

Overview

Classification Broadbands within the ACTPS employment framework are provided for under the terms of relevant Enterprise Agreements. Broadbands are intended to provide benefits to employees and employers in the removal of hard barriers to promotion, greater flexibility for positions to align with business needs, and a means to attract, train and retain suitably qualified employees in specialised roles. However, where applied and managed inconsistently, broadbanded classifications can be detrimental to employees and the integrity of the classification framework.

When determining viability and risk associated with broadbanded classifications in the ACTPS, consideration should be given to:

- Evidence based analysis of the relevant business needs, available funding/positions, and targeted research reflecting the actual duties undertaken, workforce and market circumstances, policy considerations, and/or any other factors relevant to the work performed.
- The type of broadbanding to apply, reflective of relevant work level standard requirements.
- The ability to develop and maintain robust policy, procedures, assessment and guidance materials to support progression through soft barriers – including consideration of the resourcing required to manage effective implementation.
- The intended outcome of broadbanding, and whether workforce data and work value assessment suggest a more appropriate measure may apply.
- The potential impact to the whole of ACTPS Classification Framework, and the relative effectiveness of the ACTPS work value model in providing comparison and consistency across the service.

The current application of broadbanding under the ACTPS Enterprise Agreements demonstrates a varied approach across the service, with relevant provisions often specific to individual Directorates and/or roles outlined in the reference table ([Attachment A](#)). Initial feedback regarding the implementation of provisions suggests a significant disparity across the service regarding competency assessment and management. Additionally, the *2021 ACTPS Classification Review* suggests that broadbanded classifications are not currently effective in providing for intended outcomes, with the average length of employment under a broadbanded classification being equivalent to that of the standard classification levels.

The original ACTPS classification framework was designed to reflect the Australian Public Service (APS) classification model, but it has subsequently evolved over time to suit the unique nature of the ACTPS workforce. Current *Australian Public Service – Classification Guidelines* provide insight into potential measures that can be adopted by the ACTPS to improve the framework for broadband classifications, and address inconsistencies across the service.

In particular, the APS guidelines provide:

- specific definition of broadbands,
- service-wide guidelines for consideration factors and appropriate application,
- a clear requirement for robust implementation strategies and supporting materials, and
- a system for consultation and review on all broadbands proposed through enterprise bargaining to ensure compliance with the APS employment framework.

There is an identified opportunity for the ACTPS to review current broadbanding practices to provide for a whole of government approach. Implementation of recommendations from the 2021 classification review, paired with expansion of the current ACTPS classification framework to include

fit for purpose broadbanding guidelines may improve delivery of intended outcomes, whilst mitigating potential risk to the integrity of the framework as a whole.

Background

History of the ACTPS Classification Framework

The ACTPS classification framework was originally developed in 1988 through the establishment of self-government. The transition accommodated for separation from the Australian Public Service classification framework. Since inception, the ACTPS classification framework has organically shifted over time to involve multiple classification structures/salary spines based on grouping of similar duties. Classifications provided under the ACTPS Employment Framework are designed to reflect the diverse nature of work performed across the service, and to allow flexibility with consideration of Directorate specific business needs, and relative employment conditions.

The Current Framework

The current ACTPS classification framework consists of approximately 60 classification groups across 19 Enterprise Agreements. A classification group may be listed in more than one Enterprise Agreement, though relative salary spines are applied consistently across the Agreements. Changes to the structure and related salary spine of a classification are facilitated through the Enterprise Bargaining process and consultative work value review.

The ACTPS classification framework largely aligns with recognised labour market models such as the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZCO) framework. Review of the ACTPS classification framework conducted in 2021 suggests there is a subset of classifications within the framework, such as the General Services Officer and Technical Officer classifications, that align with organisation-based requirements as a 'catch-all' classification structure. These classification structures/salary spines contain more than one discrete occupational group within the classification.

Additionally, the ACTPS classification framework has been designed with consideration of the diverse nature of work performed across the service, and the relative value of this work as compared to all roles within the service. To accommodate for these factors, the ACTPS has developed a principle-based work value model, with a focus on four key features:

- Responsibility and accountability
- Social nature of work
- Physical nature of work
- Cognitive nature of work

Each key feature comprises several evaluation factors to provide a wholistic assessment of the complexity of individual duties, and the environment in which the duties are performed.

Classification structures within the ACTPS framework adhere to this model by providing high level, evidence-based Work Level Standards for each classification level, with salary spines determined by Work Value Assessments and market value comparison. The *draft ACTPS classifications framework review report 2021* provides for whole of government guidance materials on the best practice application of these measures.

Work Level Standards

Work Level Standards (WLS) capture the way in which tasks, responsibilities, skills, and experience differ within a classification structure. The standards are designed to provide for common language and a clear distinction of the knowledge and performance expectations associated with each level provided in the structure, and subsequent remuneration as applied.

Application of a classification to a position or group of positions requires assessment of these factors in line with the specific duties, nature and expectations of the required role. For WLS assessments to be successful, classification standards should be routinely reviewed to ensure they remain fit for purpose, are reflective of the true nature of work performed, and are comparable to general labour market standards.

A WLS assessment tool was developed as part of the 2021 classification review and is available as guidance material on the ACT Government employment portal, along with the current classification descriptors (Work Level Standards).

Work Value Assessment

A work value assessment (WVA) is the method for assessing the work value of a role relative to other similar roles within the ACTPS. A WVA is undertaken by assessing the nature, impact and accountabilities of the role. Assessment involves objectively evaluating a role based on information and evidence gathering and mapping against the ACTPS work evaluation framework features.

It is important to note that a WVA is not:

- An assessment of a staff member currently performing the role.
- A performance management system.
- A measure of workload.
- A system for determining the number of jobs in an organisation.
- A system for measuring market forces (i.e., supply and demand factors).

A Work Value Assessment tool was developed as part of the 2021 classification review and is available as guidance material on the ACT Government employment portal.

Market Value Assessment

Market Value Assessment is key to understanding the comparative value of an ACTPS role in the context of remuneration in the wider labour market. A market value assessment informs review of applicable salary spines for a classification group.

The ACTPS uses a range of data sources to inform market value, including industry group databases such as MERCER, and national labour market data based on the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census - remuneration data mapped to the ANZSCO framework and geographical location.

The process to assign a classification to position(s) refers to all three assessment measures as needed and is conducted primarily at the Directorate level, with provision for review of assigned classifications outlined in the Common Core terms of the Agreements. Change to the broader classification structure is undertaken through Enterprise Bargaining and is supported by the Office of Industrial Relations and Workforce Strategy.

Broadband Classifications

Definition

The *Public Service Classification Rules 2000, rule 9(4)*, provides for the allocation of more than one classification to a group of duties (broadband), where the group of duties to be performed in an Agency involves work value applying to more than one classification.

The *Australian Public Service – Classification Guide*, published by the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC), expands on this definition as ‘the option to group together narrowly defined work into a broader group of duties... Where two or more classifications are combined into a single broader group of duties (a band) to meet the needs of a particular agency.’

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, an agency may choose to broadband those classifications.

To note - the option to apply broadband(s) in the ACTPS Classification Framework is subject to the inclusion of relevant provisions under the applicable ACTPS Enterprise Agreement.

Duties and/or positions to be grouped for the purpose of broadbanding should be determined:

- having regard to the overall nature of 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.

Types

The broadbanding of classifications can be varied by 'type' to suit the complexity of work level standards and work value represented within the band. Types of broadbands include:

- **Job families** - Identification of a particular type of work that spans two or more classification levels. This more traditional broadbanding approach focuses on particular groups of roles within a classification structure. The broadbanding of job families may or may not include assessment criteria to advance between classification levels.
To note - ACTPS classification structures could be considered a 'job family' for this purpose. Where this definition applies to a classification structure/salary spine, the more appropriate measure may be to collapse the structure into fewer levels/pay points to reflect the true nature and value of the relevant duties.
- **Specialised broadbands** - Provides 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, qualifications and/or work availability. Specialist broadbands include a 'soft barrier' for progression within the broadband subject to eligibility. Assessment provisions should be clearly identified so that employees understand and have certainty regarding the eligibility conditions for progression.
- **Directorate/Business unit broadbands** – Grouping of classification levels within a specific Directorate/business unit. This broadband method is best suited to smaller units where similar duties are undertaken in all positions. This approach could also be applied at the Directorate level within a specific classification structure. However, Directorate/business unit broadbands would not be appropriate where the work performed encompasses a variety of duties and/or includes roles that require a range of specialist skills/qualifications.

Broadbands should be implemented and periodically reviewed with consideration of the relative Work Level Standards. When determining the appropriate 'type' of broadbanding to apply, the standard requirements under skills, experience and qualifications for each level in the band will likely indicate the appropriate provisions and assessment criteria required for incremental progression.

Benefits

Implementation of broadband classifications can support a range of organisational objectives and employee benefits, including:

- Increased flexibility in assigning duties to a role/ alignment of functional operations within existing classification structures.
- Removal of artificial barriers to progression/increased staff mobility.
- Opportunity for recognition and reward through upskilling/multi-skilling initiatives.

- Reduction of business costs associated with merit and selection processes.
- Improved attraction and retention outcomes.

Considerations

Broadbanded classifications can have significant impact on a wide range of employment and business matters. As such, consideration should be given to the intended outcomes and potential consequences of broadbanding prior to implementation.

Potential costs:

- Increase to ongoing salary costs where employees advance to higher classifications.
- Additional resourcing costs associated with the ongoing education and training of staff on effective broadband management principles.

Risk considerations:

- Increased risk of underemployment and/or underperformance where the framework and assessment measures for progression are lacking or incorrectly managed;
 - Where an employee is suitably qualified but is unable to progress through the soft barrier due to lack of adequate assessment measures.
 - Where progression for suitably qualified employees is significantly impacted by a lack of funding and/or reduction in business needs at the higher level(s).
 - Where employees who lack the necessary skills and proficiencies to perform more complex duties advance through barriers without adequate assessment.
 - Where employees at the lower level(s) are not provided with the appropriate training and/or development opportunities to meet the requisites for progression through soft barriers.
- Potential for unclear distinction, in practice, of the duties and performance expectations between classification levels in the same band.
- Potential for disparity over time between the work value of the banded duties as compared with the work value of duties performed under the individual classification levels.
- Reduced application of the merit and equity principle as provided by the *Public Sector Management Act*.
- The long-term impact of broadbanding where more appropriate interventions may apply, such as:
 - Reclassification to an existing level/structure.
 - Expanding or collapsing classifications within the existing salary spine.
 - Provision of a new classification structure.
 - Review of position description(s) and/or relevant work level standards to reflect the true nature of the role(s)
 - Higher Duties Allowance and/or other ACTPS attraction and retention initiatives.
- The consequence of risk factors to the overall integrity of the ACTPS Classification Framework in reviewing comparative work value across the service.

ACTPS - Broadbanding in Practice

Attachment A – Broadband reference table

Questions

- Can the APS principles and guidelines be adapted to reflect the needs of the ACTPS workforce?
- Where do Work Level Standards provide for reclass/restructure vs broadbanding?
- What are the key components of ‘duties’ vs ‘work value?’ How does the current ACTPS Framework reflect these factors?
- Is there benefit to providing Whole of Government policy/guidelines for implementation and management of broadbanding within Directorates/Agreements?
- How can OIRWS support bargaining negotiations and governance related to broadbanding across the Agreements (incl. consistency and integrity of work value model)?
- Should broadbanding practices consider other ACTPS employment frameworks (i.e. the Capability Framework)?
- Is current ACTPS broadbanding effective for intended purposes?

Materials Referenced

Public Service Classification Rules 2000

Australian Public Service - Classification Guide 2013

ACTPS Classification Review Report 2021

ACTPS Employment Framework – Enterprise Agreements