

# Functional job requirements for the home economics teacher

## 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 25 hours per week
Not present	0%	0 minutes
Rare	1% – 7%	15 minutes – 1 hour 15 minutes
Occasional	8% – 33%	1 hour 30 minutes – 8 hours 15 minutes
Frequent	34% – 66%	8 hours 30 minutes – 16 hours 30 minutes
Constant	67% - 100%	16 hours 45 minutes – 25 hours



## Description of home economics teacher

It is the role of a home economics teacher to teach a class of up to 28 students in grades eight to twelve. Junior classes (years 8 to 10) will have up to 28 students per class and senior classes (years 11 and 12) will have up to 25. Students in high schools will generally be aged 13 years and above. Home economics teachers are responsible for all aspects of the planning, preparation and delivery of effective learning and teaching programs across a range of subjects including hospitality, early childhood, tourism, fashion/creative arts and home economics. The proportion of time spent teaching theory versus practical demonstration varies between the subjects. For example, tourism is entirely theory based, whereas textiles or food technology will predominantly be practical in nature. The curriculum is spread across four terms per school year and is determined prior to the start of the new school year. The average time spent by home economics teachers in classes will be 23 hours per week (for example 34 classes of 40minutes duration).

**Assessment details:** assessment of the home economics teacher position was conducted at Sunnybank State High School (Boorman St, Sunnybank) which had three home economics teacher at the time of assessment. Primary contact was Ms. Robyn Pedler, head of home economics, who participated in all teaching duties outlined in the following pages, as well as having additional duties related to the organisation of staff, curriculum and resources as well as mentoring, support and recruitment processes as required.

## Hours of work and scheduled breaks

**Hours of work:** the ordinary work hours for a home economics teacher is 25 hours per week. The average class time will be 23 hours per week incorporating 34 classes per week. The ordinary spread of hours of work exclusive of meal times is between 8.30am and 3.30pm, Monday to Friday. Staff may be required to work outside of these hours when involved in functions, sporting days, fetes or other events where the department may be required to cater specifically for these occasions. Home economics teachers do not have set uniform requirements; however, are required to wear clothing suitable to the practical nature of some of their classes.

Staff are required to maintain currency of qualifications through the completion of professional development courses which may be completed in the holiday period, weekends or outside of standard work hours.

**Meal breaks:** home economics teachers 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 organisational demands, scheduled playground supervision and involvement in various committees (e.g. P&C, student council, student welfare) may inhibit taking of such breaks.

**Rest pauses:** home economics 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:** home economics teachers are required to undertake bus, playground and detention room supervision duties approximately three times per week. The rostering of these supervisory sessions are dependent on other organisational demands and time commitments of the staff members .

**Non-contact time:** home economics teachers will usually have three 'spare' sessions per week in which to complete non-contact duties such as session planning, marking, liaising with parents; however, this number will vary depending on other duties they fulfil.

The activity frequencies below have been calculated based on a week of 5 days comprising 5 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.

	Job activity	Average time	Critical job demand
1	Room/activity setup – staff are required to set up a class room when they will be completing a demonstration to a class of students or the students will be participating in a practical teaching session. The teacher aide and students may assist with this process. This may include setting out items required for the cooking classes (including food items and equipment), sewing machines for textiles and moving furniture to accommodate a particular class.	Up to 3 hrs per week (e.g. 5 minutes per class)	Yes
2	Teaching of students – home economics involves teaching a variety of core and vocational based subjects including hospitality, tourism, fashion/creative arts, early childhood, and home economics (incorporating textiles, food technology, family studies and consumerism). Depending on the needs of the school additional topics may be covered including Core Skills; Driver Education; Life Skills and Certificates in Work Education.  Depending on the subject and the experience of the teacher a proportion of the curriculum is taught in a classroom environment encompassing the theoretical background material prior to completion of a practical component. For example during Textiles or Fashion one lesson per week may be theory with the remainder five being practical in nature. As determined by the teacher a demonstration lesson may be completed prior to the students completing the task independently. Day excursions may arranged to appropriate venues by  Teachers to facilitate learning. Home Economics Teachers are required to report on each student's performance on areas covered throughout the year.  Subjects are usually taught in specifically identified rooms within the school with access to appropriate equipment and supplies. Teaching may involve standing or seated presentation of information to students, monitoring verbal and non-verbal responses of students to information, providing answers to questions, supervision of group and individual learning activities and encouraging participation by students	Up to 25 hrs per week (e.g. 1-2 hrs per week)	Yes
3	Parent liaison – teachers may contact the parents of their students via telephone as required to discuss specific issues (e.g. student performance). Teachers participate in teacher parent interview nights approximately three times per year and staff may also be involved in subject information nights providing additional information as needed to both students and parents.	Up to 1 hr per week	Yes
4	Completion of stock take – once per year, the teacher together with the teacher aid complete a basic stock take of all equipment used by the students and staff in the home economics department.	One per year	No
5	Specific non-contact time - involving session planning, completion of administrative paperwork, correction of students' work, reports, class preparation (e.g. photocopying, resource preparation) review of resources, purchasing of supplies, checking and responding to messages, etc. It was noted that teachers may spend additional time outside of their standard hours completing these tasks (e.g. an additional 5-8 hours per week).	Up to 3.5 hrs per week	Yes
6	Student supervision – teachers are required to participate in three supervision sessions per week. Supervision can include the playground, gym, library and bus areas (depending on the school) and involves ambulating around a pre-determined area and completing visual and auditory monitoring of students' activities and school premises, providing assistance to students as required. In addition, at the school where the assessment was conducted, students may be supervised after school in the detention room including completion of relevant administrative tasks (e.g. attendance records and reporting).	Up to 1 hr 30 mins per week	Yes
7	Staff meetings –teachers are required to participate in both general and department meetings as per school requirements. At the school where assessment was conducted, general high school teachers reported they participated in at least one meeting per week. Length of meetings will generally be between 30 and 60 minutes, before or after normal school hours, however may be longer if a whole school meeting is required.	Up to 1 hr per week	Yes
8	Committee meetings – teachers may also be required to, or choose to, participate in certain school based committees (for example student council, P&C, sound and lighting) Most committee based tasks are voluntary in nature and level and type of participation will vary depending on the committee in question.	Up to 1 hr 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

Cooking/sewing equipment e.g. pots/pans, cooking supplies, bolts of fabric (e.g. up to 20kg)

Students' chairs and desks – up to approximately 20kg

Computers, PDAs and data projectors – for use during information technology based learning activities with students and administrative tasks.

Pens/pencils/chalk/whiteboard markers, books and activity equipment.

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				Floor to waist to shoulder e.g. cooking aids	
6-10kg			Floor to waist e.g. bolts of fabric		
11-15kg					
16-20kg		Floor to waist e.g. bags of flour, desks and tables			



## 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. The teachers workload can be high due to multiple demands and a large number of unplanned interruptions occurring 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 students – including providing information on sensitive issues including basic life skills and culturally sensitive topics.</li> <li>• Coordinating or leading others.</li> <li>• Coaching and developing others.</li> <li>• Coordinating the work of others – aides and students.</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 – provide appropriate instruction and supervision of students when using equipment/materials and ensure appropriate hygiene guidelines are followed regarding meal preparation and an awareness of any student food allergies	
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 with students.
- Ability to sustain constant 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).
- Ability to lift and carry heavy and/or awkward loads with no assistance (up to 20kg).
- 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.

