually or as a member of a project team, or within a work group.
- A *professional officer* may be engaged at this level during a professional development year whilst undertaking post-graduate qualifications.

### **PO1 Level – 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> increments**

After 12 months at the 5<sup>th</sup> increment of PO1, an employee will be assessed by the agency (or health unit) for progression based on the employee's professional:

- Performance;
- Aptitude;
- Experience;
- Responsibilities; and
- Initiative.

Following assessment, should a *professional officer* not progress to the 6<sup>th</sup> increment in the PO1 range, the *professional officer's* supervisor or manager will be responsible for implementing a development plan in conjunction with the *professional officer* to address any issue arising from the assessment. A *professional officer* may be reassessed at any time following the implementation and completion of the development plan.

Employees will be eligible for incremental progression from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> increment based on 12 months service at the 6<sup>th</sup> increment.

### **PROFESSIONAL OFFICER LEVEL 2 (PO2)**

Work at this level:

- is usually performed under reduced *professional direction* with the quality of output monitored;
- requires professional expertise in one or more fields within a discipline; and
- demands a detailed knowledge of standard professional tasks (including problem definition, assessment, planning, liaison, execution, analysis, interpretation and reporting) with scope for exercising initiative in the application of established work practices and procedures.

The content of the work is subject to existing *professional discipline* and agency (or health unit) standards. Guidance may be given in reviewing work programs or on unusual features of an assignment.

At this level, employees will exercise initiative in the application of professional practices either as a member (in some situations as leader but not a *professional officer* with *managerial responsibilities*) or a *professional officer* (who has expertise in one or more fields within a discipline) in a *multi-discipline* team or independently and may be or may deputize for the professional head of a small work unit.

Responsible for *professional direction* of other *professional officers* and paraprofessionals.

Employees are expected to actively seek personal professional development which includes an ability to effectively articulate concepts and theories.

Employees at this level will be expected to have completed post-graduate qualifications that are necessary for registration to practice in specialized settings.

### **Knowledge and Experience**

- Has attained greater specialized knowledge within the discipline and is achieving higher level of outcomes under reduced *professional direction* within the discipline.
- Has attained professional expertise, competence and experience to perform any standard professional task within the discipline.

### Operational Outcomes

To contribute to the operational objectives of the work group, a position at this level may involve a combination of the following:

- Tasks may be broad in scope and involve *complex* professional problems.
- Uses *professional judgment* to select and apply new and existing methods and techniques.
- Contributes to the development of advanced techniques and methodology.
- Undertakes *complex* activities under reducing *professional direction* and selects and applies new techniques and methodologies based on *professional judgement*.
- The supervision of staff (which may include employees who are not *professional officers*) and provides *professional direction* in tasks requiring limited expertise or for functions of *limited complexity*.
- Where appropriate provides *professional direction* to staff including where appropriate professional development to other *professional officers*.
- May report investigations directly to the client.
- Addresses problems through combinations of standard procedures and/or modifications to standard procedures.
- Coordinates all phases of a project or assignment.
- Provides discrete professional and consultancy services.
- Carries out research under *professional direction*, and contributes to advances of techniques used.
- Undertakes various assignments requiring knowledge of one or more fields within a *professional discipline*.

### Working Environment

- Exercises and accepts professional responsibility for the outcomes of a work unit.
- Exercises initiative in the application of professional practices either as a member (in some situations as leader but not a *professional officer with managerial responsibilities*) or as a *professional officer* (who has expertise in one or more fields within a discipline) in a *multi-discipline* team or independently.

### PROFESSIONAL OFFICER LEVEL 3 (PO3)

Operating under general policy direction and with a high level of *professional independence* in the determination of operational priorities, strategies, work standards and allocation of resources. Generally the work demands a level of competence from extensive experience and/or additional study. The *professional officer* at this level will be:

- Specializing within a *professional discipline*; or
- A senior professional supervisor; or
- A professional manager.

Positions at this level demonstrate leadership within the *professional discipline* and may coordinate a number of subordinate *professional officers*. *Professional officers* at this level will focus on increasing the value, contributions and effectiveness of the *professional discipline* within the agency (or health unit). Any standard professional task within the discipline (including problem definition, assessment, planning, liaison, execution, analysis, interpreting and reporting) may be undertaken at this level.

A senior professional supervisor will be responsible for allocating and determining work priorities to ensure operational standards and efficiencies are met having regard to the needs of clients and providing *professional guidance* for a team of *professional officers*. The senior professional supervisor is expected to seek ways to develop levels of discipline awareness and specialized knowledge of individual *professional officers*.

A professional manager will have *managerial responsibilities* for a work unit, which may include a *multi-discipline* team of *professional officers* to ensure effective and coordinated services to the client group. This is the first level where a *professional officer* may have *managerial responsibilities*.

There will be *professional independence* in a general operational context involving routine research, project or case situations, requiring levels of expertise and experience to ensure and contribute to professional standards, objectives and priorities within the framework of the agency's (or health unit's) corporate goals. *Professional direction* is only received for those aspects of work which involve new or sophisticated techniques or relate to areas of work outside the normal span of activity.

High levels of initiative will be exhibited in accomplishing the objectives and undertaking *complex* projects, either on an individual basis as a recognized *specialist*, as a *professional officer* with responsibilities for *complex* duties, or as a team leader.

Work may require the development and provision of formal professional advice and consultancy services to other agencies, industry representatives and the public. The level of information provided and recommendations may influence decisions of others, including superiors and peers, especially in the monitoring, development and delivery of programs.

#### **Knowledge and Experience**

- Operates with *professional independence* and high levels of competence.
- Continues to apply knowledge obtained through post-graduate specialised qualifications and/or extensive recognized expertise.

#### **Operational Outcomes**

To contribute to the achievement of organisational objectives and output, a position at this level may include a combination of the following:

- Analyses situations and identifies opportunities and/or needs to develop and/or progress work group objectives.
- Develops and promulgates *crucial* information for management.
- Undertakes projects of a *complex* nature with limited or no *professional direction*.
- Contributes to the development of operational policy.
- Undertakes professional duties of an *innovative*, *novel*, and/or *crucial* nature without *professional direction* subject to established professional standards.
- Assesses the professional, technical and economic impacts of achievements and/or projects.
- Provides professional advice and consultancy services to other agencies (or health units), industry representatives and the public.
- Assesses and reviews the standards of work of other *professional officers* and external consultants.
- Exercises control and coordination of either discrete operations or projects.
- Undertakes duties and ensures the outcome of work which is of a *complex* and varied nature, requiring detailed knowledge of the agency's (or health unit's) operations combined with a *specialist* or very high level of practitioner knowledge of major activities in the work unit.

## Work Level Definitions subject to further discussion

- Trains staff, coordinates workflow processes, ensures quality of output of the work unit, conducts performance assessment and review, staff counselling, career planning and development.
- Interprets legislation, regulations and other guideline material relating to the operations and functions of the work area.
- Uses significant initiative to accomplish objectives and undertake *complex* projects.

### Working Environment

- May influence organisational attitudes and professional development policy within the framework of operational programs.
- Develops professional advice and consultancy services to other agencies, industry representatives and the public.
- Interprets legislation, regulations and other guideline material relating to the operations and functions of the work area.

### PROFESSIONAL OFFICER LEVEL 4 (PO4)

Operates under broad policy direction and with high levels of *professional independence* in the determination of overall strategies, priorities, work standards and allocation of resources. The role will be:

- A senior professional practitioner; or
- A senior professional manager; or
- A senior professional *specialist*.

At this level work may involve the exercise of significant *professional judgment* based on a detailed knowledge of national initiatives and involvement in the development and/or application of discipline principles and new technology and/or knowledge of *crucial* work which can involve a single discipline or a variety of disciplines. Decisions are likely to have a major impact on the health unit, agency, on industry, or on the State, and are rarely subject to professional review.

The senior professional practitioner at this level will undertake work which is *very complex* and highly *innovative*. At this level there is minimal *professional direction* and the *professional officer* would be expected to closely examine personal practices and actions to ensure compliance with established ethics and standards for the *professional discipline*.

As a senior professional *specialist*, work is normally without *professional direction* with discretion permitted within the boundaries of *broad guidelines* to achieve organizational goals, and at this level, the *professional officer* will have a high profile within the discipline through higher qualifications or by publications in refereed journals, and will operate within *broad guidelines* to achieve specific objectives with *professional independence*. This would normally be supplemented by evidence of higher qualifications and wide spread professional recognition of expertise.

It is likely that discipline principles and new technology requiring the exercise of significant *professional judgment* will be developed and applied. This includes initiating, formulating and managing research programs and major projects, or providing scientific services or enterprises involving both a service and research work. It is expected that there will be a lack of precedent for the majority of professional duties and actions which may span a range of activities in a *very complex*, specialized environment and contribute to the formulation of corporate policy and the implementation of policy directives.

The senior professional manager at this level will have *managerial responsibilities* for a large work unit, or *complex* projects involving a number of *professional disciplines*. Skills required include work prioritization, monitoring productivity and setting local strategic plans, in addition to assessment and review of professional and operational standards. At this level, there will also be a demand for an

ability to monitor resource allocations, to evaluate professional, technical and economic impacts of programs, and to formulate policy and corporate strategy proposals.

A detailed knowledge of Governmental policies and procedures, and an appreciation of their application in relation to agency (or health unit) operations is expected. In addition, the senior professional manager will interpret and provide advice on legislation, regulations and other guideline material relating to the operations and functions of the work area.

At this level, expert consultancy advice to outside bodies, agencies and the public will be provided as well as participation on inter-agency committees to develop policy, planning and other initiatives.

With *professional independence* and high levels of expertise and experience, the *professional officer* at this level will determine professional standards, objectives and priorities within the framework of the agency's (or health unit's) corporate goals.

**Knowledge and Experience:**

- Utilizes comprehensive knowledge within the *professional discipline* and broad exposure to other *professional disciplines*.
- Applies *professional judgment* based on up-to-date discipline knowledge.
- Applies *professional knowledge* having regard to the agency's (or health unit's) policy framework.

**Operational Outcomes**

To satisfy specified agency or health unit objectives, a position at this level may include a combination of the following:

- Exercises significant *professional judgment* in the development and/or application of *professional discipline* principles and new technology.
- Manages *very complex* projects involving a number of personnel from either one or a variety of *professional disciplines*.
- Contributes directly to the formulation of corporate objectives and the agency's (or health unit's) professional policy.
- Implements and interprets policy directives to satisfy the demands of professional programs.
- Provides advice to senior management/authorities regarding current relevant developments in the discipline and their potential implications.
- Initiates and manages high level programs and major investigations.
- Determines professional standards and operational objectives for the agency or health unit.
- Is the authoritative *specialist* where requirements are *very complex* and of major importance to the agency or health unit.
- Identifies current and future options relating to developments which impact on agencies and/or industry.
- Provides professional advice to inter-agency committees regarding professional policy, planning, forecasting and development implications.
- Provides *specialist* services to industry where the end product is of major importance to the industry and/or the State.
- Initiates and formulates programs within the framework of (major work group) objectives and priorities.
- Undertakes demanding evaluations of an economic and/or technical nature with *professional independence*.

## Work Level Definitions subject to further discussion

- Manages programs of *crucial* importance to the State to satisfy the Government's objectives or the agency's (or health unit's) corporate goals.
- Manages large work units, including prioritizing work, training of staff, monitoring work flow and setting local strategic plans.
- Provides expert specialised consultancy skills with *crucial* impacts to the industry, the State and possibly the nation.
- Develops and oversees the implementation of new and high level programs and major investigations with a strategic management emphasis.
- Verifies the professional standards of operations and outputs.
- Has significant *managerial responsibilities* and abilities.
- Evaluates professional, technical and economic impacts of program.
- Formulates policy and corporate strategy proposals.
- Provides expert professional advice on a consultancy basis to external bodies, other agencies and the public.
- Participates on inter-agency and/or national committees to develop policy, planning and other initiatives.

### Working Environment

- Uses significant *professional judgment* based on knowledge of national initiatives and personal involvement in the development and application of discipline principles and new technology, and/or knowledge of *crucial* work which can involve a number of personnel from the discipline or a variety of disciplines.
- Operates in a highly *complex* or specialized field to establish and/or modify standards, guidelines, concepts, theories, techniques or principles, both adapting precedents and by making significant departures from traditional approaches using significant *professional judgment*.
- With *professional independence*, uses high levels of expertise and experience to determine professional objectives and priorities within the framework of the agency's or health unit's corporate goals and discipline standards.
- Manages, initiates and formulates research programs, major projects or manages a major professional service or enterprise.
- Is the government's "authority" in a particular specialised field of expertise, or has extensive discipline knowledge and broad experience spanning more than one *professional discipline*.
- Uses detailed knowledge of government policies and procedures, and an appreciation of their application in relation to agency (or health unit's) operations.
- Interprets and provides advice on legislation, regulations and other guideline material relating to the operations and functions of the work area.
- Utilizes significant management skills and abilities to monitor resource allocations.

### PROFESSIONAL OFFICER LEVEL 5 (PO5)

Operates under general policy direction and with *professional independence* in the determination of overall strategies, priorities, work standards and allocation of resources. The role will be:

- The leading professional manager of a major program and operations; or
- The leading professional *specialist*.

Under the broad direction of an executive level, positions at this level will operate within *broad guidelines* to achieve specific objectives with total *professional independence* and be recognized as a national and/or international authority or as a *specialist* both within the public sector and externally. The occupant will generally make a significant contribution on the development of professional understanding on a national or beyond basis.

Positions at this level require high levels of expertise and experience with a comprehensive knowledge of a recognized *professional discipline*. Professional decisions at this level are likely to have substantial impacts to the health unit, agency, to industry, or to the State, and are not subject to professional review.

Work is undertaken in a highly *complex* or specialized field to establish and/or modify standards, guidelines, concepts, theories, techniques or principles, both by adapting precedents and by making significant departures from traditional approaches. *Professional independence* and high levels of expertise and experience to determine professional standards, objectives and priorities within the framework of the agency's (or health unit's) corporate goals will be evident.

This level will involve the management of programs of *crucial* importance to the State, to satisfy the Government's objectives or the agency's (or health unit's) corporate goals, often within a *multi-discipline* environment. This level is also responsible for professional policy development and advice to Government.

For a leading professional *specialist*, the lack of precedent is a major feature of the majority of duties and actions undertaken. Development and overseeing the implementation of new and high level programs and major investigations is a major feature of this level, as is an emphasis on strategic management.

The professional manager at this level will have high level *managerial responsibilities* which involve a staff comprising a large number of *professional officers*, and the coordination and direction of major program objectives to achieve the end result in a timely and effective manner. Programs are normally long term and require high level strategic planning and *innovative* thinking.

### **Knowledge and Experience**

- Has evidence of higher qualifications, and discipline recognition at national and/or international levels.
- Has made a significant contribution to the development of professional understanding on a national and/or international basis.
- Requires very high levels of expertise and experience within the *professional discipline*.

### **Operational Outcomes**

To satisfy the Government's objectives and/or the agency's or health unit's corporate goals, a position at this level may include any of the following:

- Operates in a highly *complex* or specialized field to establish and/or modify standards, guidelines, concepts, theories, techniques or principles, by both adapting precedents and making significant departures from traditional approaches.
- Uses high levels of expertise and experience with *professional independence* to determine professional objectives and priorities within the framework of an agency's or health unit's corporate goals and discipline standards.
- Manages programs of *crucial* importance to the State to satisfy the Government's objectives or the agency's or health unit's corporate goals.
- Provides expert *specialist* consultancy skills with *crucial* impacts to the industry, the State and possibly the nation.
- Develops and directs the implementation of new and high level programs and major investigations, with a strategic management emphasis.

**Working Environment**

- Positions at this level have *crucial* impacts to the agency (or health unit), to industry, to the State or to the Nation and decisions made will not usually be subject to professional review.

**PO5 – 4<sup>th</sup> increment**

Appointment at or progression to the 4<sup>th</sup> increment of PO5 will only occur if the *professional officer*:

- Has a level of accountability which warrants classification at the PO5 level; and
- Is personally recognized as having a national and international reputation as a *specialist* in the *professional discipline* confirmed by peers and endorsed by the publication of *papers* and external invitations to teach or speak to professional bodies/educational institutions on subject material which demands high level professional expertise; and
- Is not subject to *professional direction*; and
- Has formal responsibilities for a major agency or health unit program.

Assessment for appointment or progression to the 4<sup>th</sup> increment will be conducted by an agency or health unit panel which includes *inter alia* internal and/or external professionals.