

# Functional job requirements for the guidance officer

## Department of Education

This document was developed for the following purposes: assisting in the development of rehabilitation programs for injured or ill employees, and providing detailed information about job demands to medical practitioners and allied health professionals undertaking medical reviews of departmental employees.

This report identifies those activities which are essential to successful performance in this role. In determining whether a work activity is a 'critical activity', the following questions are considered:

- Does the worker spend greater than 33% of designated work time performing this activity?
- Is specialised training/experience required to complete this activity? Has this been completed by only a small proportion of staff in this geographical region?
- Is this activity performed in an environment where no other workers are readily available to assist with its completion?
- Does this activity occur without prior notice and require immediate attention leaving no time to seek assistance to complete it?
- Is this activity core to the development of stakeholder relationships, which are essential to achieving successful outcomes?
- Would an inability to perform this activity result in an increased health and safety risk to co-workers, students, and/or members of the public?

The development process included: site observation of work environments, staff interviews, staff feedback on draft documents and consideration of benchmark publications for the analysis and description of work activities and job demands specific to particular positions (the *Revised Handbook for Analysing Jobs*, the *Occupational Information Network* and the *Australian Job Guide, 2006*).

This report indicates the average time spent across a working week on each work activity, and also on each physical demand of work. In order to make this information meaningful to the various users of this report, in some instances the time spent is expressed as a single word, as a percentage of total time, or as an actual amount of time (i.e. hours and minutes). The timeframes used are based on the benchmark descriptions (from the publications above) for expressing frequency of performance of work tasks.

Descriptor	Percentage of time	Amount of time based on 38 hours per week
Not present	0%	0 minutes
Rare	1% – 7%	22 minutes – 2 hours 40 minutes
Occasional	8% – 33%	3 hours – 12 hours 30 minutes
Frequent	34% – 66%	13 hours – 25 hours
Constant	67% - 100%	25 hours 30 minutes – 38 hours



## Description of guidance officer

It is the role of the guidance officer is to provide a comprehensive student support program within the school environment offering counselling with students on a one-on-one basis or in a group setting assisting the students with specific difficulties, acting as a mediator or providing information on other life skills. The staff member may be required to liaise with parents, teachers, or other external health providers as needed as part of the counselling process. The guidance officer is required to liaise with external agencies and co-ordinate student information sessions with teachers to assist with vocational planning whilst at school or following completion. They are responsible for building relationships with appropriate external agencies and keep up to date on the availability of resources for students and Queensland Education policy.

Staff are required to have a Masters in Counselling or Registration as a Psychologist in addition to their Teacher Qualifications to be employed in this role.

**Assessment details:** assessment of the guidance officer position was conducted at Rochedale State High School (Priestdale Road, Rochedale), which had one guidance officer at the time of assessment. Primary contact was Ms. Corinne Neilsen, who participated in all duties outlined in the following pages.

## Hours of work and scheduled breaks

**Hours of work:** depending on the identified needs and number of students enrolled at the school, Education Queensland assign a specific number of hours for the guidance officer role. At the school where the assessment took place, the position was funded for 0.7 full time equivalent hours (FTE) and an arrangement was reached whereby Rochedale school offered the staff member additional hours until a full time position was made available. The ordinary hours of work for a full time guidance officer is from 8.30am until 4.30 pm, Monday to Friday. Staff may be required to work outside of these hours when involved in information evenings or parent teacher interviews.

Guidance officers do not have set uniform requirements; however, are required to maintain professional attire.

Staff are required to maintain currency of qualifications through the completion of professional development courses which may be completed in the holiday period.

**Meal breaks:** guidance officers are entitled to an unpaid meal break of 40 minutes if in excess of 5 hours is worked on any day. This meal break is to be taken between 11.30am and 2.00pm or such other times as may be arranged by the principal. It was further reported that it is common for students to approach the guidance officer for assistance during meal breaks and due to other organisational demands, this may result in significant interruption during designated meal breaks.

**Rest pauses:** general high school teachers are entitled to a rest pause of 10 minutes duration to be taken mid-morning which will be considered as rostered duty time. It was reported that organisational demands may inhibit such breaks.

**Bus and playground supervision:** guidance officers are not required to complete any playground or bus supervision duties at the school where the assessment took place.

**Non-contact time:** guidance officers are not considered to have any designated non-contact time as they do not specifically teach students in a rostered and ongoing basis which differs from other teaching staff members.

The activity frequencies below have been calculated based on a week of 5 days comprising 7.6 contact hours per day, as per page one of this report. Job activities have been listed as critical only where they meet criteria for critical job demands, as outlined on page one of this report.



	<b>Job activity</b>	<b>Average time</b>	<b>Critical job demand</b>
1	<p>Counselling - students may refer themselves for counselling with the guidance officer or be referred by their parents, teachers or other health professionals regarding difficulties that they student may be experiencing at home, relationship or family issues, and concerns around student protection. Counselling generally occurs on a one-to-one basis of varying duration as determined appropriate by the staff member. As part of this process the guidance officer may act as a mediator between parties, liaise with parents, or report any more significant concerns to Welfare Services. The staff member may also refer students to the school based Youth Worker who visits on a weekly basis and to other external health professions for ongoing specific health based treatment.</p> <p>Guidance officers may partake in interviews with specific senior students which have been identified to not be performing well at school and to liaise with teachers and parents as deemed appropriate.</p>	Up to 25 hrs per week	Yes
2	<p>Teaching of students/information for students - in addition to one-on-one counselling services the guidance officer designs, co-ordinates and participates in the delivery of specific behavioural based group sessions including behavioural management; self-esteem; grief and assertiveness and liaises with other teaching staff to organize student attendance. The guidance officer develops and facilitates the delivery of specific presentations for the year 11 and 12 students on a range of topics identified as priorities in consultation with the Heads of Department and may include topics on QCS, Vocational Options and Life Skills. External presenters may be brought into the school from a range of organizations including Community Health Providers, Police and Universities.</p> <p>The staff member is involved the development and delivery of a Personal Development Program focused on year 8, 9, and 10 students including topics on vocational options, resilience training, and bullying. As for the senior school program, external presenters may also be involved.</p> <p>For all presentations supplementary booklets, handouts and teacher aids are developed and reviewed as appropriate.</p>	Up to 12 hrs 30 mins per week	Yes
3	Follow up student leavers - in line with Queensland Education policy guidance officers are required to follow up students who have left school prior to completing Year 12 or liaise with other staff members as needed if the student is transferring to another school.	Up to 2 hrs 40 mins per week	Yes
4	Administration - guidance officers are required to maintain case notes following counselling sessions, generate reports as requested and liaise with external agencies to arrange guest speakers. Staff members are required to review departmental policies and maintain up to date resources for students and be aware of appropriate community bases resources.	Up to 12 hrs 30 mins per week	Dependent on the school
5	<p>Staff meetings - guidance officers may be involved in supervising the Student Services Team which includes the Chaplain, Youth Workers and Nurses and attend monthly staff meetings. In the interim the officer may meet with the members of the team on a weekly basis to discuss specific student cases and complete case reviews.</p> <p>In addition to this, the guidance officer is required to complete case conferences with other senior guidance officers and district guidance officers.</p>	Up to 2 hrs 40 mins per week	Yes
6	Parent liaison – the staff member may contact the parents of their students via telephone as required to discuss specific issues (e.g. student performance, welfare) and this is noted on the student’s record. Guidance offers participate in teacher parent interview nights approximately once per semester and staff may also be involved in specific information nights providing additional information as needed to both students and parents (e.g. Year 10 Careers Evening).	Up to 2 hrs 40 mins per week	Yes
7	Liaising with external health providers or agencies - guidance officers may be involved in liaising with specific health professionals involved in the management of a student’s health or arrange for referrals or assessments to be completed (e.g. with psychologists, child mental health services team).	Up to 2 hrs 40 mins per week	No



## Frequency of physical job demands (average % of shift)

Demands	Not present	Rare (0-7%)	Occasional (8-33%)	Frequent (34-66%)	Constant (67-100%)	Demands	Not present	Rare (0-7%)	Occasional (8-33%)	Frequent (34-66%)	Constant (67-100%)
Sitting					✓	Reaching			✓		
Standing – static			✓			Handling			✓		
Standing – dynamic				✓		Pushing			✓		
Walking – flat terrain				✓		Pulling			✓		
Walking – slippery/gravel terrain		✓				Lifting			✓		
Climbing – step stools/ladders		✓				Carrying			✓		
Climbing – stairs		✓				Balancing – above ground			✓		
Stooping		✓				Fine motor				✓	
Kneeling		✓				Control operation			✓		
Crouching – one off		✓				Arm – hand steadiness			✓		
Crawling		✓				Driving			✓		
Auditory function					✓	Visual function					✓

## Tools/equipment handled

Students' chairs and desks – up to approximately 20kg
Pens/pencils/chalk/whiteboard markers and books.
Computers, PDAs and data projectors – for use during information technology based learning activities with students and administrative tasks.
Phone and email – for planning/liaison with different schools and staff.
Learning aids – charts, models, posters, overhead projectors and screens

## Loads lifted and carried

	Not present	Rare (0-7%)	Occasional (8-33%)	Frequent (34-66%)	Constant (67-100%)
0-5kg				Files, documents, handouts	
6-10kg			Learning aids e.g. over head projectors		
11-15kg					
16-20kg					



## Risk based physical environmental considerations

- There may be clutter in the work area, increasing the risk of trip hazards, awkward bending and lifting, and poor storage practices.
- Items, furniture and fixtures may be poorly positioned or designed by staff members, requiring the adoption of awkward postures.
- There may be limited/confined space for movement during performance of some activities.
- There may be constant low-level ambient noise (from students, traffic, school activities e.g. music practice, etc.)
- There may be limited lighting and ventilation in some facilities.
- Some work may be performed outdoors or in an area exposed to the elements (e.g. experiments on school ovals or on excursions).
- Fine motor work may be performed in temperatures of 16 degrees or lower and above 24 degrees, due to local environmental conditions and capacity of school facilities to control ambient air temperatures.
- Work may be performed in temperatures above 24 degrees (occasionally in summer).
- Work areas may be slippery or wet.

Psychosocial risks to be considered	Social/interpersonal demands
Time pressure/high workload – while deadlines exist for many tasks, the level of demand is dependent upon school environment and staffing level. Staff may also be required to address multiple demands and a large number of unplanned interruptions may occur throughout the day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performing for or working directly with the public.</li> <li>• Communicating with persons outside organisation.</li> <li>• Establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships.</li> <li>• Resolving conflicts and negotiating with others.</li> <li>• Communicating with supervisors, peers or subordinates.</li> <li>• Guiding, directing and motivating students.</li> <li>• Training and teaching others.</li> <li>• Coordinating or leading others.</li> <li>• Coaching and developing others.</li> <li>• Coordinating the work of others – students and external agencies..</li> <li>• Interpreting the meaning of information for others.</li> <li>• Dealing with unpleasant or angry people.</li> <li>• Dealing with physically aggressive people.</li> <li>• Assisting and caring for others (may include first aid).</li> </ul>
Responsible for others' health and safety – assisting in the identification of at risk students and liaising with parents, appropriate external agencies and teachers.	
Environmental stress – constant low-level ambient noise from students, PA announcements, school bells etc. requiring considerable projection of voice to be heard. Some temperature variation during winter and summer, constant environmental monitoring of student location during outdoor skills based sessions.	
Insufficient work breaks – shortened breaks may be taken on a voluntary basis due to high workload and time constraints. Breaks may be limited by meal and playground supervision duties, particularly if there is insufficient planning e.g. unplanned wet weather duties. Although break times are stipulated, teachers do not always receive an uninterrupted break	
Investigations – participate in reporting, investigation and resolution processes, including mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect and participation as a witness or party to performance, discipline, grievance, WorkCover or other processes.	
Policies – comply with departmental policies, procedures, guidelines and the code of conduct, including undertaking risk management processes to ensure the health and safety of students and others under their supervision or direction.	

## Considerations for assessment of physical job fitness

- Assessment of sustained sitting capacity of 50 minutes, including sufficient flexibility to allow adoption of awkward postures when working.
- Ability to sustain dynamic standing throughout the day with minimal sitting breaks.
- Capacity for grip patterns required for repetitive handling of various equipment.
- Assessment of fine motor dexterity or actual keyboard operation for typing activities (for non-contact duties).
- Symmetry, range and discomfort with movements of the spinal and peripheral joints, including hips, knees, ankles, shoulders and wrists.
- Able to ascend and descend 2 x flights of stairs.
- Sufficient visual and auditory function to enable interaction and response to students.

## Other considerations

- History of neck/shoulder discomfort associated with static and sustained repetitive neck flexion postures.
- History of upper limb, lower limb or spinal pain with repetitious or static tasks.
- History of lower back pain with sustained sitting.
- Knowledge of individual allergies and ability to work with a wide range of chemicals.
- Knowledge of ergonomic principles for clerical workstations and knowledge of/ability to learn safe crouching/stooping posture (with flexion occurring at the hips rather than in the lumbar spine).
- Knowledge of correct manual handling techniques i.e. ability to bend at hips, bend knees and squat with a straight back.
- Knowledge of vocal health and techniques to enable safe projection of voice.

