

# Role Description

## Diagnostic Plant Pathologist



Department of Primary Industries  
and Regional Development

Portfolio	Primary Industries and Regional Development
Department/Agency	Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
Group/Division/Branch	Agriculture & Biosecurity / Biosecurity and Food Safety / EMAI
Location	Menangle
Classification/Grade/Band	Professional Officer Grade 1 - 4
Role Family	Bespoke / Science and Engineering / Deliver
ANZSCO Code	1339913
PCAT Code	11119192
Date of Approval	May 2020 (updated October 2024)
Agency Website	<a href="http://www.dpird.nsw.gov.au">www.dpird.nsw.gov.au</a>

### Agency overview

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) is the department dedicated to growing primary industries and supporting regional economic development to deliver long term benefits to the state. Our focus is to protect, support and develop our primary industries, mining sector, and regions.

DPIRD brings together Agriculture and Biosecurity; Fisheries and Forestry; Local Land Services; NSW Resources; Regional Development and Delivery; the Regional Growth NSW Development Corporation; NSW Public Works and Soil Conservation Service.

We have nearly 5,000 employees, with almost 80 per cent of us living and working in regional NSW.

Within the Agriculture and Biosecurity division, Biosecurity & Food Safety branch is responsible for effective management and risk minimisation of biosecurity threats to NSW as well as the through-chain regulation of food safety. It delivers a risk-based approach to policy and compliance and provides regional engagement and coordination in response to emergency incidents and natural disasters impacting primary industries and the food sector.

### Primary purpose of the role

The Diagnostic Plant Pathologist is required to provide scientific leadership and technical direction in the Plant Health Diagnostic Service (PHDS) Laboratory, managing submissions by triaging and assigning tests, discussing and interpreting results, problem solving, liaising with submitters, and issuing reports.

### Key accountabilities

- Assessing and undertaking examination or analysis of samples, assigning appropriate tests, interpreting results and issuing reports

- Maintaining knowledge of plant diseases and disease diagnosis across a broad range of species to ensure that decisions made and activities undertaken meet professional expectations
- Providing scientific leadership and technical direction to the laboratory
- Ensuring compliance with the Quality Management System and current standards to meet ISO17025
- Providing advice that underpins existing biosecurity policy and informs new policy development.
- Promoting and maintaining a safe work culture in the laboratory
- Comply with work standards for Pathologists according to the level of appointment in the Professional Officer Progression Criteria (1-4) scale in the Crown Employees (NSW Department of Industry) Professional Officers Award

## Key challenges

- Managing multiple tasks effectively within tight timeframes to meet client expectations
- Understanding and implementing a diagnostic approach that results in a meaningful diagnosis or diagnostic plan
- Balancing diagnostic capabilities with financial constraints of the submitter

## Key relationships

Who	Why
<b>Internal</b>	
Leader Plant Biosecurity Diagnostics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reports on activities, provides advice and gains direction on key scientific and diagnostic issues</li> <li>• Escalates issues, keeps informed, and advises</li> <li>• Participates in meetings to represent work group perspective and shares information about both day to day and medium to long term issues</li> </ul>
Laboratory professional and technical staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures all tasks are completed in a timely manner by discussing with team members daily</li> <li>• Contributes to a harmonised team environment by completing all assigned tasks and taking initiative to assist other team members that may require additional help</li> <li>• Ensures that laboratory employees are informed on testing requirements, turnaround times and WH&amp;S issues concerning biological material</li> </ul>
<b>External</b>	
Submitters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensures diagnostic needs are being met and accurate results are provided as per agreed turnaround times</li> </ul>

## Role dimensions

### Decision making

- This role has a high level of autonomy and is fully accountable for the delivery of accurate laboratory reports that meet the agreed requirements of quality, deliverables and outcomes

- The Plant Pathologist refers to a supervisor any decisions that require significant deviation from project outcomes or timeframes, are likely to escalate or create substantial or contentious precedent, require a higher administrative or financial delegation, or submission to a higher level of management

## Reporting line

Leader Plant Biosecurity Diagnostics

## Direct reports

Nil

## Budget/Expenditure

Nil

## Essential requirements

- Degree qualification in Science (BSc) or related field

## Capabilities for the role

The [NSW public sector capability framework](#) describes the capabilities (knowledge, skills and abilities) needed to perform a role. There are four main groups of capabilities: personal attributes, relationships, results and business enablers, with a fifth people management group of capabilities for roles with managerial responsibilities. These groups, combined with capabilities drawn from occupation-specific capability sets where relevant, work together to provide an understanding of the capabilities needed for the role.



The capabilities are separated into **focus capabilities** and **complementary capabilities**.

## Focus capabilities



*Focus capabilities* are the capabilities considered the most important for effective performance of the role. These capabilities will be assessed at recruitment.

The focus capabilities for this role are shown below with a brief explanation of what each capability covers and the indicators describing the types of behaviours expected at each level.

## FOCUS CAPABILITIES

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
 Personal Attributes	<b>Act with Integrity</b> Be ethical and professional, and uphold and promote the public sector values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represent the organisation in an honest, ethical and professional way and encourage others to do so</li> <li>• Act professionally and support a culture of integrity</li> <li>• Identify and explain ethical issues and set an example for others to follow</li> <li>• Ensure that others are aware of and understand the legislation and policy framework within which they operate</li> <li>• Act to prevent and report misconduct and illegal and inappropriate behaviour</li> </ul>	Adept
	<b>Manage Self</b> Show drive and motivation, an ability to self-reflect and a commitment to learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act as a professional role model for colleagues, set high personal goals and take pride in their achievement</li> <li>• Actively seek, reflect and act on feedback on own performance</li> <li>• Translate negative feedback into an opportunity to improve</li> <li>• Take the initiative and act in a decisive way</li> <li>• Demonstrate a strong interest in new knowledge and emerging practices relevant to the organisation</li> </ul>	Advanced
 Relationships	<b>Communicate Effectively</b> Communicate clearly, actively listen to others, and respond with understanding and respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on key points and speak in plain English</li> <li>• Clearly explain and present ideas and arguments</li> <li>• Listen to others to gain an understanding and ask appropriate, respectful questions</li> <li>• Promote the use of inclusive language and assist others to adjust where necessary</li> <li>• Monitor own and others' non-verbal cues and adapt where necessary</li> <li>• Write and prepare material that is well structured and easy to follow</li> <li>• Communicate routine technical information clearly</li> </ul>	Intermediate





## FOCUS CAPABILITIES

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
	<p><b>Commit to Customer Service</b></p> <p>Provide customer-focused services in line with public sector and organisational objectives</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on providing a positive customer experience</li> <li>• Support a customer-focused culture in the organisation</li> <li>• Demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the services provided and relay this knowledge to customers</li> <li>• Identify and respond quickly to customer needs</li> <li>• Consider customer service requirements and develop solutions to meet needs</li> <li>• Resolve complex customer issues and needs</li> <li>• Cooperate across work areas to improve outcomes for customers</li> </ul>	Intermediate
 <p>Results</p>	<p><b>Think and Solve Problems</b></p> <p>Think, analyse and consider the broader context to develop practical solutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify the facts and type of data needed to understand a problem or explore an opportunity</li> <li>• Research and analyse information to make recommendations based on relevant evidence</li> <li>• Identify issues that may hinder the completion of tasks and find appropriate solutions</li> <li>• Be willing to seek input from others and share own ideas to achieve best outcomes</li> <li>• Generate ideas and identify ways to improve systems and processes to meet user needs</li> </ul>	Intermediate
	<p><b>Demonstrate Accountability</b></p> <p>Be proactive and responsible for own actions, and adhere to legislation, policy and guidelines</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be proactive in taking responsibility and being accountable for own actions</li> <li>• Understand delegations and act within authority levels</li> <li>• Identify and follow safe work practices, and be vigilant about own and others' application of these practices</li> <li>• Be aware of risks and act on or escalate risks, as appropriate</li> <li>• Use financial and other resources responsibly</li> </ul>	Intermediate
 <p>Business Enablers</p>	<p><b>Technology</b></p> <p>Understand and use available technologies to maximise efficiencies and effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate a sound understanding of technology relevant to the work unit, and identify and select the most appropriate technology for assigned tasks</li> <li>• Use available technology to improve individual performance and effectiveness</li> <li>• Make effective use of records, information and knowledge management functions and systems</li> <li>• Support the implementation of systems improvement initiatives, and the introduction and roll-out of new technologies</li> </ul>	Intermediate

## Complementary capabilities

*Complementary capabilities* are also identified from the Capability Framework and relevant occupation-specific capability sets. They are important to identifying performance required for the role and development opportunities.

Note: capabilities listed as 'not essential' for this role are not relevant for recruitment purposes however may be relevant for future career development.

COMPLEMENTARY CAPABILITIES			
Capability group/sets	Capability name	Description	Level
 Personal Attributes	Display Resilience and Courage	Be open and honest, prepared to express your views, and willing to accept and commit to change	Adept
	Value Diversity and Inclusion	Demonstrate inclusive behaviour and show respect for diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives	Intermediate
 Relationships	Work Collaboratively	Collaborate with others and value their contribution	Adept
	Influence and Negotiate	Gain consensus and commitment from others, and resolve issues and conflicts	Intermediate
 Results	Deliver Results	Achieve results through the efficient use of resources and a commitment to quality outcomes	Adept
	Plan and Prioritise	Plan to achieve priority outcomes and respond flexibly to changing circumstances	Intermediate
 Business Enablers	Finance	Understand and apply financial processes to achieve value for money and minimise financial risk	Foundational
	Procurement and Contract Management	Understand and apply procurement processes to ensure effective purchasing and contract performance	Intermediate
	Project Management	Understand and apply effective planning, coordination and control methods	Intermediate