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DATA QUALITY GUIDELINES

Workforce Profile Collection

June 2021

NSW GOVERNMENT | Public Service Commission

Contents

Overview

These guidelines are for the information and use of Submitters and Approvers of the Workforce Profile Data Collections.

Data Items that are required for PSC standard reporting are expected to have high levels of integrity. Details of these key data items, why they are collected and the issues that arise due to incorrectly coded data are detailed in this document. Suggestions on how to mitigate the risk of poor-quality data in agency returns are also provided and should be considered when generating submissions.

For further information or assistance please call or email Workforce Information.

Telephone: (02) 9272 6123

Email: psc_datacollection@psc.nsw.gov.au

1. Postcodes

What is collected?

- Work location (data item 1d) – the location of the employee's current workplace.
- Home location (data item 1e) – the location of the employee's current home address.

Why is it collected?

The NSW Government is interested in work location distribution of public sector employees.

Of particular interest to government is an analysis of regional vs metropolitan distribution of public sector resources and the ratio of public sector employees to the population. This analysis assists government in planning the location and distribution of its services.

Home location postcode is used to analyse the distance public sector employees commute to work which in turn assists government when planning new offices and/or relocation of existing offices/services.

Issues

- Work location is sometimes reported as agency head office location or payroll centre. This then results in a distorted picture of location of resources and may lead to planning based on incorrect information. It is therefore very important to provide the actual work location. Where the employee must necessarily travel between various locations, e.g. a district nurse, then it is appropriate to provide the postcode of the office where they are based, i.e. the office to which they are assigned in the organisational structure.
- Home location is the postcode of the employee's actual home location. Actual address details are not collected. For various reasons, some employees provide a post box location as their home address. Whist this is an acceptable address for personnel records, a post box postcode will normally return an error when submitting the workforce profile.
- The work and home location of separated employees will be the last know location and residence of the employee so it is important that any moves should be updated in the HR system.

2. Diversity

What is collected?

Responses from agency diversity surveys:

- Aboriginal person or Torres Strait Islander (data item 2a)
- Person with a Disability (data item 2b)
- Person from a Racial, Ethnic or Ethno-Religious minority group (data item 2c)
- Language first spoken as a child (data item 2d)

Why is it collected?

Used for statutory diversity reporting and annual reports. Data is used to assist in workforce diversity initiatives. Integrating workforce diversity objectives, strategies and programs into workforce planning ensures that a direct link between business needs and the benefits of a diverse workforce is established and maintained.

Issues

- Identification with the listed diversity items is through voluntary agency level surveys when an employee commences employment with an agency. Even when an employee answers the diversity survey questions, they have a right to ask that their data be withheld from the Workforce Profile collections. If an agency does not actively encourage employees to complete the survey or where the survey does not ask employees to specifically respond as 'not a member' of any of the groups or 'do not wish to answer' the survey, that employee record will be classified as missing for diversity reporting purpose. This can result in a low response rate within the agency.
- Due to relatively low response rates over the years, diversity statistics have been reported as estimated figures which can distort the real picture throughout the sector and within agencies. Estimated figures may disproportionately elevate or lower the actual figures depending on the size of the agency and the actual number of responses. From June 2014, estimated figures are only generated for agencies with response rates greater than 65%.
- Agencies are asked to actively encourage their employees to complete the diversity survey. The survey should include an option to allow the employee to say they do not wish to complete the survey if they so choose.

3. Position code

What is collected?

Data item 3l. This seven-digit code describes the nature and purpose of work performed in the public sector and their customers and is the code that has been assigned to the position/role the employee occupies as at the census date.

Why is it collected?

Analysis of data using this code enables government to monitor changes in resource allocation in the public sector and support key corporate services reform strategies, in particular the shared corporate services strategy. It also provides valuable information for workforce and strategic planning at both agency and whole of sector level.

Components of this code are used to determine frontline/non-frontline resources. Frontline positions are identified where the type of duty is service delivery and the position customer is external. It should be noted that this gives an indicative number only but is currently the simplest method of determining frontline/non-frontline resources consistently across the public sector.

Issues

- Position code should be based on the position/role, not on the job title or the individual person occupying the position.
- Careful consideration is to be taken when distinguishing between managers, line supervisors and professionals.

4. Occupation code

What is collected?

ANZSCO (data item 3m) – classification of occupations according to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classifications of Occupations

Why is it collected?

ANZSCO enables the monitoring of changes in the occupational profile of the public sector and allows comparative profiling with other sectors and the labour market.

Issues

- ANZSCO code should be based on the position/role, not the job title or the individual person occupying the position.
- Careful consideration is to be taken when coding managers. The word 'manager' in a job title does not always mean the position manages people and/or resources. The manager codes are only to be used for higher level management positions that carry out their role at a corporate and/or whole functional area level.
- Grade alone does not signify a management position and line supervisors should not be confused with managers.
- Senior/executive positions may be managers or may be more appropriately coded within a specific professional group.
- Positions with the title of 'Executive Officer' can have a very wide range of salary grades and roles from provision of high-level support and advice to senior executives to provision of secretarial or administrative support to individuals or groups. It is essential to look beyond the job title and look at the tasks performed by the position.

5. Leave categories

What is collected?

- Recreation leave accrued and taken (data items 5a and 5b)
- Sick leave accrued and taken (data items 5c, 5d, 5e and 5f)
- Extended leave accrued and taken (data items 5g, 5h and 5i)
- Parental leave taken (data items 5j, 5k and 5l)
- Family & Community Services (FACS) leave taken (data item 5m)
- Special Leave taken (data item 5q)
- Domestic and Family Violence Leave Taken During the Reference Period (Data item 5r)

Why is it collected?

Leave accruals and usage are used by government to calculate average employee availability, liabilities for budgeting purposes and to analyse trends within agencies.

Analysis of usage of sick leave can also be used as an indication of morale and/or general health of specific segments of the workforce.

Availability and/or usage of leave types can also be used for analysing changes in policies.

Average leave taken per FTE (cluster level) and 5-year trend (sector level) is reported in the annual Workforce Profile reports. These reports are publicly available on the PSC website.

Issues

- Employees whose conditions of employment provide for leave but did not accrue and/or take leave during the reference period should be coded ‘0’ (numeric value).
- Employees whose conditions of employment do not provide for leave should be coded ‘-8888’ (not applicable).
- Assigning ‘0’ against employees who are not eligible for leave, then that employee is included in the population of employees used to calculate leave rates. ‘0’ is a positive numeric value and will be included in the total number of hours leave taken. If the number of records incorrectly coded is sufficiently high, it can significantly impact the calculation of average leave hours taken per FTE at an agency and/or sector level.
- Alternatively, assigning ‘-8888’ against employees who are eligible for leave but may or may not have taken leave, this record will be excluded from the population used to calculate leave rates.

The important things to remember are:

1. Assign the correct codes or values
2. If eligible for leave then leave accrued/taken must be a positive numeric value in the relevant data item.

Note: there are some circumstances where leave accrued/taken will have a legitimate negative numeric value. These circumstances are usually agency/award specific. Whatever the reason, an explanation is required at sign-off (approval) stage.

6. Overtime

What is collected?

- Overtime hours (data item 3f)
- Actual earnings overtime payments (data item 4g)

Why is it collected?

This is an indicator of additional employee workload and is used to analyse the proportion of total gross earnings that is made up of overtime payments. It assists with workforce and budget planning at agency, cluster, and sector level.

Issues

- Some agency returns indicate ‘0’ overtime hours but have a $ value for overtime earning or vice versa. Occasionally this is a legitimate combination, e.g., hours worked may occur in one reference period but not paid until the next reference period. However, this is an exception rather than the rule.
- Calculating the average overtime hours per FTE and/or headcount relies on the using the correct population, i.e. those employees whose employment conditions provide for paid overtime. It is important to distinguish those employees who are entitled to overtime but did not work hours from those employees whose employment conditions do not entitle them to work paid overtime, e.g. senior executives, or casuals.
    - ‘0’ means entitled to paid overtime but no hours were worked and no $ paid.
    - -8888 means not entitled to work paid overtime.

7. Movement Type

What is collected?

The employee's most recent movement during the reference period (data item 6c)

Why is it collected?

It identifies employees as 'ongoing', 'recently commenced' or 'separated'. Analysis of this data is used for development of retention and recruitment strategies and for workforce planning purposes at agency, cluster, and sector levels. It is also used as an indicator of mobility across the sector.

Issues

- A very high proportion of responses use 'other/unknown reason' for recently commenced employees. Meaningful analysis of whether new employees commence from within or outside the public sector is therefore challenging.
- Approximately 71% of all recently commenced employees in the sector are reported as 'Other/unknown reason for commencement from within/outside the NSW public sector.

8. Employment Category and Senior Executives

What is collected?

The nature of the employee's employment contract with the agency (data item 3g)

Why is it collected?

It provides an indication of the flexibility and structure of the NSW Public Sector. This information is essential for workforce information and planning.

Issues

Incorrect use of codes for senior executive employees.

- Any executive in a public service agency should be a Public Service Senior Executive and use code '18' in Employment Category.
- Executives from Transport, Health and Police are considered as Aligned Executive Service and should fall under code '19' in Employment Category. Note that NSW Police executives are still in the process of transition to GSELA Act 2016, and for those executives yet to transition, code '16' should be used.
- All executives who are not Public Service or Aligned Service will fall under code '12' – Senior Executives not in Public Service or Aligned Executive Service.
- All department secretaries are employed under the GSE Act and are considered as Public Service Senior Executives, therefore should use code '18'.
- Public Office Holders are not considered to be senior executives and for employment category should be coded as Statutory Appointees or tipstaves and use code '15'.

9. Contract Start Date and Contract end Date

What is collected

The employees contract start date for their current role (data item 6h) and the employees contract end date, if they are on a term contract (data item 6i).

Why is it collected?

It allows the identification of term employment versus ongoing employment and provides the ability to analyse the length of assignment to a role.

Issues

- If an employee is on a contract and in one of the following employment categories, then they should have a valid contract start date;
    - Category 5 – Contract Non-Executive
    - Category 12 - Contract - senior executives not in Public Service senior executive or Aligned Executive Service (NSW Health, NSW Police and Transport NSW)
    - Category 16 – Special Executive Service (NSW Health, NSW Police and Transport NSW)
    - Category 18 – Contract-Public Service senior executives
    - Category 19 – Contract-Aligned Executive Service ((NSW Health, NSW Police and Transport NSW)
    - Category 20 – Transport Service Senior Manager (Transport NSW only)
- This data item previously applied to only senior executives, but from 2019 onwards applies to all contract employees.
- If an employee has an ongoing contract, then data item 6i – Contract End Date should show Not Applicable (-8888)
- If the employee has a contract end date, then a valid date should be shown in data item 6i – Contract End Date

10. Who is included in the collection?

All employees employed at the agency at any time during the reference period should be included in the collection.

Who should be included?

- ✓ All ongoing staff, including ongoing statutory appointees
- ✓ All temporary staff, except temporary staff provided by employment agencies
- ✓ All casual staff who undertook paid work at some time during the reference period
- ✓ Staff on secondment (to and from the agency). The seconded employee's home agency should report the employee if it pays 51% or more of their employment-related costs. The receiving agency should report the employee if it pays 51% or more of their employee-related costs
- ✓ Apprentices, trainees and cadets
- ✓ Staff on leave (paid or unpaid)
- ✓ Retained staff
- ✓ Departmental Liaison Officers who are current employees of an agency and are based within a Minister's Office and paid through the agency's payroll

Who should NOT be included?

- ✗ Members of boards and committees
- ✗ Casual staff who did not undertake paid work at any time during the reference period
- ✗ Temporary staff supplied by an employment agency on a fee for services basis (also known as contingent labour). This data is collected separately.
- ✗ Contractors and consultants engaged on a fee for service basis including Visiting Medical Officers, etc
- ✗ Volunteers
- ✗ People on work experience
- ✗ Staff who separated from the agency prior to the annual reference period even if they received a payment during the reference period
- ✗ Ministers' personal staff

11. Issues

Zero FTE's

Agencies have been including records where there is a value of zero in both census period and reference period FTE for casual employees. Where there are zero's in both of these cases and there are no hours recorded for the casual employee during the reference period in data item 3e, then these records should not be included in the upload file.

Leaving these records in can result in an overstated headcount in cases where data item 3h – Census Date Status, is recorded with 1.

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Level 4, 255 George Street
Sydney NSW 2000

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