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# Contents

[Contents iii](#_Toc403739637)

[Introduction 1](#_Toc403739638)

[Part One – Classification Framework 2](#_Toc403739639)

[APS classification principles 2](#_Toc403739640)

[Classification structure 2](#_Toc403739641)

[Legislative framework 3](#_Toc403739642)

[APS classification system 4](#_Toc403739643)

[Part Two – Classification Management 8](#_Toc403739644)

[Why is classification management important? 8](#_Toc403739645)

[Classification responsibilities 8](#_Toc403739646)

[Classification decisions – classifying jobs 10](#_Toc403739647)

[Documenting classification decisions 12](#_Toc403739648)

[Flexibility within approved classifications 12](#_Toc403739649)

[Better Practice Case Study - ATO 14](file:///J%3A/APS-Classification-Guide%20-%20Updated%20for%20changes%20to%20Classification%20%20Rules%201%20December%202014%20FINAL.docx#_Toc403739650)

[Part Three – Work Level Standards 15](#_Toc403739651)

[What are work level standards? 15](#_Toc403739652)

[Key concepts 16](#_Toc403739653)

[APS work level standards for the APS Level and Executive Level classifications 17](#_Toc403739654)

[APS Role evaluation tool and guidance 20](#_Toc403739655)

[APS work level standards for the SES classifications 21](#_Toc403739656)

[Agency work level standards 21](#_Toc403739657)

[Busting Myths 21](#_Toc403739658)

[Part Four – Classification Management in Practice 22](#_Toc403739659)

[Role evaluation 22](#_Toc403739660)

[Role evaluation principles 23](#_Toc403739661)

[Job analysis 23](#_Toc403739662)

[Assessing a role 26](#_Toc403739663)

[APS role evaluation tools 26](#_Toc403739664)

[Dealing with potential sensitivities 27](#_Toc403739665)

[Documentation 27](#_Toc403739666)

[Busting myths 28](#_Toc403739667)

[Part Five – Broadbanding 29](#_Toc403739668)

[Objectives of broadbanding 29](#_Toc403739669)

[Broadbanding and the APS classification system 29](#_Toc403739670)

[Advantages and disadvantages of broadbanding 30](#_Toc403739671)

[Different broadbands for different needs 31](#_Toc403739672)

[Establishing and managing broadband arrangements 32](#_Toc403739673)

[Documentation 34](#_Toc403739674)

[Busting myths 35](#_Toc403739675)

[Better Practice Case Study - DHS 36](file:///J%3A/APS-Classification-Guide%20-%20Updated%20for%20changes%20to%20Classification%20%20Rules%201%20December%202014%20FINAL.docx#_Toc403739676)

[Better Practice Case Study - FWO 37](file:///J%3A/APS-Classification-Guide%20-%20Updated%20for%20changes%20to%20Classification%20%20Rules%201%20December%202014%20FINAL.docx#_Toc403739677)

[Part Six – Training classifications 39](#_Toc403739678)

[Benefits of using training classifications 39](#_Toc403739679)

[Training classifications and the APS classification system 39](#_Toc403739680)

[Different training classifications for different needs 40](#_Toc403739681)

[Establishing and managing training classifications 41](#_Toc403739682)

[Better Practice Case Study - ABS 44](file:///J%3A/APS-Classification-Guide%20-%20Updated%20for%20changes%20to%20Classification%20%20Rules%201%20December%202014%20FINAL.docx#_Toc403739683)

[Better Practice Case Study - BoM 45](file:///J%3A/APS-Classification-Guide%20-%20Updated%20for%20changes%20to%20Classification%20%20Rules%201%20December%202014%20FINAL.docx#_Toc403739684)

[Part Seven – Managing “Specialists” 46](#_Toc403739685)

[The single APS classification structure 46](#_Toc403739686)

[Managing specialist occupations 46](#_Toc403739687)

[Better Practice Case Study - DEEWR 49](file:///J%3A/APS-Classification-Guide%20-%20Updated%20for%20changes%20to%20Classification%20%20Rules%201%20December%202014%20FINAL.docx#_Toc403739688)

# Introduction

The Australian Public Service (APS) classification guide has been developed by the Australian Public Service Commission (the Commission) and provides policy guidance on determining and managing classification arrangements in the APS. This guide is current as at 1 December 2014.

#### How to use this guide

This guide provides general advice on workforce classification within the APS and replaces the 1992 publication *Handbook of Australian Public Service Classification Management*. It outlines the broad framework and principles underlying the system of classification management, and provides guidance and advice on techniques that agencies can use when putting these principles into practice.

While many of the principles and practices identified in this guide are relevant across all APS classification levels, this guide is aimed primarily at the classifications APS Levels 1-6 and Executive Levels 1-2. Information relevant to Senior Executive Service (SES) classification levels has been incorporated where appropriate.

#### Why have this guide?

The reform work stemming from [*Ahead of the Game: Blueprint for Reform of Australian Government Administration*](http://www.dpmc.gov.au/publications/aga_reform/aga_reform_blueprint/blueprint.cfm) (2010) sought to clarify and align employment conditions across the APS, and in particular to ensure that non-SES classification arrangements and work level standards continued to meet the needs of APS agencies and employees. The report on the [*APS classification review*](http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/classification-review), published in November 2012, made a series of recommendations to strengthen the integrity of the classification system and to achieve greater consistency in classification decision-making across the APS.

This guide has been developed in response to recommendations made in the APS classification review. It presents a common approach to classification management across the APS and builds on good practice already in place in many APS agencies. The opportunity is taken in this guide to share these good practice examples within a classification framework that is common to all.

#### Acknowledgement

This guide was prepared by the Commission’s Workforce Classification team. Major contributors were Ms. Erin Selmes, Ms. Elyse Allan, Mr. Izaac White, Ms. Louise Memmolo, and Mr. Owen Livermore.

We thank and acknowledge the contribution of agencies that participated in the APS classification review working group, and of agencies that contributed case studies for publication. Without the assistance of these agencies, the guide would not have been possible.

#### Further advice

Further information on classification management is available on the [Commission’s website](http://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-employment-policy-and-advice/classification) or by contacting the workforce classification team via employmentpolicy@apsc.gov.au.

# Part One – Classification Framework

The classification framework provides agencies with an orderly and systematic way to organise work for the efficient achievement of agency outcomes.

The essential function of the classification framework is to group together jobs with similar features of work value, based on the level of complexity and depth of responsibility expected. It also assists with managing the workforce in that employees can be matched to clearly identified jobs.

## APS classification principles

The classification framework is based on a set of principles that provide a common foundation for the consistent application of classification management across the Australian Public Service (APS):

1. Jobs are classified, not people.

Jobs are classified on the basis of the work to be performed rather than the particular qualities of the person performing it.

1. Jobs are classified based on work value.

The work value of a job is established by considering the type and nature of the work to be performed and assessed against the relevant work level standards.

1. A classification level is determined according to the highest level of function performed most regularly.

Comprehensive analysis of the job to be performed may identify a range of duties across different levels of work value. The classification level allocated is based on the level of the highest function most regularly performed.

1. Classification and remuneration are related, but assessed independently.

Remuneration does not drive or determine a classification level, only work value does. The remuneration applicable to each classification level is determined in an agency’s enterprise agreement, including the flexibility to consider an alternative salary for an individual employee under an individual flexibility arrangement and in keeping with the [bargaining framework](http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/aps-public-service-bargaining-framework) for APS enterprise agreements.

## Classification structure

The APS classification structure is designed to provide a flexible framework for a wide variety of APS jobs across a diverse range of agencies. The structure is based on a single spine of classification levels, underpinned by a suite of training classifications. This approach facilitates mobility within the APS and supports the concept of a unified APS. It also provides a structure that enables the merit-based promotion of APS employees to a higher classification level (refer to Part 4 of the [*Australian Public Service Commissioner’s Directions 2022*)](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2022L00088).

#### Approved classifications

The approved classification levels are

* APS Levels 1-6
* Executive Levels (EL) 1-2, and
* Senior Executive Bands 1-3.

Training classifications are available as a means of skilling employees before being allocated an operational classification on completion of their training program. The approved training classifications are

* Apprentice APS
* Cadet APS
* Graduate APS, and
* Trainee APS.

There is also a small number of occupational-specific classifications (for example, Medical Officers) and a limited number of approved agency-specific classifications relating to work that is only performed in one specific agency (for example, APS Meat Inspector, Examiner of Patents and Customs Level 1-5).

## Legislative framework

The [*Public Service Act 1999*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A00538) (PS Act) is the principal legislation that governs the employment framework for the APS employees. It enables the Australian Public Service Commissioner (the Commissioner) to make rules about the classification of APS employees (section 23(1)), which are found in the [*Public Service Classification Rules 2000*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F2005B01581) (the Classification Rules). Agency heads must comply with these rules (section 23(3)).

The Classification Rules is the legislative instrument that governs APS classification arrangements. It provides the foundation for mobility within the APS by specifying a system of managing ‘groups of duties’ that is common to all APS agencies. From 1 December 2014, under these rules

* approved classifications are specified (rule 5)
* an agency head must allocate an approved classification to each employee in the agency, based on the group of duties to be performed (rule 6)
* an agency head must allocate an approved classification to each group of duties to be performed in the agency, based on the work value of the group of duties (rule 9 (1) (2))
* for APS, Executive Level and SES classifications, the allocation of the approved classification must be based on the work value as described in the work level standards issued, in writing, by the Australian Public Service Commissioner (the Commissioner) (rule 9(2A))
* for classifications ***other than*** APS, Executive Level or SES levels, agency heads must issue work level standards, in writing, that describe the work value of the group of duties to be performed in the agency at that classification (rule 10)
* more than one classification (called a broadband) can be allocated to a group of duties (rule 9(4)).

## APS classification system

The APS classification system outlines the key components of managing agency classification arrangements in which objectives regarding consistency, transparency, flexibility and mobility are applied and sustained.

**Figure 1.1 The APS classification system**



Objectives of the classification system

The objectives of the APS classification system are consistency, transparency, flexibility and mobility.

##### **Consistency**

The APS classification system seeks to be consistent and equitable by grouping together duties of a similar work value within the same classification level. Consistency requires a credible and defensible method of establishing the work value of each job and the relativities between all work levels. This is achieved through a job evaluation system based on work value standards set for each work level.

##### **Transparency**

Classification arrangements that are supported by clearly defined work level standards support an open and transparent classification system.

##### **Flexibility**

The classification system supports flexibility by recognising that some jobs in the APS are quite different to most others.

Agencies can accommodate these particular jobs within the classification structure by

* using local titles to more meaningfully ‘label’ jobs in addition to the approved classification level
* grouping duties across more than one classification level under a broadband
* using training classifications to skill employees (usually at entry level) as part of a structured development program tailored to meet an agency’s particular requirements regarding jobs and skills.

##### **Mobility**

The APS classification systems supports a unified APS and mobility within the APS by providing a common language to identify and describe the common elements of APS jobs, enabling comparison of roles across agencies and job types.

#### Applying the classification system

The classification system is applied and supported through legislative provisions, policy guidance and support tools.

The PS Act and the Classification Rules have already been identified as the legislative basis for the classification system, providing a common foundation for classification management across all APS agencies. This foundation is supported by a range of policy guidance and supporting tools.

##### **APS work level standards**

Work level standards for the APS have been developed to

* provide a consistent platform for classifying jobs
* accommodate the diversity of roles across the APS, and
* highlight the key differences between each classification level.

From 1 December 2014, the Classification Rules require that agencies adopt the APS work level standards for APS 1–6 Level and Executive Level classifications (issued by the Commissioner) whenever allocating a relevant classification. These can be found at

 <http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/worklevel-standards>

Agencies have been required to adopt the APS Senior Executive Service work level standards issued by the Commissioner, since 2012. These can be found at

<http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/ses-worklevels>

##### **APS classification guide**

The APS classification guide (this guide) provides policy and practical guidance on classification management to assist with a shared understanding of the broad framework and underlying principles of the APS classification system. Advice and practical examples are provided to assist agencies to put these principles into practice.

##### **Role evaluation tools**

Role evaluation is the way the work value of new and existing roles can be assessed in a structured and systematic way. The Australian Public Service Commission (the Commission) has developed role evaluation tools that can be used by agencies to assist in assessing roles for the APS Level and Executive Level classifications and the SES classifications.

APS Role evaluation tool and guidance can be found at

<http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/role_evaluation_guide>

SES Evaluation Methodology Guidelines and Process can be found at

<http://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-employment-policy-and-advice/ses/ses-classifications>

##### **Agency policy and procedures**

Agencies may develop their own policies, procedures and guidelines that support the common foundation of the APS classification system and complement the APS-wide guidance issued by the Commission.

Agencies may use supplementary guidance to assist them to apply work level standards, but any agency specific guidance must not be inconsistent with the APS work level standards.

#### Sustaining the classification system

The APS classification system is implemented and sustained within agencies through communication, oversight and education.

##### **Communication**

Classification policies and procedures need to be communicated to employees and in particular to managers and other agency decision-makers who make assessments regarding work value. This includes an explanation of the classification principles, job evaluation requirements and any agency-specific requirements.

##### **Oversight**

There must be robust oversight within agencies regarding the application of the classification system, such as strategic monitoring of changes in the classification profile. Agency classification data is captured and benchmarked across the APS in the annual State of the Service Report published by the Commissioner.

##### **Education**

Agencies are responsible for ensuring their decision-makers are appropriately educated about their responsibilities. The Commission provides from time to time [learning and development programs](http://www.apsc.gov.au/learn/programs/people-management/understanding-work-value) regarding APS Classification arrangements, in addition to supporting tools regarding work level standards and role evaluation.

# Part Two – Classification Management

Classification management is the way in which decisions relating to organisational structures and the work value of jobs are managed.

## Why is classification management important?

Classification management can have a significant impact on the achievement of agency objectives, particularly those relating to workforce efficiency, business productivity and the effective use of resources. Classification management

* allows the future planning of workforce needs to be undertaken in a systematic way
* allows an agency to build clear structures and accountability lines (at individual, work team, branch, division and agency levels)
* enables consistency in classification decision-making through the application of established APS-wide classification principles and practices
* underpins the promotion system and provides a means for managing employee career progression, including lateral moves
* facilitates mobility across the APS

## Classification responsibilities

Classification management is part of the devolved APS employment framework provided in the [*Public Service Act 1999*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A00538)(PS Act). Agency heads have the responsibility to manage classification arrangements in their respective agencies, within an APS-wide framework outlined in the [*Public Service Classification Rules 2000*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F2005B01581) (the Classification Rules).

#### Role of the Australian Public Service Commission

While each agency head has responsibility for managing the work and the people in their own agency, the Australian Public Service Commission (the Commission) provides a high level of central agency support for determining and managing APS classification arrangements.

The Commission is responsible for

* the Classification Rules
* developing and maintaining the APS work level standards and the APS Senior Executive Service work level standards
* providing policy support to agencies on classification matters
* providing guidance and training that supports agencies to make sound classification decisions.

#### Role of APS agencies

Agency heads have a suite of powers and functions in the PS Act, and the Classification Rules. Some of these powers and functions are discretionary, while others are mandatory. The powers and functions of an agency head include:

* an agency head must allocate an approved classification to each employee in the agency, based on the group of duties to be performed (rule 6)
* an agency head must allocate an approved classification to each group of duties to be performed in the agency, based on the work value of the group of duties (rule 9 (1) (2))
* for APS, Executive Level and SES classifications, the allocation of the approved classification must be based on the work value as described in the work level standards issued, in writing, by the Australian Public Service Commissioner (the Commissioner) (rule 9(2A))
* for classifications ***other than*** APS, Executive Level or SES levels, agency heads must issue work level standards, in writing, that describing the work value of the group of duties to be performed in the agency at that classification (rule 10)
* if a training classification is allocated to a group of duties, then the agency head must ensure that the duties include a requirement to undergo training (rule 9(3)).
* on satisfactory completion of all training requirements, and agency head must allocate to an employee an operational classification as specified in the Classification Rules (rule 11).
* more than one classification (called a broadband) can be allocated by an agency head to a group of duties (rule 9(4))
* an agency head may create positions and nominate employees to occupy positions in the agency (section 77, PS Act).

Agency enterprise agreements should provide a salary range for all non-SES classifications levels used, or that may be used, in the agency.

#### Classification decision-makers

Any decision-making powers in the PS Act or the Classification Rules can be delegated by the agency head to other people in their agency. These powers are often devolved to employees who have a more direct classification management role in the agency.

In providing guidance to classification decision-makers, agencies should ensure

* classification decisions are consistent with Government policies, including the classification principles
* classification processes support the APS workforce diversity agenda
* work value is assessed against the relevant work level standards.

In order to ensure consistency in classification management practices, agencies are to provide sufficient guidance and oversight to ensure the classification principles and other requirements are applied appropriately within their agency.

## Classification decisions – classifying jobs

Making a decision to allocate an approved classification to a job is needed when

* creating a new role
* evaluating an existing role that has undergone a substantial change in the duties to be performed (for example, machinery of government changes, a restructure or reorganisation within the agency, or a new policy)
* confirming the appropriate work value of a job prior to commencing recruitment action.

It is important to ensure that a detailed, factual and up to date picture of the role being classified is established and documented prior to making a decision on the classification level. This includes:

* a detailed description of the activities (for example, a duty statement)
* an understanding of the inherent requirements of the job and any mandatory licenses, registration or qualifications required
* the skill and knowledge requirements
* any agency arrangements that affect the role (for example, organisational chart).

It is important to remember the principle that the classification allocated is based on the highest level function performed most regularly. This means that the job may contain a mix of duties that are higher and/or lower in work value than the classification allocated.

#### The distinction between the job and the individual performing the role

When making a classification decision, it is vital that the work value of a job is considered and not the capabilities or characteristics of the employee who will perform the role.

**Figure 2.1 Differentiating between the job and an individual**

Additionally, remuneration should not influence a classification decision. Classification is based on an appropriate work value assessment of the role and not on the remuneration arrangements that may be needed to attract and/or retain appropriately skilled or qualified people. Agency enterprise agreements provide for individual flexibility arrangements that can be used where market pressures or other influencing factors make the consideration of additional remuneration or other flexible work options appropriate.

#### Reclassification

The classification of the job should be reviewed when a significant change in work value occurs. This includes changes in the nature and scope of the work to be performed such that the level of complexity changes or the responsibility and authority of the job alters.

It is important to note that when assessing any differences in the duties not all changes necessarily equate to a need for a change in work value. Any reclassification needs to be based on an evaluation of work value using the work level standards as a guide.

Where a decision is made to reclassify a job, this does not mean the classification of the employee performing the duties is also automatically reclassified. Employees are allocated a classification in a separate decision under the Classification Rules (rule 6(1)). If the duties are reclassified to a higher level, then the new role would be filled by an employee already at the higher classification or through a merit-based selection process.

If the duties are reclassified to a lower classification, the role would be filled by an employee already at that lower classification or again through a merit-based selection process. The employee originally performing the duties would be redeployed to other duties at their classification level, in keeping with the agency’s redeployment arrangements. This may include the employee choosing to reduce their classification to continue performing the role (section 23(4), PS Act). The reduction of an employee’s classification without their consent may only be approved where the decision is compliant with any procedural requirements in the agency’s enterprise agreement (section 23(5), PS Act).

An employee displaced by the reclassification of their role is to be redeployed or reassigned to another role at their classification level in accordance with processes in the agency’s enterprise agreement regarding workplace change.

#### Inherent requirements of a job

Classification decisions involve the essential or inherent requirements of a job, rather than specifying how a job is to be done. This distinction is important as employers must offer equal employment opportunities. For example, if an employee is able to carry out the essential activities (inherent requirements) of a job, they should be given the same opportunity to undertake that job as everyone else.

While an employer is not obliged under the [*Disability Discrimination Act 1992*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/C2013C00022) to change the inherent requirements of a job to suit an employee, reasonable adjustments need to be put in place to eliminate, as far as possible, potential or actual discrimination against employees.

#### Mandatory requirements of a job

Some jobs also will have a mandatory requirement, to hold a license, qualification or registration. The same mandatory requirement may be required across a number of classifications of jobs (for example, registration as a medical practitioner or holding a legal practice certificate).

It is important to identify the mandatory requirements of a job as they may play a role in classification decisions in that acquired knowledge and skill are a component of work value. While they may assist in distinguishing between classification levels, they do not address the full range of work value factors and therefore should not be sole basis of the classification decision.

## Documenting classification decisions

A record must be kept of decisions made when exercising delegated authority under the PS Act or the Classification Rules. Documenting reasons for the decision is also necessary to safeguard the integrity and transparency of the decision outcome.

Classification decisions need to be based on a suitably thorough investigation, including:

* work analysis leading to job design
* reasons for the classification level allocated, including the job analysis and assessment of work value
* details of the assessment made regarding changes in work value where the job is reclassified.

Documented reasons provide valuable historical information that will assist any subsequent review of a job, particularly where changes in work value need to be assessed. Maintaining such records ins important to an agency’s ability to manage its classification arrangements.

The type of information to support a decision regarding the allocation of an approved classification to a role (job) should include:

* background information regarding the reason for the assessment (for example, who initiated the request and why)
* for a new role – evidence that the requirement for the new role has been established, and a work values assessment of the expected duties
* for a role review – an assessment of the change in work value associated with the revised duties
* funding approval for the new or reclassified role.

## Flexibility within approved classifications

There is flexibility within the APS classification structure to manage particular issues.

#### Local titles

Local titles are labels that may be used by an agency to segment the workforce along functional or occupational lines. Examples of occupational lines include engineering, accountancy, information technology, legal or public affairs.

Local titles may reflect qualification or registration requirements for the job and refer to the [APS Job Family Model](http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/job-family-model). Local titles can also be used in job advertisements to assist in attracting a strong field of applicants for the particular occupational stream.

The actual approved APS classification level must appear next to the local title in all advertising material and in the agency’s enterprise agreement. This approach ensures that potential applicants and employees are aware of the formal APS classification enabling comparison of roles across agencies and job types.

#### Individual flexibility arrangements

An agency’s enterprise agreement sets out the terms and conditions of employment for its workforce. These agreements are collective in nature and apply to many employees.

Flexible work practices, which may be achieved through individual flexibility arrangements (IFAs), can deliver benefits to both employers and employees. IFAs allow for variations to an enterprise agreement in order to meet the genuine needs of the employer and individual employees, while ensuring that minimum terms and conditions are not undermined.

IFAs cannot alter the classification structure. However, IFAs may provide agencies with the flexibility to attract and retain key employees while ensuring the role they undertake is appropriately classified based on work value.

## Better Practice Case Study - ATO

#### ****Re-evaluating jobs to ensure classifications remain current (APS 1 and APS 2)****

Throughout 2012-13 the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) has been working with its Operational delivery areas to provide meaningful work at APS 1 and APS 2 classifications.

Part of the process includes analysing the work undertaken in these areas at each classification and determining the areas and opportunities in which the agency can gain greater value out of positions that are classified at higher levels. Work processes and technological improvements have evolved in the last 10 years, reducing the complexity of particular roles. However, the perception of what work is appropriate at what levels has remained similar from a work-type perspective (not from a complexity perspective). In some cases this may have contributed to a flawed perception of what work is appropriate at each level.

The agency is investing effort in analysing and re-evaluating roles in order to ensure that the complexity of the work is the primary factor in considering a classification, not its work-type. The ATO is realising benefits through process efficiencies for both the agency and taxpayers, with dividends for the workforce over the longer-term.

Examples of how the ATO has re-engineered particular roles include reallocating processing work of a lower work value that was previously undertaken by APS 3s to APS 1s and APS 2s, and integrating workforce planning processes to build future staffing at these levels. This means that employees at the APS 3 level can be deployed to more complex tasks that suit their work level standards, capabilities and are appropriate to the salary being paid.

The ATO has found that this project needs to have a broad workforce planning perspective and not a classification by classification approach. This ensures that any changes are undertaken with a strategic, long-term perspective, with consideration given to potential risks to agency capability and to developing a sustainable workforce structure.

# Part Three – Work Level Standards

Work value determines the classification of jobs across the Australian Public Service (APS). The work value for each classification level is described in work level standards.

## What are work level standards?

Work level standards describe the distinctive features of work at each classification level. They are a statement of

* the broad job requirements, key duties and responsibilities
* the knowledge and skills required of the role
* the operating context and characteristics that describe effective performance at each classification level.

#### Common applications

Work level standards are a tool to support sound decision-making relating to job design and classification. The standards also help employees to understand what is expected of them in their role. The primary uses for the work level standards include:

* job classification – for example, ‘We are introducing a new role. We are not sure what classification it should be’
* job design or redesign – for example, ‘There is a high level of turnover in this role because the scope of work is too broad/narrow. How can we make the job more engaging while keeping it at the APS 4 classification?’
* evaluation of work value – for example, ‘Employees in the role are expected to deal with complex enquiries on their own. Is that what an APS 3 should be doing?’
* developing a job statement – for example, ‘We need to advertise a new job. How should we describe the key requirement associated with the job?’
* learning and development - for example, ‘I want to be able to apply for an EL 1 role within the next year. In what areas do I need to gain more experience?’
* performance management – for example, ‘What is expected of roles at the APS 6 classification?’

## Key concepts

The principal purpose of work level standards is to describe the essential characteristics of the work to be performed, at both a conceptual and a practical level.

1. Differentiating between the person and the job

Work level standards describe the level of work and not the skills of the individual employee who may perform the role. This is an important aspect of job classification as it focuses on what the job is expected to do and not on the attributes of the individual employee performing the role at any given time.

When using the work level standards to determine an appropriate classification level for a role, it is important to consider

* the responsibilities and accountabilities required of the role, and
* the knowledge and skills required for competent performance in the role.

The level at which the incumbent is currently performing should not influence the outcome of the classification evaluation. Additionally, the current incumbent may have qualifications, skills and capabilities that are not needed for the role.

1. Distinguishing between work value and work volume

Work volume does not influence work value. The appropriate classification of a job should be determined based on the complexity and responsibility of tasks involved, not the number of tasks or how busy the role is. Work volume may influence the number of employees needed to perform the duties.

1. Determining the appropriate classification

The appropriate work level is influenced by the duty or function/s of the highest work value that is most regularly performed. Many roles are a mix of duties with work values that are higher and/or lower than the classification level allocated.

A classification level can only be allocated following an analysis of the job. That means looking at the range of duties, their relationship to one another and their relative significance. Such decisions cannot be based on a single task (for example, supervision), but must be considered on balance in conjunction with the other duties performed in the whole job.

No single example of work will necessarily determine whether a role should be classified at a particular level. Equally, work level standards cannot be expected to describe all possible combinations and permutations of characteristics that may make up an individual role.

It is unlikely that any single role would include every activity, task, responsibility or skill identified in the work level standard for that classification. However, the actual duties to be performed should be consistent with the nature of the work described in that standard.

1. Assisting with performance management

Work level standards broadly describe the level of work expected at each classification and can be used to inform performance management processes as they identify the work value expectations for each classification level. The Integrated Leadership System (ILS) can also be used to help to understand the expected behaviours and capabilities of employees at each classification level.

1. Reclassifying roles

A role should only be reclassified where a substantial and sustained change in the nature of the work alters the level of complexity, responsibility or authority of the job. It should be noted that not all changes in the nature of the work justify an increase or decrease in classification level.

Generally, a change in workload will not influence work value, but may influence the number of employees needed to perform the duties.

## APS work level standards for the APS Level and Executive Level classifications

From 1 December 2014, agencies are required under the [*Public Service Classification Rules 2000*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F2005B01581) to adopt the [APS work level standards (APS Level and Executive Level classifications)](http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/worklevel-standards).

Agencies may retain content from their existing work level standards as supplementary guidance to assist with the job evaluation process for their workforce. However, any agency specific guidance must be consistent with the APS work level standards.

#### Structure of the APS work level standards

The APS work level standards highlight the key differences in work value between the APS Level 1-6 and EL 1-2 classification levels. These work level standards are also consistent with the Senior Executive Service (SES) work level standards, contributing to a transparent, comprehensive and cohesive classification framework.

The work level standards are intended to be a broad framework that classifies APS Level and Executive Level roles according to work value. They do not attempt to describe in detail all the possible components of roles at their different levels across the APS. Instead, they focus on the core components of the role.

The work level standards consist of two key elements: characteristics and functions.

1. Characteristics – these are general statements about the broad job requirements and operating context for each classification level.
2. Functions– job requirements are divided into five functional streams that describe typical duties for each classification level. A role may incorporate duties from more than one function.

Together, the characteristics and functions capture the broad requirements of the job.

Table 3.1: Work level standard characteristic descriptions

| **Characteristic** | **Definition** |
| --- | --- |
| Leadership and Accountability | There are two aspects to leadership and accountability;* the depth and scope of knowledge and expertise essential to the role, and
* the impact of the role on agency outcomes.
 |
| Job Context and Environment | The complexity and diversity of the operating environment. |
| Independence and Decision-making | The degree of guidance provided by operating frameworks and the scope for judgement and discretion to act, approve or make decisions. |
| Stakeholder Engagement | The nature of interactions and degree of stakeholder management. |
| Management Diversity and Span | Resource management of the role; size and complexity of management responsibilities. |

It is useful to firstly consider if the role has a stronger fit with one of the five functions, and to then consider secondary functional areas if there is a diversity of duties. Many roles will incorporate duties from more than one function.

Table 3.2: Work level standard function descriptions

| **Function** | **Definition** |
| --- | --- |
| Service Delivery | Outcome delivery, including the development of delivery responses. |
| Program and Project Management | Resource management and inter-agency and cross-agency engagement. |
| Policy | Development, interpretation of policy and the provision of policy advice. |
| Regulatory | Compliance and enforcement functions within a governance framework. |
| Professional / Technical | Provision of technical, professional, specialist or strategic advice, expertise or knowledge. |

Describing work value from the perspective of both the characteristics and functions allows a more comprehensive understanding of APS roles and for the differences between classification levels to be more clearly identified. The distinctions in work value described in the work level standards are illustrated in the Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1: Work value distinctions



#### Shared responsibilities

The work level standards work in conjunction with the broader APS employment framework under the [*Public Service Act 1999*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A00538) (PS Act), including acting in accordance with

* all Australian Laws (for example, the [*Workplace Health and Safety Act 2011*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2011A00137))
* the [APS Values](http://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-employment-policy-and-advice/aps-values-and-code-of-conduct/aps-values) and [Employment Principles](http://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-employment-policy-and-advice/aps-values-and-code-of-conduct/employment-principles)
* the [APS Code of Conduct](http://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-employment-policy-and-advice/aps-values-and-code-of-conduct/code-of-conduct).

The APS work level standards for the APS Level and Executive Level classifications have been developed to provide a broad common base suitable for use across the APS. Agencies can choose to adopt these work level standards, or calibrate their own work level standards with the APS standard.

Alternatively, an agency can build on the APS work level standards by tailoring them to provide a more comprehensive picture of employment for that agency. This can be achieved by developing specialised sub-functions as illustrated in the figure below. The sub-functions would provide more detail about the typical duties or operating context for specialised roles in the agency.

Figure 3.2: Example of how to tailor APS work level standards for agency specialised roles

**APS work level standards APS work level standards adapted to meet agency needs**



#### Job families

Job families gather functionally similar roles that have related skills, tasks and knowledge blocks into occupational groupings down to the level of job role. The [APS Job Family Model](http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/job-family-model) can be used to complement the work level standards by providing an agency context for specialised roles. This will provide clarity to roles that may not fit neatly into the functional streams, or enhance the agency’s work level standards by including unique and specialised roles. The job families component can add additional detail to the work level standards regarding agency expectations on issues such as mandatory qualifications for specialised roles. Understanding these groupings can help an agency to make role comparisons with the broader labour market to gain an understanding of potential skill shortages and any future planning that may be needed for these particular specialised roles.

#### Local titles

An agency can attribute local titles to roles to better describe the particular functional stream or occupation. A local title is to be underpinned by the work level standards for the relevant classification, as an approved classification must be allocated to all APS jobs. Local titles may also be an effective way of attracting a strong field of applicants from within the specific occupational stream.

## APS Role evaluation tool and guidance

To support the introduction of the APS Work level standards, the Commission developed the [APS Role Evaluation tool and supporting guidance](http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/role_evaluation_guide) to assist agencies to measure the work value of new and existing roles and determine the appropriate classification level.

Use of the tool is not compulsory. However agencies are strongly encouraged to incorporate a structured role evaluation process into their classification management processes.

## APS work level standards for the SES classifications

Since 2012, agencies have been required under the Public Service Classification Rules 2000 to adopt the APS Senior Executive Service work level standards.

The Commission has developed the SES classification methodology to assist agencies to measure the work value of new and existing SES roles. The methodology consists of:

• SES work level standards – an official statement that provides a general description of the work performed at each of the three approved SES classification levels, and

• an evaluation tool – to assist agencies in measuring the work value of SES roles against the work level standards.

These are available at:

<http://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-employment-policy-and-advice/ses/ses-classifications>

## Agency work level standards

For classifications ***other than*** APS, Executive Level or SES levels, agency heads must issue work level standards, in writing, describing the work value of the group of duties to be performed in the agency at that classification.

## Busting Myths

| **It’s often thought that…** | **But in fact…** |
| --- | --- |
| ***Jobs should be classified to match the skill and performance of the employee*** | Classification decisions are made on the basis of the work value requirements of the role and not the person performing the role.  |
| ***The work value of a role is not considered separately from work volume*** | The quantity of workload does not inform the work value of a role. Changes to the volume of workload should not be reflected in a change in the classification of the job. Instead an increase in work volume could be addressed through:* a revision of work processes or delegation;
* overtime;
* or having more than one job.
 |
| ***Classification is determined by remuneration*** | Work level standards are used to classify a job. Remuneration and other conditions provided to employees in enterprise agreements do not influence classification decisions. How much employees are paid is a separate consideration. |

# Part Four – Classification Management in Practice

A decision to allocate a classification level to a job is made after a new role (job) has been designed or when evaluating an existing job

* having regard to the overall nature if the job and its highest function regularly performed,
* on the basis of comparison between jobs (within and between agencies), and
* against approved work level standards.

In support of consistent classification decision-making across the Australian Public Service (APS), agencies are encouraged to incorporate a structured job evaluation process into their classification management practices.

## Role evaluation

Role evaluation is the method of determining the relative work value of a job (role) through assessing the nature, impact and accountabilities of the job. Evidence to support this assessment should be gathered in a structured and systematic way.

Role evaluation is a two part process. First, evidence is gathered to understandthe role (job analysis). Second, the role is assessed and measured against established criteria, usually work level standards. Undertaking these steps allows the following information to be identified

* the job context – the characteristics of the work area, agency and environment in which the job operates
* the job – the required tasks, duties and responsibilities, and
* the worker requirements – the required knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes.

A key reason for conducting a job evaluation is to determine the appropriate classification level for the job. It can also be useful for many other purposes including:

* preparation of job descriptions
* development of selection criteria
* job design and re-design
* identifying performance expectations
* the identification of training needs
* the design or re-design of work area structures.

**When is role evaluation required?**

A role evaluation should be conducted when

* allocating a classification to a newly created role
* reviewing a role which has substantially changed due to circumstances such as machinery of government changes, a restructure or reorganisation within an agency, or a new policy
* a vacancy occurs (but before the commencement of a recruitment process) to assess whether the job has changed over time.

## Role evaluation principles

The principles for role evaluation build on the classification principle that work value is the basis for classifying a job:

1. Analyse the job, not the person **-** analysis is applied to a job and its requirements rather than the skills, experience and performance of a particular incumbent. If the incumbent was to leave the job, the job remains the same whatever strengths and perspectives the person had brought to the role. The classification of the work should therefore remain the same.
2. Quality information about the role **-** is fundamental to the quality, integrity and credibility of job analysis. The job assessor should ensure that assessments are information-based and do not make assumptions about aspects of the role.
3. Ignore the existing classification level **-** role evaluation is about having a fresh look at the role.
4. Take into account both the significance and the frequency of tasks undertaken.
5. Consider all existing responsibilities or planned future responsibilities.
6. Do not classify a job on the basis of the workload or how busy it is.

## Job analysis

The aim of job analysis is to obtain sufficient factual information to allow an informed assessment of the essential nature of the work and its relative value. Job analysis is an integral part of any job evaluation process.

**The process**

Job analysis must be conducted in a systematic manner, and generally consists of

1. Information gathering: The assessor collects role-related information from the person undertaking the duties (incumbent) and their supervisor, and from documentation such as business plans. Others who are expected to interact with the role, such as clients, stakeholders and peers, may also be useful sources of information.
2. Analysis: At this point the assessor should have gathered quite a bit of information about what the job is expected to do. It is important to identify the most critical or essential skills, knowledge and abilities required to perform the duties and ultimately, the job. When determining how critical or essential the task and related knowledge, skills or abilities are, consider factors such as:
* the difficulty or criticality of the tasks being performed
* the impact on job outcomes
* the impact on other jobs within the work area or agency, and
* how frequently the tasks are performed.

#### What do you need to find out?

The type of information needed to be gathered will depend on the reason for the analysis, such as whether the job is a new role, or because of an expected change to the duties. Relevant questions to ask may include:

* What are the key responsibilities of the role?
* What are the key skills and/or technical knowledge used in the role?
* What are the key challenges for the role?
* Who are key clients and stakeholders? What interactions occur or are expected to occur and what is the nature of these interactions?

Establishing the ***job context factors*** that relate to the role is also important, such as the

* scope of responsibility
* degree of decision-making required and its impact
* depth of knowledge and/or expertise required
* skill variety needed
* nature of work demand, for example, regular peaks and troughs in workload
* whether the work is steady or fast-paced
* impact of the role across the team, agency and/or externally
* degree of autonomy associated with the role
* extent to which the work is structured and routine
* degree to which procedures are prescribed
* level of accountability

Information about the ***work area structure*** is key, with regard to the

* direct manager
* any other employees who report to the role
* other positions in the team, and
* the key functions of all roles in the team

Information about the ***functioning of the work area*** should also be identified, specifically the

* primary function of the work area
* key outcomes of the work area
* primary output produced or service provided
* government priorities that are relevant to the work area, and
* any significant legal or governance frameworks that are relevant to the work of the area

#### Sources of information

There may be information already available which can be of assistance in undertaking job analysis – providing it is reliable and consistent with what is known about the role.

The following table lists a range of potential information sources for new and existing roles.

Table 4.1 Potential information sources for job analysis

| Source | Existing Role | New Role |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Budget or cabinet papers |  | ✓ |
| Delegations held by role | ✓ |  |
| Performance Agreement | ✓ |  |
| Annual Report | ✓ | ✓ |
| Business Plans | ✓ | ✓ |
| Role Description | ✓ |  |
| Government or Ministerial Statements | ✓ | ✓ |
| Press Releases | ✓ |  |
| New Policy Proposal Documentation |  | ✓ |
| Organisational Chart – existing or proposed | ✓ | ✓ |
| Structured interviews with* Incumbent
* Manager
* Stakeholders/Peers
 | ✓ | ✓ |

It is recommended that a minimum of two accurate and current information sources are used, one of which should be the role description for an existing job. It is also good practice to interview at least the incumbent and manager, where possible.

## Assessing a role

The assessment of a role integrates the information obtained from a job analysis activity and uses it to inform decisions about the role. The primary purpose is to allocate a classification level to a job, however this step may also be used to design or re-design job responsibilities.

To classify a job, the information obtained about the role and responsibilities is compared with the relevant work level standards. Work level standards capture the way in which tasks and responsibilities differ across classifications. In determining the appropriate classification for a job, an assessment should consider those characteristics of the work level standards that are most relevant to the role.

From 1 December 2014, the Classification Rules require that agencies adopt the [APS work level standards for APS 1–6 Level and Executive Level classifications](http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/worklevel-standards) (issued by the Commissioner) whenever allocating a relevant classification.

Agencies have been required to adopt the [APS Senior Executive Service work level standards](http://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-employment-policy-and-advice/ses/ses-classifications) issued by the Commissioner, since 2012.

Work level standards are generic documents that apply to a wide range of jobs, so it may be useful to also compare the role to existing roles that have a similar work value. Role comparisons can be made against roles in the same agency or in another APS agency.

## APS role evaluation tools

An **analysis-based role evaluation tool** has been developed to support the consistent application of the APS classification structure and to assist agencies to evaluate roles and determine the appropriate classification level, as measured against the APS Work level standards.

The evaluation tool breaks a role down into its main activities. Evidence about the role is analysed against a set of factors producing a point score. It is important to note that the factors included in the role evaluation tool are not exclusive and there may be other factors that are relevant to scoring a role.

Each evaluation factor is assigned a score and the combined score indicates the appropriate classification.

Roles may score anywhere within the range for a classification, reflecting the broad range of work value within each classification level. It is unlikely that all roles within an agency would consistently score at the high end or low end of each classification.

The APS role evaluation and tool and guidance (APS Level and Executive Level classifications) can be found at

<http://www.apsc.gov.au/publications-and-media/current-publications/role_evaluation_guide>

The SES Role Evaluation Methodology Guidelines and Workbook 2012 can be found at

<http://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-employment-policy-and-advice/ses/ses-classifications>

## Dealing with potential sensitivities

The role evaluation process can potentially be a sensitive issue for those involved, in particular where an existing role has a current incumbent performing the duties. Therefore it is important for the assessor to be aware of this, prepare to manage expectations, alleviate any apprehension and misunderstanding as well as communicate effectively to affected/involved staff including providing advice about possible outcomes.

The below suggestions may assist in managing potential sensitivities.

* Before undertaking the role evaluation, establish what action may be taken if the classification outcome differs from the anticipated classification. For example, reclassifying or redesigning the job.
* Explain the possible classification outcomes to the incumbent and the manager, and be clear about what these may mean for the incumbent.
* Be aware that managers and/or incumbents may try to influence the outcome by ‘talking up’ or downplaying the role. Using a variety of information sources will help to address this.
* Focus on obtaining very specific, detailed and current information to ensure that an independent and accurate assessment can be made to establish the appropriate classification.

In all cases it is important to conduct the evaluation with empathy and to be as neutral as possible.

## Documentation

Thorough information and documentation procedures relating to classification decisions are necessary elements in safeguarding the integrity of the process. A decision to allocate a new or revised classification level to a job is made under delegated authority under the [*Public Service Act 1999*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A00538) and the [*Public Service Classification Rules* 2000](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F2005B01581). This means a record of the decision must be made, including the reasons for the decision.

Adequate documentation in support of classification decisions can also provide valuable information to assist any subsequent review of a job where, for example, further work value changes may need to be assessed.

Appropriate documentation includes, but is not limited to, job descriptions, completed questionnaires and interviews. Other supporting documentation may include:

* background information (who initiated the action and why)
* in the case of a new role – some evidence that the need for the new role had been established
* an assessment of the resource impact of the creation or reclassification
* an analysis leading to task and job design
* supporting reasons for the classification decision, including reference to the comparisons made with formal standards
* in the case of a reclassification – a summary and assessment of work value change, including reference to the authority for the change.

Maintaining such records is important to an agency’s ability to manage its classification arrangements effectively. The extent of detail and the type of information provided in support of the decision made also depends upon the nature and complexity of the role.

## Busting myths

| **It’s often thought that…** | **But in fact…** |
| --- | --- |
| ***You can’t analyse new roles because the job has never been performed and there are no incumbents*** | New roles can be analysed by collecting information from subject experts. These are people who hold similar/same jobs or perhaps line managers. Ask them if there is anything in terms of functions, experience or skills that they would expect the ideal job holder to do or possess. |
| ***It is enough to talk to a supervisor when analysing a role*** | Collecting data from a single source may result in inaccuracy. Job analysis needs to consider more than one source of data in order to collect accurate information. |
| ***A role can be reclassified if the duties or responsibilities of the role have significantly changed e.g expanded or reduced over time*** | A role should only be reclassified if there has been a demonstrated significant change in the work value of the job. |
| ***A role cannot be reclassified when occupied*** | A role can be reviewed and where required reclassified (up or down) even if the job is not vacant. In these circumstances the individual performing the role is to be managed in accordance with APS and agency redeployment policy.  |

# Part Five – Broadbanding

The Australia Public Service (APS) classification system provides agencies with flexibility to adapt the classification structure to meet work requirements. This includes the option to group together narrowly defined work into a broader group of duties.

Broadbanding is an arrangement where two or more APS classifications are combined into a single broader group of duties (a band) to meet the needs of the particular agency.

## Objectives of broadbanding

Broadbanding may assist an agency to:

* provide more flexibility in packaging duties into a job
* remove artificial barriers between duties at different levels
* implement and encourage a team-based approach to work
* provide more development and career opportunities for employees
* provide more flexibility in the deployment, mobility and use of employees
* achieve its business imperatives and objectives
* reinforce or introduce cultural change.

## Broadbanding and the APS classification system

The option to broadband is available under rule 9(4) of the [*Public Service Classification Rules 2000*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F2005B01581)(the Classification Rules) which states that if a group of duties involves work requirements applying to more than one classification, the agency head may allocate more than one classification (a broadband) to the group of duties.

In practice, this means that where there are elements of work at two or more classifications that are very similar in nature, but vary in complexity, then an agency head may choose to broadband those classifications.

Agencies must ensure clear guidelines and processes are put in place to maintain integrity of any broadbanding arrangement. At a minimum, the procedures should ensure an employee is only advanced where:

* sufficient work is available at the higher classification, and
* they have gained the necessary skills and proficiency to perform the more complex work.

An agency with new or revised broadbanding proposals are required under the bargaining framework for APS enterprise agreements to consult with the Australian Public Service Commission (the Commission) to ensure that the proposals:

* meet the APS Values and Employment Principles - relating to merit, community access to employment opportunities and leadership
* meet the APS legislative requirements - such as the Classification Rules
* are consistent with the bargaining framework for APS enterprise agreements. This includes that salary advancement for individuals within classifications and broadbands is subject to at least satisfactory performance.

It should be noted that a broadband is allocated to the *group of duties* and not to the individual employee. Within the group of duties, agencies must ensure that there are discrete jobs at each classification level within the broadband, and that these jobs are aligned to the work value requirement of the relevant work level standards.

Rule 6(1) of the Classification Rules requires each employee in an agency to be allocated an approved classification. This means all employees performing duties in a broadband must still be allocated a single classification within that broadband. Agencies should ensure that as each employee advances through a broadband, the employee’s APS classification is adjusted to reflect the work value of the duties being performed.

Additionally, the [*Australian Public Service Commissioner’s Directions 2022*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2022L00088)(the Directions) state that the advancement within a broadband is not considered a promotion.

A local title can be given to a broadband in addition to the approved APS classifications being broadbanded. Agencies are required to ensure that broadbands in their enterprise agreement clearly identify the approved APS classifications contained in the broadband.

SES classifications are excluded from broadbanding arrangements.

## Advantages and disadvantages of broadbanding

Before making a decision to introduce a broadband, an agency needs to establish what the broadband intends to achieve and take into account the advantages and the disadvantages of a broadbanding arrangement. Broadbanded roles are not necessarily suited to all agencies, or to all job types. This means that agencies need to be clear about the benefits a broadbanded arrangement would provide for the work to be undertaken, and for the employees who are to perform the role.

The potential benefits of broadbanding include:

* aligning functional operations with the classification structure
* creating opportunities for skill development
* increasing flexibility in matching people to jobs
* increasing efficiency by removing barriers to the flexible movement of employees
* reduce costs associated with promotion processes
* supporting multi-skilling of employees across a wide range of activities
* producing a less hierarchical and more team-oriented workforce
* improving retention.

Disadvantages of broadbanding include:

* reducing the number of occasions in which employees are competitively assessed
* potentially blurring work value distinctions between roles in the same band
* increasing ongoing salary costs where employees advance to higher classifications within the broadband, if the broadband is not managed appropriately
* ongoing costs to educate and train employees and supervisors about the objectives of the broadband to ensure it is managed appropriately and evaluated periodically

## Different broadbands for different needs

The aim of the APS classification structure is to provide agencies with flexibility to use the classification arrangements in a way that most suit their needs. There can be no single approach to broadbanding that will suit all agencies, and there is no expectation that an agency should necessarily broadband. Broadbands successfully used in agencies are usually structured around job families or specialisations, or can be agency-wide.

#### Job family or specialised broadbands

This type of broadband stems from the identification of a particular type of work that spans a number of classification levels. This more traditional broadbanding approach focuses on particular groups of roles within a job family or roles of a specialised nature. This approach means a variety of broadbands could operate within an agency.

Specialised broadbands have the potential to encompass the complete range of work value within the broadband. This means an employee can develop their skills to eventually undertake work at the higher level, subject to meeting certain tests regarding performance, competency and work availability.

Figure 5.1 Job family or specialised broadband example



#### Agency-wide broadbands

An agency broadband encompasses all roles at the specified classifications across the whole agency. This broadband method may suit an agency that has similar work across the agency, such as a ‘policy’ agency. However, is not always appropriate for an agency that undertakes very different types of work, such as a mix of administration, trade and specialist roles, where more specialised broadbands would be more appropriate. An agency-wide broadband is usually better suited to smaller sized agencies.

Figure 5.2 Agency-wide broadband



## Establishing and managing broadband arrangements

There is no single ideal or ‘correct’ model for broadbanding that can be applied to all agencies. It is important to consider the similarity of functions, the increasing complexity of duties, and where advancement barriers should be placed. Advancement provisions should be clearly identified so that employees understand and have certainty regarding the eligibility conditions for advancement. This can be done in the agency’s enterprise agreement or other human resources policies.

If an agency is considering introducing a new broadband during the life of their enterprise agreement, or reviewing a current one, a facilitative clause to this effect should be included in the enterprise agreement so an appropriate salary range can be applied to the broadband when needed. This enables any new or revised arrangement to take effect ahead of being included in the agency’s next available enterprise agreement.

Before introducing a broadband, consideration needs to be given to what the broadbanded duties are intended to accomplish. This can be done through an analysis of the roles, including how they will be defined and grouped together, and any consequences of being banded together.

In addition, agencies need to identify:

* how initial and ongoing costs will be controlled and managed
* a strategy for managing employee expectations about advancement
* how to determine whether (or when) work at the higher work value is available
* a way to manage classification advancement that is based on evidence of organisational need for the higher level work and employee competency and skill level to undertake the duties
* whether supervisors have the necessary skills to manage the broadband in determining the availability of higher level work and assessment of employee skills to undertake the work
* ways in which employees can be rewarded, valued and motivated
* a strategy to evaluate the effectiveness of the broadband.

In establishing a broadband, agencies must take into account the [APS Employment Principles](http://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-employment-policy-and-advice/aps-values-and-code-of-conduct/employment-principles) relating to merit and community access to employment opportunities. Broadbanding should be approached in a strategic way to address agency needs, and not simply as a way to bypass a promotion process. To meet the intent of the APS Employment Principles, it would be best for broadbands to be structured so there are at least two breaks between APS Levels 1-6 that require an open, competitive selection process. For example:

* APS 1-3, APS 4-5, APS 6 or
* APS 1-4, APS 5, APS 6 or
* APS 1-2, APS 3-4, APS 5-6.

In most cases, broadbanding is not appropriate for the Executive Level (EL) classifications. In general there are limited jobs at the EL 1 and EL 2 classifications that are sufficiently homogenous, or have sufficient commonality of functions, to justify broadbanding. The spread of responsibility (such as the management challenge, accountability requirements, the scope of influence or judgement required) across these classification levels, and the importance of the EL 2 classification as a feeder group to the SES, are strong arguments to keep them separate.

#### Advancement within a broadband

Broadbanding removes the need for open, competitive selection processes between each of the APS classification levels included in the broadband. Where already in a broadband, an employee is assigned a higher classification based on the operating arrangements for the broadband rather than through promotion.

It is considered best practice for advancement to meet these minimum requirements:

1. work at the higher classification level being available; and
2. employees demonstrating on an individual basis their role-related capabilities to undertake the higher level work.

The Directions require decisions regarding advancement to be made on the basis of an assessment of the employee’s work-related qualities and the work-related qualities required for efficient and effective organisational performance. Therefore, as part of the operating arrangements for the broadband it is important to build attainment points or other barriers that require some form of assessment to determine an employee’s ability to progress to the higher work value.

Barriers, including some form of formal assessment, can be placed at any point between classifications within a broadband. As each broadband is designed to meet an agency’s specific needs, operating requirements can vary. For clarity and certainty, these arrangements should be specified in the agency’s enterprise agreement or other human resources policy.

Under the bargaining framework for APS enterprise agreements, it is a requirement that salary advancement for individuals within a broadband is subject to at least satisfactory performance. Therefore, an effective performance management system needs to guide progression through a broadband, manage expectations and deal with under-performance.

Other arrangements for advancement could include a requirement to undergo an internal merit selection process, or even an open merit selection process. Mechanisms to ensure fair and consistent treatment need to be developed.

## Documentation

Appropriate documentation should be kept regarding a decision to advance an employee through a broadband to a higher classification level. This is good governance, and supports rigour, consistency and integrity in decision-making.

While keeping such records is important to the effective management of classification arrangements, the form the records take and their level of detail are matters for individual agencies to decide, having regard to its particular broadband arrangements and other factors.

## Busting myths

| **It’s often thought that…** | **But in fact…** |
| --- | --- |
| ***The allocation of a higher classification within a broadband is a promotion*** | Promotion is based on providing all eligible members of the community having reasonable opportunity to apply to perform the relevant duties. Therefore the allocation of a higher classification to a person already within the same broadband is not a promotion.  |
| ***Broadbanding is always beneficial to an agency*** | Broadbanding can result in additional and ongoing costs where progression through a broadband is seen to be automatic and not linked to individual competency and performance and work availability tests. Further, where a broadband involves a reduced number of pay points it could result in rapid advancement of larger numbers of employees through the broadband than previously. |
| ***Broadbands are approved APS classifications*** | Broadbands are local titles and, while they contain approved classifications, are not themselves approved APS classifications.  |
| ***Broadbanding provides no benefits to an agency*** | Broadbanding allows employees to grow in the job, identify career progression and develop skills outside the immediate role and take on work of a greater degree of complexity.  |

## Better Practice Case Study - DHS

#### The Department of Human Services APS 3-4 Customer Service Role Broadband

The Department of Human Services (DHS) Enterprise Agreement 2011-14 contains an APS 3-4 broadband for employees in external customer service roles. Customer services roles are typically jobs that involve providing assisted and managed services directly to the public in the DHS call/processing centres, face-to-face customer service centres and in the community.

In order to advance, APS 3 employees first complete a Broadband Advancement Workbook which documents evidence of their technical capability and general behaviours that are expected at the APS 4 level. The workbook is modelled on the Integrated Leadership System (ILS) and clearly articulates the required behaviours expected at the higher level.

This completed workbook is then used by the employee’s manager to confirm the employee’s capability to perform at the APS 4 level. Relevant evidence may include (but is not limited to):

* examples of the existing work and results;
* written or verbal responses against the ILS criteria;
* qualitative and quantitative data; and
* observation and feedback from managers/supervisors and/or other relevant stakeholders such as technical specialists.

APS 3 employees are encouraged to work with their manager to identify the necessary experience, technical capability and behaviours they need to demonstrate to be able work effectively at the APS 4 level. This complements regular performance discussions and, coaching, as well as structured learning and development initiatives.

An employee assessed as not suitable for advancement may reapply in three months. An employee assessed as suitable for advancement may only advance if there is an ongoing job at the higher classification level.

Careful consideration is given to operational requirements i.e. managers must ascertain if there is an actual vacancy and/or the need for an additional job at the higher classification. Formal delegations are in place to ensure strong governance of these arrangements.

Where more APS 3 employees are eligible for advancement than there are identified vacancies, an internal merit-based selection process may be conducted to select those to be advanced to the APS 4 classification level.

## Better Practice Case Study - FWO

#### The Office of Fair Work Ombudsman APS 3-5 agency-wide general broadband

The Office of the Fair Work Ombudsman (FWO) established an agency-wide general broadband (APS 3-5), created in January 2010 as part of the FWO 2010-11 Enterprise Agreement, and continued under the 2011-14 Enterprise Agreement. The combination of these classification levels enables career progression for a large proportion of employees within the agency. Movement within the broadband saves the agency costs and time in comparison to an external recruitment process to fill a vacant position.

Advancement within the broadband relies on satisfying the relevant Branch Head (SES Band 1) of the following:

* that there is ongoing work available at the higher level (either through a vacancy or through a change in requirements of the position),
* that the individual has demonstrated work-related qualities at the higher level or has been successful in an open merit selection process, and
* that the individual has achieved a rating of satisfactory or above in their most recent performance cycle.

The requirement to prove the availability of ongoing work ensures that any movement through the broadband reflects business requirements as well as individual capability. Without the requirement for an ongoing position at the higher level, the agency would be at risk of over-classifying positions.

It is likely that, at any given time, there are a number of APS 4 employees who can demonstrate competency at the APS 5 level but managers and employees with in the FWO are aware that the first requirement for a movement through the broadband is available ongoing work. This is made clear through a specific broadbanding intranet page, an agency-specific broadbanding guide and as part of the broadbanding request form. The broadbanding intranet page provides managers and employees with access to case studies that demonstrate the appropriate movement through the broadband, including a flowchart that outlines how movement through the broadband can occur starting with the ‘identification of a vacant position’.

The availability of ongoing work relates to a vacancy as well as a change in role requirements. Their guidance material emphasises that the change must be linked to the role and its required outputs and not the capability of the person performing the role. The change in role requirements may be the result of one or more factors such as team restructures, branch restructures or a change in required agency outputs.

An internal broadbanding working group was established in 2012 to review the implementation of broadband arrangements across the agency. This review generated an educative channel to better inform both managers and employees about their obligations and entitlements in relation to movements through the broadband.

Within FWO’s Human Resources Branch, the Recruitment Team provides advice and guidance in relation to broadbanding policies and procedures. By aligning ownership of the broadband process with the recruitment team there is a direct link between the team that manages agency vacancies and the broadbanding process.

The delegation for broadbanding decisions deliberately rests within the relevant work group. This enables the SES Band 1 to ensure that branch budgets are not negatively affected by movements through the broadband and that branch structure is maintained on the basis of work output requirements.

The benefits of the arrangements have been clear. The agency-wide general broadband enables efficient recruitment decisions in response to vacancies and changing role requirements. All employees are aware that the purpose of the broadband is to better reflect business requirements and to enable more effective career progression and filling of ongoing vacancies.

# Part Six – Training classifications

The Australian Public Service (APS) is committed to developing a quality, skilled workforce. Entry-level training opportunities that combine work with structured on and off-the-job training is an effective way for an agency to ‘grow its own’ skill base.

The APS classification structure includes training classifications so agencies can manage the entry-level training of their employees in a structured way.

## Benefits of using training classifications

In using training classifications, agencies have the flexibility to design training programs that meet their skilling needs. Employees can be trained in specialised areas where there is an identified labour market shortage of necessary skills and experience. Employees are also offered a readily identifiable career path.

Other benefits of using the training classifications include:

* an effective way to train and induct new employees
* improving the productivity of new employees and accelerate their contribution
* increasing workforce diversity .

## Training classifications and the APS classification system

The APS training classifications sit alongside the approved classification levels, and are contained in Schedule 2 of the [*Public Service Classification Rules 2000*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F2005B01581) (the Classification Rules). The approved training classifications are

* Apprentice APS (Trades)
* Cadet APS
* Cadet APS (Research Scientist)
* Graduate APS
* Trainee APS (Administrative) and
* Trainee APS (Technical).

Schedule 2 of the Classification Rules also contains a limited number of approved agency-specific training classifications relating to work specific to only one agency (e.g Valuer-in-Training and Customs training classifications).

The duties allocated to a training classification must include a requirement to undergo training (Classification Rules, rule 9(3)). Additionally, section 25(5) of the [*Australian Public Service Commissioner’s Directions 2022*](https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2022L00088) (the Directions) specifies that vacancies for a training classification must be notified as open to all eligible members of the community.

Designing the training requirements for a training classification is the responsibility of each agency. Factors to consider when determining training requirements include:

* the nature of the training duties that are assigned
* whether the training is part of a prescribed scheme or training package
* whether the training is covered by a training agreement with a registered training provider
* any relevant provisions in the agency’s enterprise agreement.

The [*Public Service Act 1999*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/C2004A00538) (PS Act) does not impose any requirements regarding the length of training to be undertaken.

On satisfactory completion of the agency’s training requirements, an ongoing employee is allocated an operational classification listed in column 3 in Schedule 2 of the Classification Rules relating to the training classification. In practice this means that once the relevant training program is successfully completed, the employee is allocated a specific classification in the approved classification structure (APS Levels 1-6). This is the culmination of the learning and development that has taken place over the course of the training program.

The Directions state that the allocation of an operational classification in this circumstance is not considered to be a promotion (section 6(b)).

## Different training classifications for different needs

Training programs that use the training classifications can combine structured training with duties that are full-time, part-time or education-based. The training programs lead to a recognised qualification and are available to anyone of working age, including young people who are new or recent entrants to the workforce, people re-entering the workforce or changing careers, and existing employees.

The different types of training classifications include:

#### Apprentice APS

Apprentices learn a trade from a skilled employer. Apprenticeships consist of both on-the-job training provided by their employing agency as well as related classroom instruction.

Upon successful completion of the required training, Apprentice APS employees are allocated the APS Level 2 operational classification. Progression beyond the APS Level 2 will be in accordance with merit and/or other arrangements (such as broadbanding), as provided in the individual agency’s enterprise agreement.

#### Cadet APS

Cadets are employed to complete an appropriate tertiary-level course leading to a degree required by the agency. Cadetships consist of time spent undertaking both academic study as well as working in the relevant agency during study breaks, and any other period/s required to complete the specified course of academic study.

Upon successful completion of their course of study, Cadet APS employees are allocated the APS Level 3 operational classification, with the exception of Cadet APS Research Scientists who are allocated the APS Level 6 operational classification.

Progression beyond these operational classifications is in accordance with merit and/or other arrangements (such as broadbanding) as provided in the individual agency’s enterprise agreement.

#### Graduate APS

Graduates have already successfully completed a tertiary qualification or comparable course of training. On being employed, graduates generally undertake a program of on-the-job training through work placements within their agency, with some structured learning and development opportunities.

Upon successful completion of the agency’s training program, Graduate APS employees are allocated the APS Level 3 operational classification. Agencies proposing to progress a Graduate APS beyond the APS Level 3 need to do so in accordance with merit and/or other arrangements (such as broadbanding) as provided in the individual agency’s enterprise agreement.

#### Trainee APS

Trainees undertake a course of training, generally for Certificate level qualification, at a technical or other further education institution, as well as participating in the agency’s training program that provides on-the-job training and experience.

Upon successful completion of the required training, Trainee APS (Administrative) employees are allocated the APS Level 1 operational classification, with Trainee APS (Technical) employees allocated an APS Level 3 operational classification. Progression beyond these operational classifications is in accordance with merit and/or other arrangements (such as broadbanding) as provided in the individual agency’s enterprise agreement.

## Establishing and managing training classifications

Agencies are encouraged to take responsibility for developing people management strategies aligned to their agency goals and a strategic approach to recruitment as part of their workforce planning. This includes considering the benefits of using training classifications to grow skills within the agency.

#### Remuneration - training classifications in enterprise agreements

Agencies intending to use training classifications must ensure remuneration for these classifications is specified in their agency’s enterprise agreement. It is recommended that agencies specify remuneration levels for each of the training classifications specified in the Classification Rules, even if all training classifications are not routinely used. This allows the option of employing people to participate in whole-of-government training programs which would otherwise be missed if the agency had not included the particular training classification in their enterprise agreement.

When developing their remuneration strategy, agencies should ensure that the salary ranges for operational classifications are sufficiently broad to provide appropriate pay points on advancement from training classifications.

An option to attract suitable candidates to training programs is to consider an individual flexibility arrangement (IFAs) in conjunction with the appropriate training classification. IFAs allow for variation to an agency’s enterprise agreement in order to meet the genuine needs of the agency and individual employees, while ensuring that minimum term and conditions are not undermined.

#### Broadbanding

Training classifications cannot be broadbanded. However, agencies have flexibility to include an operational classification in a broadband with a higher level classification. In keeping with broadbanding principles, access to the higher classification needs to be based on the availability of duties at the higher work value, and that the employee is skilled to undertake the higher level work.

The option to access a higher classification in a broadband needs to be included in the design of the training program. This is to ensure the training is structured around skilling employees to undertake duties at the higher work value on completion of the program as well as meeting any other advancement requirements specified for the broadband. In addition, any broadband arrangement that includes an operational classification on completion of training needs to be specified in the agency’s enterprise agreement.

#### Unsuccessful completion of training requirements

An employee’s employment in a training classification may be terminated in writing at any time for failure to satisfactorily complete an entry-level training course (section 29(3)(e) of the PS Act).

The performance of employees in a training classification needs to be managing carefully to ensure they are provided with appropriate opportunities to successfully complete the training requirements.

#### Employment in a training classification on a non-ongoing basis

While employment in a training classification is usually on an ongoing basis, non-ongoing employment is also possible. In keeping with the [*Public Service Regulations 1999*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F1999B00307), an employee can be employed on a non-ongoing basis for the duration of a specified term or for a specified task to undertake a training scheme for the purpose of gaining:

* skills and experience - regulation 3.5(3)(c)(i)
* a formal occupational qualification, licence, accreditation or registration - regulation 3.5(3)(c)(ii).

Non-ongoing employment does not result in ongoing employment upon successful completion of training.

#### Use of local titles

Local titles can be given to a training role in conjunction with the approved APS training classification. Using a local title in job advertisements can assist in attracting a more appropriate field of applicants to training opportunities. An agency using local titles must ensure that the equivalent APS training classification level appears next to the local title in all advertising material and in the agency’s enterprise agreement.

#### Training programs not covered by training classifications

Agencies may also offer training programs which provide entry-level employment opportunities coupled with on-the-job experience but without a requirement for formal qualifications on entry or in the course of training. Such programs should not be established using a training classification. For example, a ‘school leavers’ program which uses the approved classifications in Schedule 1 of the Classification Rules.

## Better Practice Case Study - ABS

#### Australian Bureau of Statistics Cadet APS Training Classification

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Enterprise Agreement 2011-14 provides an option for employees to be employed in a Cadet APS training classification. The cadetship program has been very effective in attracting high quality applicants in the fields of mathematics, statistics and/or econometrics. A limited number of cadetships are generally offered each year to students who are in their final year of a Bachelor’s degree and intend to undertake Honours (an additional year of study).

While studying, cadets have access to one of the largest workforce groups of mathematical statisticians and economic analysts within Australia, are paid at the Cadet APS (full time study) salary applicable to their age (as specified in the ABS Enterprise Agreement). Cadets also receive a cadet book allowance and all compulsory student and course fees are met by the ABS. Prior to commencing their Honours study, cadets undertake a four week work experience placement. While undertaking the work experience placement, cadets are paid at the Cadet APS (Practical Training) salary applicable to their age. If cadets are required to travel interstate to undertake this work experience placement, the ABS generally provides for interstate travel and accommodation expenses.

Schedule 2 of the [*Public Service Classification Rules 2000*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F2005B01581) enables the ABS to employ applicants at the Cadet APS classification and, upon successful completion of their Honours study, for cadets to be allocated an APS Level 3 operational classification. Overall the ABS has had great success in training the next generation of mathematical statisticians and econometricians through the program.

## Better Practice Case Study - BoM

#### Australian Bureau of Meteorology Trainee APS (Technical)

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) through forecasts, warnings, monitoring and advice spanning Australia and the Antarctic Territory, provides a fundamental and one of the most widely-used government services.

Comprehensive services are provided 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and are underpinned by extensive observation, communication and computer systems operated by BoM as well as international co-operative satellite and communication systems. These systems are highly specialised and cover an array of pneumatic, analogue, digital, microprocessor and mechanical based equipment.

The technical expertise to install, operate, monitor, maintain and repair these highly specialised systems is not widely available in the Australian labour market. To meet its needs, BoM has developed in-house initial technical training programs to acquire, advance and sustain the right combinations of knowledge, skills and attributes within the APS workforce.

A prerequisite for entry in the initial technical training programs is a Diploma in a relevant field of study. The BoM programs offer a combination of:

* formal theoretical and practical training, simulations and assessments delivered by technical training specialists based at BoM’s training centre, and
* experiential training and assessments in the field delivered through coaching and supervision by qualified Technical employees in BoM’s national network of offices, maintenance centres and meteorological sites around Australia and its territories (including Antarctica).

The work undertaken during the initial technical training programs has been evaluated under the [*Public Service Classification Rules 2000*](http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Series/F2005B01581) at the Trainee APS (Technical) classification, as it primarily involves a requirement to undergo training.

The BoM has built a talent pipeline around the Trainee APS (Technical) classification and it is promoted as the entry point to an attractive and rewarding career for people with technical aptitude and an interest in environmental information systems. The requirement to undergo training is integral to its attraction strategy and the way that employees are valued by providing *‘the opportunity to grow, to learn, to innovate, to succeed and to build a stimulating and rewarding career’*. Upon successful completion of all training requirements, the Trainee APS (Technical) employee is allocated to an APS Level 3 operational classification (local title of Technical Officer Level 2).

# Part Seven – Managing “Specialists”

The Australian Public Service (APS) classification structure is able to accommodate a wide variety of APS jobs that includes specialist occupations.

## The single APS classification structure

In 1998 a common APS classification structure was introduced replacing 13 structures and 81 classification levels below the SES, providing a mechanism for maintaining the concept of a cohesive APS. While the common structure facilitates mobility across the APS, it is also flexible as employees are able to specialise in occupation-based career paths. The common structure also readily allows employees to have a diverse career across different career streams.

## Managing specialist occupations

There are a number of arrangements that can support managing a specialist workforce, enabling:

* the attraction of specialist employees to clearly identifiable roles
* the retention of employees through both the recognition of their particular skills set and the provision of clearly identifiable career paths (where these are available in agencies)
* enhanced learning and development opportunities that can be specifically tailored to specialist areas.

Agencies can use particular mechanisms to attract, develop and retain employees with specialist skills, as described below.

#### Work level standards

The APS classification structure provides a common basis to identify and compare work value across agencies and job types. This is primarily achieved through the [APS work level standards](http://www.apsc.gov.au/aps-employment-policy-and-advice/classification/work-level-standards).

There is a misconception that it is difficult to attribute work value to roles which require a high level of technical expertise and which may not play a management role. The supervision and management of employees is only one component of work value, yet is a characteristic that many focus on when considering classification levels. The APS work level standards identify work value in a way that is meaningful across a range of specialisations, and demonstrates that jobs with a high level of specialist complexity can be assigned a work value weighting (and hence a classification level) equivalent to roles with a broader managerial focus.

Agencies can adapt the APS work level standards to provide a more comprehensive picture of employment groups for that agency. Enhancing the agency’s work level standards by including unique and specialised roles can provide

* clarity to roles that may not otherwise fit easily into the APS functional streams, and
* the agency context for specialised roles.

#### Local titles

A number of agencies use local titles in addition to the approved classification. This approach allows jobs to be labelled in a way that is most relevant to both the job and agency, and can assist with attracting and recognising specialist employees.

Local titles are informal labels (not classifications), and allows an agency to segment their workforce and better describe a particular functional stream or occupation. Local titles may also reflect qualification requirements for a job. The use of a local title is underpinned by the relevant work level standards for the APS classification level allocated.

Local titles can also be used in job advertisements to help attract a more appropriate field of applicants, as a classification level as a title can often be meaningless to people outside the APS. The use of a local title can also be effective in enabling ‘specialist’ groups to relate to others in the specialist occupation.

When using local titles, the equivalent APS classification level must appear next to the reference to the local title in all advertising material and agency enterprise agreements. This requirement provides a common language to identify and compare roles across agencies and job types, and supports employee mobility across the APS.

In support of standardising local titles across the APS, agencies are encouraged to align local titles to the APS Job Family Model.

#### Career paths

The APS classification framework facilitates career paths by providing a common basis for identifying and comparing roles across the APS. By aggregating a wide range of roles across all agencies, the common APS-wide classification structure supports employees looking to move between agencies and job types in order to gain a diverse range of career experiences.

Assisting an employee to identify a career path and other mobility opportunities also depend on other initiatives, such as:

* effective workforce planning by agencies and the APS as a whole
* frameworks that identify opportunities and pathways for employees to move within and between agencies
* articulating core and specialist knowledge, skills and capabilities required for APS roles
* a sustained investment of time and money in employee learning and development

In order to create meaningful career paths for specialists, agencies are encouraged to develop specialist frameworks that enhance capability development and support career progression. The identification of professional/technical/specialist capability frameworks will assist in making career pathways clearer.

#### Remuneration and other flexible work arrangements for specialists

Remuneration, varied terms and conditions, or flexible work practices can be provided through an individual flexibility arrangement (IFA). IFAs allow for variations to an agency’s enterprise agreement in order to meet the genuine needs of the agency and individual employee, while ensuring that minimum terms and conditions are not undermined. IFAs may help to attract and retain skilled and valuable employees, while ensuring the duties of role are appropriately classified based on work value.

## Better Practice Case Study - DEEWR

#### The Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations Information Technology (IT) Specialist

The Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) introduced an IT Specialist equivalent to the Executive Level 1 (EL1) classification through the DEEWR Enterprise Agreement 2012-14.

The IT Specialist addressed a specific need, identified through DEEWR’s ICT strategic workforce planning, to attract and retain IT employees with highly specialised skills and expertise in a tight labour market.

The IT Specialist local title is only available in limited circumstances, with a clear expectation that no more than 40 employees will be eligible at any point in time. This local title is used in those circumstances where the Department determines that there is a requirement for highly specialised skills and expertise to support the delivery of important or critical business applications, projects or services. The following strict eligibility requirements must be met in order to be assigned this local title:

* a degree in ICT from an Australian tertiary institution or a comparable qualification which is appropriate to the duties of the classification;
* qualifications in an associated discipline;
* highly specialised IT skills and expertise that will support the delivery of important or critical business applications, projects or services as determined by the relevant IT Group Manager; and
* holding a level of IT Specialist expertise that is directly relevant to the Department’s requirements.

The local title of IT Specialist sits alongside the current EL1 and Executive Level 2 classifications, ensuring that the Department is able to offer competitive remuneration while maintaining an appropriate management structure.

The introduction of the local title also provides a career pathway for employees who are seeking to remain a specialist, and to build their capabilities and expertise in a specialist area, while at the same time providing flexibility within existing classification structures for the Department to be able to meet critical business needs. Importantly, the arrangements provide transparency for all parties when compared with the approach used more broadly in the public sector of individual flexibility agreements to address ICT sector labour market needs.