

Requirements for compliant job descriptions

All Job Descriptions (JDs) must be written in accordance with **Determination 8 of 2018 – Specifications for Northern Territory Public Sector Job Descriptions**.

Key Duties and Responsibilities

JDs should be “a **brief** summary ... of the **key** duties and responsibilities of the job, explained in terms that are accurate for the job requirements, clear and easily understood by applicants” (DET 8 of 2018)

Important words here are “brief”, “clear” and “key”. It is unlikely that any job has 8 or 10 **key responsibilities**, yet JDs frequently have that many. Consider whether the responsibilities listed are “key”.

JDs should be easily understood by applicants – that is, someone reading the key duties and responsibilities should then have a clear idea of what the person actually does!

Selection Criteria

Must be written so as to allow for **Transferable Skills and Capabilities** and must not unreasonably restrict the field of applicants to only existing NTPS employees.

Determination 8 of 2018 states that selection criteria are to set out “the experience, qualifications, education, capabilities, knowledge, skills and personal qualities that are essential to achieve the outcomes of the job at a standard expected relative to the level of the position.”

It specifically states that essential criteria: “must allow consideration of transferable skills and potential for future development” and “must not be written in such a way as to unreasonably require the applicant to have specific knowledge or experience in the exact duties of the job being filled, or be written in a manner that may limit applicants to only those who have already occupied the vacancy.”

JDs must not require knowledge or experience using NTG specific systems (such as PIPS, EMIS, TRIM etc), or specific pieces of legislation. Rather JDs must allow consideration of similar work areas and experience which would indicate a person could quickly acquire and apply the knowledge.

For example a requirement for an AO3 or AO4 level general administration support position to have: “Demonstrated experience in a health setting”, or “experience in an education setting”, does **not** comply with the Determination because it does not recognise that the necessary capabilities and qualities to perform administrative duties do not have to include experience only in a specific work environment.

The fact that a vacancy is at the AO3 or AO4 level makes it all the more unreasonable to expect specialised knowledge in “health”, or “education”, when what is actually required is good transferable administration skills at the appropriate level. This sort of criterion can be made compliant by adding words such as “**the ability to acquire such knowledge quickly**”, or “**the capabilities and personal qualities suitable to work well in a health setting**.”

Creating compliant JDs

applicants for NTPS positions must meet all criteria identified as essential, so be sure in advertising that any criteria listed as essential really are

any qualification listed as essential must have been identified in Determination Number 3 of 1999 (NTPS Qualifications) or the relevant EBA as one required for that role

selection criteria must really be criteria and not responsibilities, for example: *Be the first point of contact for the public* is a duty **not** a selection criterion against which an applicant could be assessed

it is **not** a requirement to include criteria requiring “*proven ability to work with persons from diverse cultures*” or “*knowledge and understanding of WHS*”. These should only be added if they are in fact essential requirements of the particular role

criteria must not be written in such a way as to unreasonably limit applications to only existing NTPS employees, and must not contain NTPS specific acronyms

REQUIREMENTS FOR COMPLIANT JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Examples of non-compliant Essential Criteria and tips for improvement.

<p><i>Have, or be eligible to obtain, a NT Driver's Licence</i> – Having a driver's licence must not be included as essential unless there could be no way for the agency to reasonably accommodate a person who cannot get a driver's licence due to disability. A useful test to determine this is to consider whether an employee who was in that role lost the ability to drive would have to be moved to another role, or terminated? If the answer is no do not include as essential a requirement for a driver's licence.</p>
<p><i>Demonstrated experience following patient identification processes, registration standards and correct financial classification on each presentation or similar experience demonstrating the ability to quickly learn these processes.</i></p>
<p><i>Experience in the preparation and processing of Cabinet and Ministerial documents, or proven transferable skills and experience in preparing other forms of high-level documentation.</i></p>
<p><i>Ability to work with persons from different cultures</i> – The term “different cultures” must not be used in NTPS JDs; instead use “diverse cultures”.</p>
<p><i>Experience working in the Corrections area</i> – This was in a JD for a general administrative role and should have instead read: Experience working in an administrative capacity at a level appropriate to AO3.</p>
<p><i>Certificate III in Aged Care or working towards the same</i> – This professional qualification was not identified in Determination Number 3 of 1999 or the relevant EBA as being essential for the position being advertised so can only be included as desirable.</p>
<p><i>Demonstrated experience providing high level support to NTCET coordinator, operation of exam timetables at Year 11 and 12, and extensive knowledge of SACE framework</i> – This criterion was for an AO3 administrative role, and is obviously non-compliant, as it requires knowledge specific only to a person who has done the exact job. It must be written to include: or the proven capabilities to quickly acquire the required knowledge to provide this support.</p>
<p><i>A thorough understanding of Government financial systems and relevant legislation, and a thorough working knowledge of the Public Sector Employment Management Act including specific determinations relevant to health services staff</i> or the transferable experience to quickly acquire this knowledge.</p>
<p><i>Proven ability to manage fleet of vehicles which includes maintenance booking and working collaboratively with RDH Transport Manager and NT Fleet.</i> [Again, this criterion is obviously non-compliant, as it requires experience specific only to a person who has done the exact job or a very similar one. It must be written to include: or transferable capabilities demonstrating ability to perform the job at the appropriate level.</p>
<p><i>Knowledge of CQI activities, WHS Standards, Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Anti-Discrimination practices and behaviours as applied in the work environment</i> – This is knowledge that it is reasonable to expect could be quickly acquired by an applicant with the required level of capabilities for the vacancy. Therefore it is not essential knowledge on commencement, and the criterion should have added the words: or the ability to quickly acquire this knowledge.</p>
<p><i>Demonstrated practical experience in records management field with an understanding of policies, procedures and legislation that relates to the management of patient records and medical records systems</i> – This was for an AO3 level position and was not compliant with the Determination because it does not allow for transferable skills and experiences or the potential of a suitable applicant to quickly learn the required policies and procedures. Criterion must be amended to add: or the capabilities and transferable skills and knowledge to perform this job at the required level.</p>
<p><i>Demonstrated ability to master hospital information systems and demonstrated experience using a hospital billing system and to use TRIM or similar systems or transferable experience or qualifications demonstrating the ability to quickly learn and use such systems.</i></p>