

Functional job requirements for the position of schools 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. A review and audit of the document was conducted on 22 June 2017 by Strive Occupational Rehabilitation Pty Ltd.

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 observations of Schools Officer (previously known as Janitor/Groundsman) 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 referenced publications) 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%	23 minutes – 2 hrs 40 minutes
Occasional	8% – 33%	3 hours 2 minutes – 12 hours 33 minutes
Frequent	34% – 66%	12 hours 55 minutes – 25 hours 5 minutes
Constant	67% - 100%	25 hours 28 minutes – 38 hours



Description of schools officer role

Schools Officers perform a wide variety of tasks in different environments and across many diverse education institutions. The primary purpose of this role is to ensure that school grounds and facilities are maintained in a neat, tidy, safe and hygienic manner. Their role may encompass ground beautification, general school maintenance tasks, larger maintenance projects, pool maintenance, general cleaning tasks and general assistance with manual tasks around the school. The Schools Officer is also required to interact with Teachers, Cleaners, School Facilities Officers and the School Administration (e.g. Principals, Deputy Principals and School Business Managers). The Schools Officer may at times also be required to interact with students, parents and visitors in an informal context.

Hours of work and scheduled breaks

Hours of work: The ordinary hours of work of a full time Schools Officer is 38 hours per week. These hours are to be worked between 6.00am and 6.00pm Monday to Friday. The ordinary hours shall be worked continuously excluding an unpaid meal break of at least 30 minutes.

Smaller schools may employ part-time Schools Officers. Part-time school officers' spread of hours is the same as that for a full time officer, 6.00am to 6.00pm. The minimum number of consecutive hours that may be worked is determined by the Chief Executive or delegate in consultation with the employee.

Meal breaks: Full time and part-time Schools Officers are entitled to an unpaid meal break of at least 30 minutes in excess of 5 hours worked on any day.

Rest pauses: Schools Officers are entitled to a rest pause of 10 minutes duration in the first and second half of the day. These rest pauses may be combined into one 20 minute rest pause to be taken in the first part of the day. Part-time Schools Officers are entitled to rest pause(s) as follows: (a) a total of 10 minutes for an employee who works for more than 3 hours but less than 6 ordinary hours in any day; or (b) a total of 20 minutes for an employee who works for at least 6 ordinary hours in any day.

ADO: Schools Officers are required to accumulate ADO time to cover the closure of schools at the defined school vacation periods without debit to annual leave, on the following basis: April vacation period - 2 days (maximum) June vacation period - 5 days (maximum) September vacation period - 5 days (maximum)

The Activity Frequencies below have been calculated based on a 38 hour week. Rare = 23 mins - 2 hrs 40 mins per week, Occasional = 3 hrs 2 mins - 12 hrs 34 mins per week, Frequent = 12 hrs 55 mins - 25 hrs 5 mins per week, Constant = 25 hrs 28 mins - 38 hours (times are exclusive of scheduled breaks).



	Job activity	Average frequency/ time per week	Critical job demand
1	Grounds beautification: involving activities such as cutting down trees, applying mulch or fertilizer to gardens, planting trees and landscaping the grounds. (Mowing and whipper-snipper use addressed as separate activity).	Constant: Up to 38 hours per week	Yes
2	Cleaning external surfaces: involving tidying and maintaining outdoor grounds, paths and public areas. This is generally a job activity for Cleaners, however School Officers can use leaf blower to clean paths of fallen leaves, as well as the use of high pressure equipment to clean concrete paths and areas. At some schools, cleaning staff may be required to perform cleaning of external surfaces requiring the use of high pressure equipment.	Rare: Up to 2 hrs 40 mins per week	Dependent on the school
3	Maintenance of grassed areas: involving mowing, slashing, spraying of herbicides, irrigation, line marking and using a whipper-snipper. Depending on the school, these activities will be completed with the aid of either a push mower, ride on mower or tractor with power take off (PTO) equipment. Operation and maintenance of irrigation systems may also be required in some school environments.	Constant: Up to 38 hrs per week	Yes
4	Maintenance of playground areas: involving regular raking, sweeping and shoveling of playground areas as well as replacement of impact material and transportation of structural materials such as hardwood sleepers. Also requires ongoing visual inspection of playground areas for hazards and development of new playground areas.	Occasional: up to 12 hrs 34 mins per week	Yes
5	General maintenance tasks: involving completion of a variety of minor maintenance tasks that have been requested by other staff members, either verbally or in the form of a written request. Tasks may involve changing light bulbs, fixing window latches, wall mounting pictures, unblocking toilets etc.	Frequent: Up to 25 hrs 5 mins per week	Yes
6	Long-term maintenance tasks: involving completion of major projects such as painting classrooms or making structural modifications to handrails etc. These tasks will vary greatly between schools depending on their requirements at the time. Such tasks may also be able to be contracted to external providers such as Q-build.	Rare: Up to 2 hrs 40 mins per week	No
7	Moving furniture/heavy items around school: involving assisting other staff members to move furniture and classroom supplies to different locations within school. May also involve marking and recording of equipment for auditing, security and purchasing requirements. This occurs mostly towards end of school term and in bulk.	Occasional: Up to 12 hrs 34 mins per week	Yes
8	Swimming pool maintenance: involving monitoring chemical and water levels, changing pool filter, handling of chemicals and vacuuming pool. Not all school environments will have a pool.	Rare: Up to 2 hrs 40 mins per week	Yes
9	Chair set up for assemblies/parades etc: involving lifting, carrying and set up of individual chairs or stacks or rows of chairs. In some school environments chairs are permanently set up and this activity is not required.	Rare: Up to 2 hrs 40 per week	No
10	Changing the message on the school sign: involving lowering and raising the sign using a height adjustment mechanism and replacing letter tiles to spell out the new message. May require balancing and climbing in some school environments, based on the position and type of sign.	Rare: Up to 2 hrs 40 mins per week	Yes
11	Emptying and cleaning of rubbish bins: This is generally a job activity for Cleaners, however Schools Officers can be involved in accessing rubbish bins placed around the school and transporting their contents to a larger bin/skip to be emptied by an external contractor. In some schools this activity is completed with the assistance of a hydraulic bin lifter.	Occasional: Up to 12 hrs 34 mins per week	Dependent on the school

12	Assistance with school camps: involving accessing equipment required for camp and transporting it to camp site. Activity also involves set up of equipment at camp site and transport back to school following conclusion of camp. The Schools Officer may also be required to assist teachers to supervise students and activities, particularly in Special School environments.	Rare: Up to 2 hrs 40 mins per week. Up to 38 hours per week during actual camp	No Dependent on the school
13	Acting in position of Facilities Officer: involving management of larger maintenance projects involving external contractors. This work activity may involve liaising with contractors, attaining quotes and overseeing the work of contractors. The Schools Officer may at times be required to complete or re-do work carried out by contractors. In some school environments, this work activity is performed by the Registrar.	Rare: 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
Ladders, trolleys, wheelbarrows
Leaf blowers (backpack and hand held), whipper-snippers, lawn mowers ride on and push
Secateurs, hedge trimmers, herbicide dispensers
General tools e.g. spanners, hammers, screwdrivers, pliers, engraving tools
Power tools e.g. drills, grinders, sanders, chainsaws, circular saws
Tractors and PTO equipment, vehicles
Pool maintenance equipment e.g. hoses, vacuums
Portable communication devices, safety equipment e.g. walkie talkies, mobile phones
Chemicals e.g. paint stripper, mark remover, chlorine, acid

	Loads lifted and carried				
	Not present	Rare (0-7%)	Occasional (8-33%)	Frequent (34-66%)	Constant (67-100%)
0-10kg				e.g. general tools	
11-20kg				e.g. herbicide dispenser	
21-30kg				e.g. fertilizer	
31-40kg				e.g. structural materials	
41-50kg					

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, requiring the adoption of awkward postures
- There may be limited space for movement during performance of some activities
- There may be constant low-level ambient noise (from students, traffic, machinery etc.)
- There may be limited classroom or natural lighting and ventilation in some facilities
- Work may be performed outdoors or in an area exposed to the elements
- Fine motor work may be performed in temperatures of 16 degrees or lower and above 24 degrees, due to local environmental conditions
- Work may be performed in temperatures above 24 degrees (e.g. in summer)

Psychosocial risks to be considered	Social/interpersonal demands
<p>Time pressure – while deadlines exist for many tasks, the level of demand is dependent upon school environment and staffing level. Workload can be high as a large number of unplanned interruptions may occur throughout the day.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing for or working directly with the public – parents and students • Communicating with persons outside the organisation – parents and external contractors • Establishing and maintaining interpersonal relationships – with staff and persons outside of the organisation • Working alone – may work in a solitary manner for long periods • Coordinating or leading others – external contractors • Coordinating the work of others – external contractors, community members during working bees, etc. • Resolving conflicts and negotiating with other staff members • Providing consultation and advice to others – e.g. regarding maintenance projects.
<p>Poor worker/team leader relationships – may exist in some environments.</p>	
<p>Lack of control or autonomy – may have lack of control over when or how task will be performed</p>	
<p>Environmental Stress – Temperature: work is often done outdoors which may be hot in summer and cold in winter. Noise: there may be constant low level ambient noise from students, traffic and machinery. Odour: may be an issue with general cleaning and maintenance tasks.</p>	
<p>Insufficient work breaks – shortened breaks may be taken on a voluntary basis due to high workload and time constraints. Although break times are stipulated, Schools Officers do not always receive an uninterrupted break.</p>	
<p>Monotonous work – may exist at times.</p>	



Considerations for assessment of physical job fitness

- Sustained standing and sitting capacity, including balance reactions
- Ability to negotiate varying terrains and surfaces when walking and carrying items weighing up to 40kg
- Grip strength (within norms for age and gender) and endurance over a sustained period
- Lifting from below knee level to overhead height (up to 40 kg) including awkward loads and sustained lifting
- Ability to adopt sustained crouching, kneeling, and stooping postures and return to standing
- Ability to maintain sustained reaching (overhead, forwards and downwards)
- Ability to push/pull lawn mower over variable slopes on a sustained basis, or trolley loaded with chairs or equipment up to 20kg
- Degrees of active range of motion and any associated symptoms of the neck, back, shoulders, elbows, wrists, hips, knees and ankles
- Absence of positive signs for brachial plexus neural compromise

Other considerations

- History of neck/shoulder discomfort associated with static, sustained repetitive neck flexion postures or with overhead activities, lifting or carrying
- History of upper limb, lower limb or spinal pain with repetitious or static tasks, or with lifting or walking
- History of lower back pain with sustained sitting, standing, walking, stooping, crouching, kneeling
- History of lower limb injuries that may affect balance/proprioception (e.g. severe ankle or knee sprains or surgery)
- Knowledge of correct manual handling techniques
- Knowledge of required PPE to be worn during activity and its correct use
- Open driver's license (for school environments where operation of vehicle is required)
- Trade background or qualifications



Photographs of selected work activities and work environments



Cleaning pool



Maintenance duties



Changing school sign



Moving office furniture



Shovelling mulch



Whipper-snipping
footpath edges



Pushing wheelbarrow