



**Allied Health Assistant Implementation Project
Grampians/Pyrenees Cluster**

Allied Health Assistant Position Descriptors

November 2014

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Background

The purpose of this document is provide a resource for health services that are writing a position description for a new or extended multidisciplinary Grade 2 Allied Health Assistant (AHA) role. The document provides a range of descriptive statements that health services can adopt, modify or extend in order to develop the selection criteria that best meets the needs of the organisation.

The need for this resource was identified as part of the Grampians Pyrenees cluster AHA implementation project strategic allied health workforce strategic plan (Richie 2013a).

Method

The statements were collated from position descriptions for Grade 2 AHA vacancies advertised by Victorian health services in March or September 2014. Of the 16 positions descriptions reviewed:

- Ten were for Grade 2 AHAs, another 4 had the capacity to be a Grade 2 position depending on the education and experience of the applicant
- Half of the vacancies were in regional Victoria
- Half were for multidisciplinary positions and required the AHA to work within a multidisciplinary team, and three positions worked with two allied health disciplines

Purpose

The document is not designed to be used as a template for an AHA position description, rather it is a resource that health services can use when developing a position description. One of the trends noted in the review of position descriptions is the format and terminology vary significantly between health services.

Nor is the document designed to articulate the competencies expected of a Grade 2 AHA, this information can found in the supervision and delegation document produced by the Department of Health (2012).

The document has two main selections that are frequently under the heading of selection criteria:

- Essential or desired criteria, and
- Key duties and responsibilities

There is some overlap between the two sections, however the second section typically provides a broader range of criteria and areas of work.

It is suggested that descriptors provided in this document are used by health service to generate discussion with the allied health and other primary health professionals about what the proposed AHA role should encompass and how it can best meet the needs and goals of the department or/and the organisation.

Essential/Desired Criteria

Current Drivers licence

Current first aid certificate

Satisfactory National Criminal History Record Check prior to commencement of employment

Satisfactory Working with Children Check prior to commencement of employment

Qualifications

Fourteen of the 16 position descriptions reviewed required applicants to have a Certificate II or IV in Allied Health Assistance (or equivalent).

Education entry requirement for Allied Health Assistants

- No formal qualifications are required for a Grade 1 AHA.
- Completion of Certificate III in Allied Health Assistance automatically progresses a Grade 1 AHA to a Grade 2 AHA position
- The entry level to a Grade 3 AHA position is Certificate IV Allied Health Assistance, however the completion of Certificate IV in Allied Health Assistance does not automatically progress a Grade 2 AHA to Grade 3.
- Employers have the responsibility of determining whether a position is classified as a Grade 3 AHA role and the candidate would be expected to have additional relevant experience

Source: Department of Health 2012

One of the health services indicated that they were willing to consider applicants who were currently working towards a Certificate II or IV in Allied Health Assistance (or equivalent).

Interpersonal skills

Behavioural qualities that reflect organisational guidelines

Ability to work within guidelines and demonstrate initiative

Ability to adapt and to be flexible

Demonstrated ability to work under instruction with minimal supervision within a multidisciplinary team

Excellent communication, organisation and investigative skills with an ability to interact and deal with people

Capacity to work independently and autonomously, and yet facilitate a collaborative culture

Communication

Well-developed interpersonal and verbal communication skills

Excellent communication skills (verbal and written), collaboration and problem solving

Team work

Proven ability to work in a team

Professionalism

Demonstrated commitment to continuing professional development

Well-developed organisational and time management skills

Proven organisational skills with an ability to prioritise and manage a diverse workload

Adhere to organisational policies, guidelines and work instructions

Reliable and ability to display initiative and willing to recognise and perform associated tasks

Perform effectively in a demanding environment

Is resourceful and takes initiative and decision making responsibilities where appropriate, and delegates back to the allied health professional as necessary

Specific skills/experience

Experience in exercise prescription and group leadership and facilitation

Knowledge of relevant community resources

Understanding of primary care and community support services

Involvement in clinical research/ publications/presentations

Computer skills

The majority of position description included computer skills as an essential or preferred skill set, however the expected skill level varied from basic to advanced levels. As shown in Fig. 1, half of the position descriptions required (or preferred) applicants to have well developed/advanced computer skills.

Twenty-nine percent of health services expected applicants to be competent/computer literate and 7% require the applicant to have basic computer and/or data entry skills.

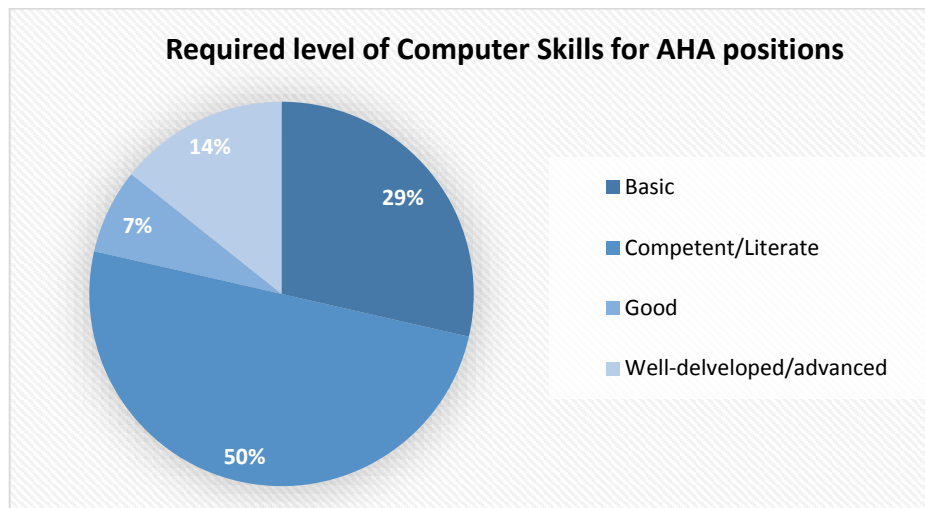


Figure 1: Variation in computer skill level for AHAs

Examples of computer skill descriptors:

Computer literacy at basic entry data level

Demonstrated ability to use a variety of computer applications and a willingness to learn specific programs

Computer skills including the ability to use word and excel programs

Well-developed computer skills

Prior experience

Experience working in a multi-disciplinary team environment with an ability to provide discipline specific assistance to client program

Experience working in health or rehabilitation setting

Experience of working with a *specified* population/client group (aged care, disability

Key Duties and Responsibilities

Key duties and responsibilities include the skills, knowledge and responsibilities that the successful applicant will be expected to use (or develop).

The terminology and format used for this component of the position descriptions reviewed varied significantly. Terminology included *specific responsibilities & duties, key activities/performance indicators, key tasks & responsibilities, key accountabilities, key result areas, major duties*.

The purpose of this selection is offer a range of statements that can be used/modified to:

1. Outline the essential elements of the position, and
2. Provide a reliable standard that applicants can be considered against.

As previously stated, it important to note that there is no expectation that all of the statements provided will be used as a multidisciplinary AHA position. It is the responsibility of the health service to develop an AHA role that reflects the needs and goals of the service.

The categories and ordering in this section have been determined by the trends in the position descriptions reviewed and the categories used in the AHA Implementation project (Richie 2013b).

The three main categories of key duties and responsibilities are communication and interpersonal skills, clinical tasks and non-clinical tasks.

The Department of Human Resources at Melbourne University (2012) and Robert Half (2014) suggest that tasks and responsibilities should be prioritised and listed from the most important to the least.

Again, it is the responsibility of the health service to determine the ordering and prioritisation of duties and responsibilities when developing a genetic AHA position description.

Communication & Interpersonal Skills

Communication

Demonstrated ability to communicate well with a wide range of people, demonstrating sound verbal and written communication skills and interpersonal skills.

Well-developed verbal and communication skills

Communicate effectively with clients and their carers, professional colleagues, the health care team and external providers

Interpersonal skills

Helpful and professional manner

A commitment to customer service and an ability to maintain patient confidentiality.

Demonstrated attributes of empathy and client-centred focus.

Demonstrated understanding of cultural diversity

Sensitive to cultural, race and gender differences

Maintain a culturally sensitive approach to the planning, delivery, and evaluation of services and programs to ensure they are appropriate and relevant to all culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) groups in the local community

Sensitive to the psychosocial implications of illness

Ability to cope with challenging behaviour and skills in conflict resolution

Consult with supervising allied health professional when dealing with difficult situations

Team work

Attend and participate at relevant team meetings in relation to patient care

Demonstrated capacity to work independently as well as part of a team

Communicate effectively with other team members

Experience of working effectively within a team and demonstrated ability to work independently.

Contribute to a culture that promotes effective teamwork, encourages cohesion and ensure staff feel valued are acknowledged.

Work with clients and liaise with other members of the work team to facilitate client management, safe program delivery and service coordination

Work as a member of the health care team, promoting and maintaining a professional relationship with all staff with the goal of optimising client outcomes across the care continuum

Assist in the orientation and support of new team members

Provides mentoring to other AHAs/students/volunteers as directed by the allied health professional

Community & partnerships

Have a clear understanding of the service, the allied health professional role and the allied health assistant role within the service

Participate in relevant working groups and meetings as required

Knowledge of relevant community resources

Liaises with other programs in the organisation in order to facilitate seamlessness healthcare for clients

The AHA may require liaison with various external and community agencies, examples may include community groups, equipment suppliers, other health services and funding bodies

To participate in AHA network professional development meetings

Develop and maintain networks with local, regional and state-wide AHA services and associated agencies

Professional development & supervision

Actively participate in regular clinical supervision, demonstrating ongoing development of clinical skills and reflective practice as identified in supervision plan

Participate in personal annual performance development planning and reviews to identify learning and development needs and progress towards achievement

Participate in relevant professional development and continuing education activities

Comply with the organisations mandatory continuing professional development requirements

Maintain personal responsibility for professional development

Clinical Tasks

Assessment & intake

Assist with intake for allied health services. This may include use of triage tools, client screening, initial needs identification, risk assessment, coordination of referrals, referral acknowledgement and scheduling of appointments

Preparation & set-up

Set-up, organise or deliver equipment to meet clients individual treatment, group program or home safety needs

Set up and organise equipment for client treatment and ensure the equipment is safe and well maintained

Prepare for patient intervention and provide assistance with therapy session under the direction of the supervising health professional

Collaborate with relevant health professionals to undertake high quality care planning and service provision for clients

Implement & monitor treatment programs

Demonstrated ability to work under instruction with minimal supervision

Implement therapy as directed in group and individual settings

Experience in implementing and monitoring treatment programs for individuals and groups under the direction of health professional staff.

Follow all individual and/or group program goals in conjunction with the client(s) as documented by the health professional

Provide clinically appropriate person centred care therapies and administrative support including the supervision and monitoring of individual client programs as directed by the primary care practitioner, discharge and care planning

Perform evidence based clinical services using a person centred approach under the direction of the supervising health professional

Provide all client care in cooperation and liaison with appropriate members of the multidisciplinary team involved in the care of the client; and communicate client status, progress and any other changes in a timely manner to the responsible primary care partitioner

Assist with the planning, delivery, and evaluation of group sessions within rehabilitation groups, integrated chronic disease management and health promotion programs

Work independently within a multidisciplinary team and within available resources and timeframes

Participate in the chronic disease management program as required

Leading and supervising various groups

Identify & respond to issues/concerns

Implement tasks as directed by other health professionals and to provide effective feedback on these tasks as required

Respond where issue are within their level of responsibility or able to raise issues with their supervising health professional

Report immediately any changes in client status (or lack of progress) to the supervising health professional

Flag issues and need for reviews with other members of the multidisciplinary team to ensure individual client goals and objectives are met in a timely manner

Resources/equipment management

- Demonstrate knowledge of resources relevant to work area
- Issuing mobility aids for clients as prescribed by relevant health professionals
- Maintains, cleans and monitors resources/equipment as required, including ordering stock and preparing environments
- Overseeing the sterilisation process for instruments within the podiatry department
- Stock maintenance including role as key liaison for external equipment hire
- Ordering and purchasing relevant consumables and equipment for client care

Safety (OH&S)

- Follow organisational safety, quality and risk policies and guidelines
- Demonstrate a knowledge of health and safety issues as they relate to clinical practice
- Maintain a safe working environment for yourself, your colleagues and members of the public
- Work practices and conduct are performed in a manner that will not endanger anyone
- Correctly use any information, training, personal protective equipment and safety equipment provided by the organisation
- Ensure the your knowledge and application of infection control and hygiene precautions are in accordance with infection control and procedures
- Minimise exposure to incidents of infection/cross infection of patients, residents, staff, visitors and the general public by adhering to the organisation's infection control policies and procedures
- Ensure occupational health and safety guidelines and home visiting procedures including risk assessment are adhered to and that steps are taken to ensure personal safety for self and others in performance of any duties
- Unsafe work practices, hazards, near miss incidents and accidents are reported to management
- Ensure any risks and adverse events are reported appropriately and promptly and prevention strategies are implemented to ensure safety of all patients and consumers
- Maintain an understanding of individual responsibility for patient safety, quality and risk, and contribute to organisation quality and safety issues

Non-clinical Tasks

Organisational skills

Demonstrated organisational skills, including an ability to plan, set and prioritise competing workloads with tight deadlines.

Demonstrate time management capabilities and experience in managing a caseload.

Demonstrate organisational skills and efficient time management to appropriately prioritise and complete workload

Proven organisation skills with an ability to prioritise and manage a diverse workload

Administration

Assist allied health professionals with administrative tasks or other duties related to program planning and service delivery

Complete indirect clinical tasks as specified by the supervising health professionals. For example, client related phone calls, the modification of equipment and the manufacture of communication boards.

Perform general clerical duties such as typing, photocopying, and ordering of administrative stock

To assist supervising health professionals in the development and review of resource and education material to support client education

Document and collect service fees as required

Undertake receipting of patient monies

Answer telephone calls in a professional manner

Information management

Maintain documentation of all client information in the appropriate medical records

Ensure client contact and service liaison information is maintained in accordance with the privacy information

To ensure that all client related information is accurate and completed in a timely manner, and is maintained and filed in line with the health services medical record management requirements

Ensuring confidential client records are kept in accordance with relevant information

Ensure timely management and maintenance of all aspects of patient records including filing of reports and identifying and labelling of contents of the unit record

Computer use

Computer literacy at basic entry data level

Well-developed computer skills

Demonstrated ability to use a variety of computer applications and a willingness to learn specific programs

Computer skills including the ability to use word and excel programs

Quality & risk

An understanding of and commitment to the organisation's values

Aim to provide a positive experience for each patient, client, resident and customer every time

Utilise the principles of patient centred care as a guide to provide a positive experience each and every time

Demonstrate ethical work practice and knowledge of the legal requirements of care

Effective and ethical practice in accordance with professional standards and values within organisation systems and constraints

To adhere to clinical policies and procedures relevant to health professional practice in acute, sub-acute and community areas including physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech pathology, dietetics and nursing services. Nursing supervision is relevant to community programs.

Demonstrated ability to consistently display commitment to, compliance with and leadership in high quality Customer Service, Equity and Diversity, Occupational Health & Safety and Industrial Democracy principles, practices and relevant legislation relating to these areas

Demonstrated understanding of quality practice and service innovation

Maintain current knowledge of service specific guidelines and performance targets and incorporating these into work practice

Committed to continuous quality improvement

Monitoring, reviewing and updating work practices and protocols within own workload and areas of responsibility

Willing to participate in the development of innovative models of care

Contributing to the implementation of relevant health promotion strategies and programs

Contributing to the development and implementation of relevant policies, guidelines and work instructions to promote excellence in the provision of services and health promotion

Actively participates in learning of new skills, ideas and techniques in a range of settings, including skills that will strengthen the organisation

To actively participate in the development, implementation and monitoring of service delivery and quality improvement activities being conducted in acute, subacute and community areas

Always escalate any issues you identify regarding customer experience or safety and risk to an appropriate staff member, if unable to rectify yourself

Identifying opportunities for improving service delivery and reporting these to the Team Leader/Manager

Shows initiative in identifying workplace problems and participates in development of practical solutions within collaboration with the allied health professional

To participate/assist in program evaluation, research reviews of systems and processed or audits as required

Efficiency & sustainability

Contribute to the responsible use and management of resources and equipment

Identify and communicate to your manager potential sources of waste minimisation within the department/unit

Ensure workload statistics and other required information is entered in a timely and accurate manner

Maintains minimum data requirements to effectively monitor and evaluate services

References

Department of Health, 2012, *Supervision and delegation framework for allied health assistants*, State Government of Victoria, Melbourne.

Department of Human Resources 2012, *Preparing a position description*, The University of Melbourne, accessed 26 November 2014 at <https://hr.unimelb.edu.au/advice/toolkits/recruitment/pd>.

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