

THE VPS HR  
CAPABILITY  
FRAMEWORK

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VPSC

Victorian Public Sector Commission

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# INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

*The VPS HR Capability Framework* has been developed to provide a consistent understanding of the knowledge, skills and attributes required by human resources (HR) professionals in the Victorian Public Service (VPS).

### Who is this guide for?

People who work in HR, or manage or supervise others, will find value in using the framework to guide:

- identification of the knowledge, skills and attributes required for an HR role;
- workforce planning and succession discussions within the HR function;
- learning and development for HR professionals within the VPS;
- performance management discussions, by providing clarity around expectations of success; and
- career planning conversations.

The framework is a good starting point to articulate the capability expectations for HR professionals within the VPS.

### What is included in this guide?

This guide includes:

- the *VPS HR Capability Framework*;
- suggestions for how the framework can be used and applied;
- descriptors for each capability; and
- how the capabilities align with VPS grades, VPS Value Range Descriptors and the *Victorian Public Employment Capability Framework*.

*The VPS HR Capability Framework* was developed by the State Services Authority (SSA) in conjunction with the Australian Human Resources Institute (AHRI).

A capability describes a combination of skills, knowledge and attributes that an individual or organisation has the ability to deliver or perform with relative ease and with a high level of predictability in terms of quality and timeliness.

# ABOUT THE VPS HR CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK

The *VPS HR Capability Framework* has seven interrelating capabilities. An individual will not develop a single capability in isolation, but will demonstrate several of the capabilities at any one time.

VPS levels	VPS2/VPS3		VPS4	VPS5	VPS6	E03
<b>Indicative VPS roles (as provided by SSA)</b>	Administration Officer		Project Officer/Adviser	Team Leader, Senior Adviser, Consultant	Manager	Director
<b>Indicative AHRI membership levels</b>	AFFILIATE		AFFILIATE/MAHRI	MAHRI/CAHRI	CAHRI/FAHRI	CAHRI/FAHRI
<b>HR Activity</b>	Administer Support Process	Apply Perform Coordinate	Integrate Execute Manage Design Analyse Review/Evaluate	Initiate Leverage Promote Lead	Envision Conceptualise Model Measure	
<b>HR Knowledge/Acumen</b>	Awareness	Understanding	Development	Drive	Strategist	
<b>HR Capabilities</b> Each of these capabilities is applicable to the breadth and depth of HR levels within the VPS.	<b>Workforce Designer:</b> Builds people capability to meet organisational objectives and challenges.					
	<b>Strategy Driver:</b> Sets and drives people strategy to achieve organisational success.					
	<b>Culture and Change Facilitator:</b> Drives organisational change and development to achieve and maintain the desired culture of the organisation.					
	<b>Relationship Manager:</b> Shapes, promotes and maintains productive relationships and partnerships across and beyond the organisation.					
	<b>Credible Activist:</b> Advises and actively influences people and business decisions.					
	<b>Expert Practitioner:</b> Applies HR expertise to deliver value to the business.					
	<b>Service Driven:</b> Aligns people and business strategies to achieve organisational imperatives.					

# COMPONENTS OF THE VPS HR CAPABILITY FRAMEWORK

The framework is made up of different components, which are explained below.

## Indicative AHRI membership levels

The indicative AHRI membership levels align the framework to the AHRI professional development levels. These have been included for people who wish to understand how the framework aligns to a nationally recognised HR professional standard.

## HR Activity

HR Activity comprises descriptors of the level of activity at which each capability is applied (at each level within the VPS). For example, the activities undertaken by a VPS Grade 4 role within an HR function would be to apply their knowledge, perform tasks and coordinate activities.

## HR Knowledge/Acumen

HR Knowledge/Acumen identifies the level of knowledge and acumen an HR professional requires across each capability, depending on their VPS level or role within the organisation. For example, a VPS Grade 2 in an administrative role within the HR function should be building their knowledge awareness, whereas a VPS Grade 6 within the HR function should have the knowledge to drive HR activity.

## HR Capabilities

These describe the capabilities required of an HR professional within the VPS (at any level of the organisation). The framework identifies the seven capabilities that an HR professional requires to be effective in the VPS. These capability requirements can be for any role within the HR function, including generalist HR roles and more specialised HR roles such as learning and development, organisational development, recruitment or organisational change. The application of the framework to a specialist HR role is acknowledged within the Expert Practitioner capability.

## HOW THE FRAMEWORK CAN BE USED

Capability frameworks are most commonly used by organisations to understand how to recruit, manage and develop individuals to ensure they have the knowledge, skills and attributes needed to do their jobs well.

The VPS HR Capability Framework can be used for activities relating to:

- recruitment and selection
- workforce planning
- learning and development
- performance management
- career planning.

As the VPS HR Capability Framework specifically addresses the capability needs of the HR function, it can also be used as a communication tool to build understanding of the profession.

How the framework can be used by HR leaders, HR managers and HR employees within VPS departments is explained further below.

### Recruitment and selection

The framework can be helpful to managers or leaders within the HR function (or within the broader organisation) who are wishing to recruit for an HR role.

It can be used to define what a person in a particular role needs to be able to do.

<i>Useful tips to remember</i>	
	A job analysis will inform the position capability requirements.
	The framework can help identify the knowledge, skills and attributes the applicant must possess on entry to perform the role effectively.
	Key selection criteria should measure the applicant's capabilities (knowledge, skills and attributes).
	Capabilities in the framework can be turned into key selection criteria by making them behaviourally based.

### Workforce planning

Research conducted by the Corporate Leadership Council shows that strategically aligned capability models provide managers with a basis for making HR decisions. They allow managers to better address workforce demographics, retirement projections and succession planning by identifying the competencies, skills and key positions that may need to be developed or filled.

*Useful tips to remember*

The framework can be considered when undertaking a succession risk analysis to identify critical roles, staff potential and potential misalignment between critical roles and the capacity of the workforce to undertake the roles.

## Learning and development

Understanding the capabilities required to be effective in a role can be useful for all HR employees. The capabilities can inform learning and development plans; inform learning needs analyses to identify, define and communicate learning and development requirements; and provide a rationale to senior management for learning and development spend.

*Useful tips to remember*

A good understanding of capability requirements will result in more clearly identified training requirements, which will mean a better return on investment.

The framework can be used to build managers' skills in observing, identifying and providing feedback on behaviours in capability areas.

## Performance management

The framework will help HR managers to ensure that day-to-day performance management processes are focused and transparent. It can bring structure to performance management processes by standardising and providing clarity around the expectations of success across HR roles in the VPS.

The capabilities described in the framework provide a firm basis for analysis and discussion (between an employee and their manager) about expectations, the individual's capability and, where appropriate, the need for development.

*Useful tips to remember*

The framework can enhance performance management by assisting to build managers' skills in observing, identifying and providing feedback on attributes in all capability areas.

Setting clear expectations of success will allow the employee to self-manage their performance.

## Career planning

HR employees may find the framework useful when determining their next career step by looking at their relevant capabilities and experience, and identifying what they need to do to progress. The framework enables employees within the HR profession to develop capabilities for the position that they aspire to.

<i>Useful tips to remember</i>	
	The framework can be used to shape professional development and contribute to the ability of VPS HR professionals to move easily from one role, situation or environment to another.
	Career opportunities are an important way to attract and retain high performing employees. The framework can assist a career conversation between an employee and their manager by giving clarity to strengths and weaknesses, making it easier for managers and staff to see what capabilities are required for the next career step.

## HR CAPABILITY DESCRIPTIONS

Capability	Capability description
<p><b>Workforce Designer:</b> Builds people capability to meet organisational objectives and challenges.</p>	<p>Maximises effectiveness by selecting, developing, managing and motivating high performing employees.</p>
	<p>Clearly defines roles and expectations, monitors performance, provides framework for feedback and facilitates development.</p>
	<p>Understands the core people competencies required for the organisation to meet its goals and ways for employees to develop those competencies.</p>
	<p>Uses HR knowledge, including on engagement, performance management and attraction, to provide strategic resource solutions.</p>
<p><b>Strategy Driver:</b> Sets and drives people strategy to achieve organisational success.</p>	<p>Develops HR strategies that are aligned with and contribute to organisational strategy.</p>
	<p>Executes people management plans that contribute to strategic planning objectives.</p>
	<p>Takes action to ensure HR strategies, structures, capabilities and processes support organisational objectives, manage risk, meet governance requirements and improve business performance.</p>
	<p>Designs and delivers innovative HR initiatives that contribute to the achievement of organisational objectives.</p>
	<p>Develops and promulgates best practices appropriate to the achievement of organisational objectives.</p>
	<p>Identifies and forecasts organisational capabilities to assist line managers to turn organisational strategy into action.</p>
	<p>Ensures HR strategy translates organisational objectives into people priorities.</p>
	<p>Evaluates the impact of HR practices on organisational results and makes adjustments as required.</p>

Capability	Capability description
<p><b>Culture and Change Facilitator:</b> Drives organisational change and development to achieve and maintain the desired culture of the organisation.</p>	Has a clear concept of the culture required for the organisation to succeed.
	Designs and delivers innovative people practices that progress/enhance a positive culture.
	Assists employees to understand the personal behavioural implications of culture and change.
	Translates culture into management practice to align employee behaviour with organisational goals.
	Identifies change required, describes the reasons for it and engages people who can deliver change.
	Monitors progress and success of change processes and makes adjustment to them.
	Gains commitment for ongoing change requirements through communication of reasons and outcomes of change processes.
<p><b>Relationship Manager:</b> Shapes, promotes and maintains productive relationships and partnerships across and beyond the organisation.</p>	Identifies issues in common for stakeholders and incorporates them when developing HR initiatives.
	Develops practical solutions to meet stakeholder demands and needs.
	Ensures good working relationships exist to deliver organisational outcomes.
	Establishes and maintains mechanisms for communication and consultation with stakeholders to address their HR requirements.
	Actively seeks to improve others in performing people management responsibilities effectively.
	Drives an internal culture of service excellence.

Capability	Capability description
<p><b>Credible Activist:</b> Advises and actively influences people and business decisions.</p>	Uses whole-of-business and HR knowledge and experience to influence others.
	Makes rational and sound decisions when supporting organisational direction.
	Builds a track record of achieving results, taking responsibility and setting high standards.
	Communicates clearly and confidently across all levels of the organisation.
	Operates in a manner that is consistent with the organisation's code of conduct, values and culture.
	Is a role model for the organisation's values and culture.

Capability	Capability description
<p><b>Expert Practitioner:</b> Applies HR expertise to deliver value to the business.</p>	Delivers value added HR services and tools to meet organisational requirements and improve performance.
	Applies and continuously grows personal knowledge to improve productivity and other organisational outcomes.
	Establishes an integrated perspective of the organisation and identifies leverage points where HR can add value.
	Seeks out opportunities to utilise specialists from other areas of the organisation and externally where required.
	Translates and adapts HR best practice to deliver value to the organisation.
	Works with other areas of the organisation to ensure HR policies and practices address their needs.
	Actively seeks to improve others through coaching, mentoring and development frameworks to provide people management solutions to the line.

Capability	Capability description
<p><b>Service Driven:</b> Aligns people and business strategies to achieve organisational imperatives.</p>	Understands the current and future role of the organisation and the implications for HR.
	Is astute in business dealings and aware of business opportunities.
	Understands and addresses underlying problems, opportunities and external forces affecting the organisation.
	Builds awareness and understanding of economic, demographic, political and legislative trends that may affect the organisation.
	Identifies and communicates potential issues and setbacks that will affect organisational design, culture and performance.
	Understands the impact of external events and changing stakeholder needs on the organisation.

## CONSISTENCY WITH VPS GRADES AND VALUE RANGE DESCRIPTORS

Workforce Designer		
Capabilities	<p><b>Builds people capability to meet organisational objectives and challenges</b></p> <p>Maximises effectiveness by selecting, developing, managing and motivating high performing employees.</p> <p>Clearly defines roles and expectations, monitors performance, provides framework for feedback and facilitates development.</p> <p>Understands the core people competencies required for the organisation to meet it's goals and wants for employees to develop those competencies.</p> <p>Uses HR knowledge, including on engagements, performance management and attraction, to provide strategic resource solutions.</p>	<p><i>Alignment to VPS and Victorian Public Employment Capability Framework</i></p> <p>KS19 People management KS9 Leadership</p> <p>KS9 Leadership</p> <p>PQ7 Developing others</p> <p>KS9 Leadership</p>
	VPS Grades	Sample application of VPS Value Range Descriptors
	Grades 2&3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide guidance for others in the work area and/or related areas</li> <li>• Understands procedures for effectively dealing with people exhibiting challenges attributes</li> <li>• Undertakes standard processing work such as data entry, purchasing, payments and reports using office databases.</li> </ul>
	Grades 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiates and manages straightforward corporate contracts and service agreements.</li> <li>• Develops guidelines within the work area.</li> <li>• Determines operational service delivery plans based on accepted standards.</li> </ul>
	Grades 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is accountable for work organisation, the allocation of resources within and the outputs required of the work area.</li> <li>• Is accountable for achievement of established corporate objectives, including the formulation and implementation of local business plans.</li> </ul>
Grades 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops policies, programs and initiatives that impact on programs or major functional areas.</li> <li>• Provides leadership in adaptation and application of concepts to operational matters within the local work area.</li> </ul>	

Strategy Driver		
Capabilities	<b>Sets and drives people strategy to achieve organisational success</b>	<i>Alignment to VPS and Victorian Public Employment Capability Framework</i>
	Develops HR strategies that are aligned with and contribute to organisational strategy.	KS11 Strategic planning KS7 Organising & planning KS16 Problem solving
	Executes people management plans that contribute to strategic planning objectives.	KS7 Organising & planning KS16 Problem solving KS17 Project management
	Takes action to ensure HR strategies, structures, capabilities and processes support organisational objectives, manage risk, meet governance requirements and improve business performance.	KS7 Organising & planning KS16 Problem solving KS17 Project management
	Designs and delivers innovative HR initiatives that contribute to the achievement of organisational objectives.	Designs and delivers innovative HR initiatives that contribute to the achievement of organisational objectives
	Develops and promulgates best practices appropriate to the achievement of organisational objectives.	This behavioural descriptor is unique to the VPS HR Capability Framework.
	Identifies and forecasts organisational capabilities to assist line managers to turn organisational strategy into action.	This behavioural descriptor is unique to the VPS HR Capability Framework.
	Ensures HR strategy translates organisational objectives into people priorities.	KS11 Strategic planning
Evaluates the impact of HR practices on organisational results and makes adjustments as required.	KS11 Strategic planning KS16 Problem solving KS17 Project management	

VPS Grades	Sample application of VPS Value Range Descriptors
Grades 2&3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Takes initiative to recommend improved processes in immediate work area.</li> <li>• Prepares and analyses reports from corporate databases to support decision making in the broader work area.</li> <li>• Participate in the development of strategies to represent the organisation or clients, involving complex and challenging problems</li> </ul>
Grades 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resolves operational service delivery problems consistent with program objectives.</li> <li>• Collects data, undertakes basic analysis and prepares simple reports.</li> <li>• Contributes to operational service delivery policy development.</li> </ul>
Grades 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributes to strategic business planning.</li> <li>• Develops business plans to deliver on evolving organisational priorities</li> <li>• Participate in strategic planning and contributes to strategic decision making processes.</li> <li>• Develops policy frameworks within area of expertise or responsibility based on defined organisational priorities.</li> </ul>
Grade 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributes advanced expertise and knowledge to strategic planning and decision making processes.</li> </ul>

Culture and Change Facilitator		
Capabilities	<b>Drives organisational change and development to achieve and maintain the desired culture of the organisation</b>	<i>Alignment to VPS and Victorian Public Employment Capability Framework</i>
	Has a clear concept of the culture required for the organisation to succeed.	The behavioural descriptor is unique to the <i>VPS HR Capability Framework</i> .
	Designs and delivers innovative people practices that progress/enhance a positive culture.	The behavioural descriptor is unique to the <i>VPS HR Capability Framework</i> .
	Assists employees to understand the personal behavioural implications of culture and change.	The behavioural descriptor is unique to the <i>VPS HR Capability Framework</i> .
	Translates culture into management practice to align employee behaviour with organisational goals.	The behavioural descriptor is unique to the <i>VPS HR Capability Framework</i> .
	Identifies change required, describes the reasons for it and engages people who can deliver change.	<i>KS20 Change management</i>
	Monitors progress and success of change processes and makes adjustment to them.	<i>KS20 Change management</i>
	Gains commitment for ongoing change requirements through communication of reasons and outcomes of change processes.	<i>KS20 Change management</i>
VPS Grades	Sample application of VPS Value Range Descriptors	
Grades 2&3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prepares briefs on sensitive issues for consideration of others.</li> <li>Drafts public communication documents.</li> </ul>	
Grades 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develops and implements operational communication and consultation strategies on specific projects.</li> </ul>	
Grades 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negotiates with stakeholders, peers, industry bodies and other government agencies to gain cooperation, influence views and meet timelines for delivery of project, service or advice.</li> <li>Provides leadership in the adaptation and application of concepts to operational matters within the local work area.</li> </ul>	
Grades 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides and receives highly complex contentious or sensitive information where high levels of negotiation, communication and interpersonal skills are required.</li> <li>Develops briefs on highly complex issues that provide options for decision within an organisation.</li> </ul>	

Relationship Manager		
Capabilities	<b>Shapes, promotes and maintains productive relationships and partnerships across and beyond the organisation.</b>	<i>Alignment to VPS and Victorian Public Employment Capability Framework</i>
	Identifies issues in common for stakeholders and incorporates them when developing HR initiatives.	KS26 Consultancy
	Develops practical solutions to meet stakeholder demands and needs.	KS26 Consultancy KS18 Stakeholder management
	Ensures good working relationships exist to deliver organisational outcomes.	PQ13 Relationship building KS25 Contract management
	Establishes and maintains mechanisms for communication and consultation with stakeholders to address their HR requirements.	PQ3 Presentation skills KS23 Service excellence
	Actively seeks to improve others in performing people management responsibilities effectively.	KS23 Service excellence
	Drives an internal culture of service excellence.	KS23 Service excellence
VPS Grades	Sample application of VPS Value Range Descriptors	
Grades 2&3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presents routine information to small groups and provides feedback to the organisation.</li> <li>• Liaises with stakeholders, clients and external providers of goods and services</li> <li>• Conducts formal community information sessions and consultative processes involving small groups or participates in a similar process with larger groups.</li> <li>• Applies understanding of interrelationships between stakeholders and/or other work units to achieve local objectives.</li> <li>• Obtains, summarises and reports on stakeholder views.</li> </ul>	
Grades 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conveys specialist concepts and policies to clients, staff and stakeholders.</li> <li>• Manages multidisciplinary project teams.</li> </ul>	
Grades 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initiates and maintains relationships with peers and senior internal and external stakeholders.</li> <li>• Manages consultation processes, including engagement of key stakeholders.</li> </ul>	
Grades 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Represents own work area with external stakeholders and effectively manages feedback.</li> <li>• Focuses on understanding stakeholder issues and including their views.</li> </ul>	

Credible Activist		
Capabilities	<b>Advises and actively influences people and business decisions.</b>	<i>Alignment to VPS and Victorian Public Employment Capability Framework</i>
	Uses whole-of-business and HR knowledge and experience to influence others.	KS9 Leadership KS10 Influence & negotiation PQ13 Relationship building
	Makes rational and sound decisions when supporting organisational direction.	PQ5 Decisiveness
	Builds a track record of achieving results, taking responsibility and setting high standards.	PQ8 Drive & commitment PQ11 Initiative & accountability PQ14 Resilience
	Communicates clearly and confidently across all levels of the organisation.	KS1 Written communication KS2 Verbal communication
	Operates in a manner that is consistent with the organisation's code of conduct, values and culture.	PQ12 Integrity
	Is a role model for the organisation's values and culture.	This behavioural descriptor is unique to the VPS HR Capability Framework.

VPS Grades	Sample application of VPS Value Range Descriptors
Grades 2&3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exercises personal judgement about the application of rules or the selection of choices within guidelines.</li> <li>Uses persuasion skills in dealing with an individual client, colleague, service provider or the like.</li> <li>Is authoritative in application of processes and policy relevant to the work unit.</li> </ul>
Grades 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Applies negotiation, persuasion and motivation skills to manage staff and stakeholders.</li> <li>Is authoritative in the application of processes.</li> </ul>
Grades 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Models high level leadership attributes.</li> <li>Advocates policy options.</li> <li>Provides professional leadership in a specialised corporate support function.</li> </ul>
Grades 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Negotiates on the spot as required, often on the basis of limited information.</li> <li>Influences stakeholders holding competing priorities and views.</li> <li>Provides leadership and guidance based on advanced expertise.</li> </ul>

## Service Driven

Capabilities	<b>Aligns people and business strategies to achieve organisational imperatives.</b>	<i>Alignment to VPS and Victorian Public Employment Capability Framework</i>
	Understands the current and future role of the organisation and the implications for HR.	KS14 Systems thinking KS24 Commercial skills
	Is astute in business dealings and aware of business opportunities.	PQ4 Commercial acumen
	Understands and addresses underlying problems, opportunities and external forces affecting the organisation.	KS24 Commercial skills KS13 Environmental scanning
	Builds awareness and understanding of economic, demographic, political and legislative trends that may affect the organisation.	KS12 Organisational awareness KS13 Environmental scanning KS21 Resource management
	Identifies and communicates potential issues and setbacks that will affect organisational design, culture and performance.	KS15 Policy skills
	Understands the impact of external events and changing stakeholder needs on the organisation.	KS13 Environmental scanning

### VPS Grades

### Sample application of VPS Value Range Descriptors

Grades 2&3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develops knowledge of legislation, regulations, policies and processes relevant and specific to role.</li> <li>• Develops knowledge of established techniques and organisational processes.</li> </ul>
Grades 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>No VPS Value Range Descriptors addressed this competency</i></li> </ul>
Grades 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creativity develops options in a changing organisational environment.</li> </ul>
Grades 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifies and responds to new and emerging strategic issues impacting on the operating environment.</li> </ul>

## DEVELOPING THE FRAMEWORK & REFERENCES

The *VPS HR Capability Framework* is based on data and findings that were gathered during the 2007 Human Resource Competency Study (HRCS) conducted jointly by management consultants the RBL Group and the Ross School at the University of Michigan. The objective of the HRCS study was to identify competencies of HR professionals and how these competencies impact on the business.

The AHRI was one of six international partners working with management consultants Dave Ulrich and Wayne Brockbank. The study involved over 10,000 HR professionals and people managers, and is recognised globally as the most substantial piece of research relating to contemporary HR competencies.

The *VPS HR Capability Framework* has been designed to reflect the findings of the HRCS study. The framework has been awarded AHRI accreditation, recognising that it aligns with this research and is locally and globally relevant to the HR field.

The framework was developed in consultation with VPS HR directors. It has been designed to reflect the capability requirements of HR in the Victorian Public Service, yet the principles used in it may be useful for the development of HR capabilities in other Victorian public sector entities.

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