Role Description
Principal Research Officer

NSW | Education

Role Description Fields	Details
Cluster	Education
Department/Agency	NSW Department of Education
Division/Branch/Unit	Centre for Education Statistics and Evaluation, Strategic Analysis and Research
Role number	271367
Classification/Grade/Band	Clerk Grade 11/12
Senior executive work level standards	Not Applicable
ANZSCO Code	132411
PCAT Code	2119192
Date of Approval	June 2025
Agency Website	https://education.nsw.gov.au/

Agency overview

At the NSW Department of Education, we educate and inspire lifelong learners – from early childhood, through schooling to vocational education and training.

We ensure young children get the best start in life by supporting and regulating the early childhood education and care sector. We unlock excellence and unleash the potential of two-thirds of school children in NSW. We're proudly public and the largest education system in Australia. We nurture opportunities for every learner to develop the skills needed for their chosen career path, helping shape the industries of tomorrow.

We respect and value Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as First Peoples of Australia.

Primary purpose of the role

The Principal Research Officer leads and manages a team to deliver a key program under the Disability Strategy (rollout of the 'My Say My Way' Accessible Survey Methods program).

Key accountabilities

- Lead and undertake research, analysis and review of complex policy issues, identifying emerging issues, and developing evidence-based options and strategies, to ensure problems are resolved and risks are mitigated
- Provide expert advice and information to inform relevant stakeholders and support policy directions
- Lead and manage team/s to support the Agency in meeting policy commitments and/or roll-out of significant policy initiatives
- Develop and implement strategies for the monitoring and evaluation of all policy initiatives to identify risks and issues and ensure the achievement of desired outcomes
- Lead and facilitate stakeholder engagement, consultation and negotiation on policy issues to identify and develop solutions and make recommendations that account for relevant factors and support sound policy decisions and approaches
- Oversee the preparation of reports, briefs and correspondence to inform or respond to Agency and/or Government requests

- Prepare accurate, timely and well-analysed project plans, reports and advice to senior officers and report regularly on progress and achievements against key milestones.
- Prepare responses to Ministerial correspondence, briefings and external inquiries to provide accurate information and feedback.

Key challenges
- Achieving multiple project objectives, given limited resources and tight deadlines and the need to identify project interdependencies and balance competing demands and priorities.
- Managing consultations and negotiations with diverse stakeholders, given the need to balance competing interests and demands which are often changing and unpredictable
- Providing accurate policy advice and recommendations on a range of complex issues, given the need to understand the problem and formulate responses within short-time frames, often without prior notice

Key relationships

Internal

Who	Why
Director	- Provide advice and report on progress towards business objectives and discuss future directions - Provide expert advice and contribute to decision making - Identify emerging issues/risks and their implications and propose solutions
Project Team	- Guide, support, coach and mentor team members - Lead discussions and decisions regarding key projects and deliverables
Stakeholders	- Provide expert advice on a range of project related issues and strategies - Optimise engagement to achieve defined outcomes - Manage expectations and resolve issues

External

Who	Why
Stakeholders	- Engage in, consult and negotiate the development, delivery and evaluation of projects - Manage expectations and resolve issues
Vendors/Service Providers and Consultants	- Communicate needs, facilitate routine business transactions and resolve issues - Negotiate and approve contracts and service agreements - Manage contracts and monitor the provision of service to ensure compliance with contract and service agreements

Role dimensions

Decision making

- Has a high level of autonomy, uses initiative and is fully accountable for the delivery of high quality strategic policy proposals and advice on time and within budget.
- Acts independently to plan, lead and organise the work of the team to deliver high quality support to the Directorate to achieve agreed objectives and performance targets.

Reporting line

Director, Strategic Analysis and Research

Direct reports

4

Budget/Expenditure

The role has a financial delegation in accordance with the Department's policy.

Key knowledge and experience

- Knowledge of and commitment to implementing the Department's Aboriginal Education Policy and upholding the Department's Partnership Agreement with the NSW AECG and to ensure quality outcomes for Aboriginal people.

Essential requirements

- Working with Children Check for paid employment
- Demonstrated understanding of and commitment to the value of public education.

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

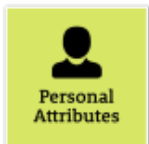| Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
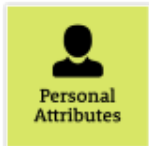
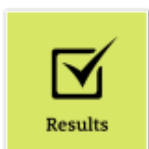|	**Display Resilience and Courage** Be open and honest, prepared to express your views, and willing to accept and commit to change	• Remain composed and calm and act constructively in highly pressured and unpredictable environments • Give frank, honest advice in response to strong contrary views • Accept criticism of own ideas and respond in a thoughtful and considered way • Welcome new challenges and persist in raising and working through novel and difficult issues • Develop effective strategies and show decisiveness in dealing with emotionally charged situations and difficult or controversial issues	Advanced
	Act with Integrity Be ethical and professional, and uphold and promote the public sector values	• Represent the organisation in an honest, ethical and professional way and encourage others to do so • Act professionally and support a culture of integrity • Identify and explain ethical issues and set an example for others to follow • Ensure that others are aware of and understand the legislation and policy framework within which they operate • Act to prevent and report misconduct and illegal and inappropriate behaviour	Adept
	Communicate Effectively Communicate clearly, actively listen to others, and respond with understanding and respect	• Present with credibility, engage diverse audiences and test levels of understanding • Translate technical and complex information clearly and concisely for diverse audiences • Create opportunities for others to contribute to discussion and debate • Contribute to and promote information sharing across the organisation • Manage complex communications that involve understanding and responding to multiple and divergent viewpoints • Explore creative ways to engage diverse audiences and communicate information • Adjust style and approach to optimise outcomes • Write fluently and persuasively in plain English and in a range of styles and formats	Advanced
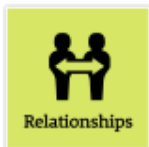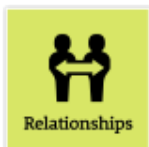
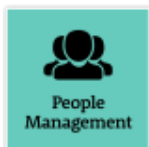|	**Influence and Negotiate** Gain consensus and commitment from others, and resolve issues and conflicts	• Negotiate from an informed and credible position • Lead and facilitate productive discussions with staff and stakeholders • Encourage others to talk, share and debate ideas to achieve a consensus • Recognise diverse perspectives and the need for compromise in negotiating mutually agreed outcomes • Influence others with a fair and considered approach and sound arguments • Show sensitivity and understanding in resolving conflicts and differences • Manage challenging relationships with internal and external stakeholders • Anticipate and minimise conflict	Adept
	Deliver Results Achieve results through the efficient use of resources and a commitment to quality outcomes	• Use own and others' expertise to achieve outcomes, and take responsibility for delivering intended outcomes • Make sure staff understand expected goals and acknowledge staff success in achieving these • Identify resource needs and ensure goals are achieved within set budgets and deadlines • Use business data to evaluate outcomes and inform continuous improvement • Identify priorities that need to change and ensure the allocation of resources meets new business needs • Ensure that the financial implications of changed priorities are explicit and budgeted for	Adept
	Think and Solve Problems Think, analyse and consider the broader context to develop practical solutions	• Undertake objective, critical analysis to draw accurate conclusions that recognise and manage contextual issues • Work through issues, weigh up alternatives and identify the most effective solutions in collaboration with others • Take account of the wider business context when considering options to resolve issues • Explore a range of possibilities and creative alternatives to contribute to system, process and business improvements • Implement systems and processes that are underpinned by high-quality research and analysis • Look for opportunities to design innovative solutions to meet user needs and service demands • Evaluate the performance and effectiveness of services, policies and programs against clear criteria	Advanced

|	**Project Management** Understand and apply effective planning, coordination and control methods	• Understand all components of the project management process, including the need to consider change management to realise business benefits • Prepare clear project proposals and accurate estimates of required costs and resources • Establish performance outcomes and measures for key project goals, and define monitoring, reporting and communication requirements • Identify and evaluate risks associated with the project and develop mitigation strategies • Identify and consult stakeholders to inform the project strategy • Communicate the project's objectives and its expected benefits • Monitor the completion of project milestones against goals and take necessary action • Evaluate progress and identify improvements to inform future projects	Adept
	Manage and Develop People Engage and motivate staff, and develop capability and potential in others	• Define and clearly communicate roles, responsibilities and performance standards to achieve team outcomes • Adjust performance development processes to meet the diverse abilities and needs of individuals and teams • Develop work plans that consider capability, strengths and opportunities for development • Be aware of the influences of bias when managing team members • Seek feedback on own management capabilities and develop strategies to address any gaps • Address and resolve team and individual performance issues, including unsatisfactory performance, in a timely and effective way • Monitor and report on team performance in line with established performance development frameworks	Adept

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.

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Description	Level
Personal Attributes	Manage Self	Show drive and motivation, an ability to self-reflect and a commitment to learning	Adept
Personal Attributes	Value Diversity and Inclusion	Demonstrate inclusive behaviour and show respect for diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives	Adept
Relationships	Commit to Customer Service	Provide customer-focused services in line with public sector and organisational objectives	Adept
Relationships	Work Collaboratively	Collaborate with others and value their contribution	Adept
Results	Plan and Prioritise	Plan to achieve priority outcomes and respond flexibly to changing circumstances	Adept
Results	Demonstrate Accountability	Be proactive and responsible for own actions, and adhere to legislation, policy and guidelines	Adept
Business Enablers	Finance	Understand and apply financial processes to achieve value for money and minimise financial risk	Intermediate
Business Enablers	Technology	Understand and use available technologies to maximise efficiencies and effectiveness	Intermediate
Business Enablers	Procurement and Contract Management	Understand and apply procurement processes to ensure effective purchasing and contract performance	Intermediate
People Management	Inspire Direction and Purpose	Communicate goals, priorities and vision, and recognise achievements	Intermediate
People Management	Optimise Business Outcomes	Manage people and resources effectively to achieve public value	Adept
People Management	Manage Reform and Change	Support, promote and champion change, and assist others to engage with change	Intermediate