



**Australian Government**

**Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations**

# **PSPGOV508A Manage conflict**

**Revision Number: 3**

## PSPGOV508A Manage conflict

### Modification History

Release	TP Version	Comments
3	PSP12V1	Unit descriptor edited.
2	PSP04V4.2	Layout adjusted. No changes to content.
1	PSP04V4.1	Primary release.

### Unit Descriptor

This unit covers the requirements for managing conflict in the workplace. It includes identifying and assessing conflict situations, implementing strategies to resolve conflict and monitoring the situation. It does not include formal negotiation, counselling or conducting mediation.

In practice, managing conflict may overlap with other generalist or specialist public sector work activities such as acting ethically, complying with legislation, providing leadership, facilitating change, negotiating, maintaining workplace safety, coordinating employment relations, etc.

This is one of 4 units of competency in the *Working in Government and Human Resource Management* Competency Fields that deal with conflict. Related units are:

- PSPGOV314A Contribute to conflict management
- PSPGOV411A Deal with conflict
- PSPHR603B Provide advisory and mediation services
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- No licensing, legislative, regulatory or certification requirements apply to this unit at the time of publication

### Application of the Unit

Not applicable.

### Licensing/Regulatory Information

Not applicable.

## Pre-Requisites

Not applicable.

## Employability Skills Information

This unit contains employability skills.

## Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

Elements are the essential outcomes of the unit of competency. Together, performance criteria specify the requirements for competent performance. Text in *bold italics* is explained in the Range Statement following.

## Elements and Performance Criteria

ELEMENT	PERFORMANCE CRITERIA
1. <b>Identify and assess conflict situations</b>	1.1 Signs, stages and possible <i>causes of conflict</i> are identified and anticipated. 1.2 Factors and issues relevant to <i>conflict</i> are clarified. 1.3 Possible resolutions and/or compromises are explored using appropriate <i>communication techniques</i> . 1.4 Responses are evaluated against workplace requirements, <i>legislation, policies and procedures</i> . 1.5 <i>Resolution strategies</i> are developed that identify the timeframes involved and the form of reporting to be used.
2. <b>Implement strategies to resolve conflict</b>	2.1 The strategy for resolution is selected to take account of <i>social and cultural differences</i> and is consistent with legislation, organisational policies and procedures. 2.2 Situations requiring assistance are identified and <i>support</i> is sought as required, according to organisational policy and procedures. 2.3 <i>Strategies</i> to address conflict are implemented promptly in accordance with legislation, policy and procedures. 2.4 Records and reports are maintained in accordance with legislation, policy and procedures.
3. <b>Monitor conflict situations</b>	3.1 Effectiveness of the resolution strategies is evaluated. 3.2 Resolution methodology is monitored and remedial actions are initiated as required. 3.3 Lessons learnt are recorded and used to improve service delivery, organisational policy and procedures as required.

## Required Skills and Knowledge

This section describes the essential skills and knowledge and their level, required for this unit.

### Skill requirements

Look for evidence that confirms skills in:

- communicating with a diverse workforce and client base including use of assertiveness, active listening, non-verbal communication, appropriate language styles, teamwork
- using problem solving to deal with unexpected issues or attitudes
- dealing with difficult situations and people
- questioning, negotiating and problem solving
- mediation and counselling in the context of conflict management
- responding to diversity, including gender and disability
- applying procedures relating to occupational health and safety and environment in the context of conflict resolution

### Knowledge requirements

Look for evidence that confirms knowledge and understanding of:

- legislation, regulations, policies, procedures and guidelines relating to conflict in the public sector workplace
- types of conflict in the workplace and typical causes
- conflict theories including signs, stages, levels, factors involved, resolution
- group processes and roles people play
- organisational theory and workplace behaviour
- organisational structures
- different social and cultural practices
- conflict resolution skills and strategies including negotiation, empathy, communication to diffuse tension and achieve positive outcomes
- personal power and positional power
- grievance procedures in the public sector
- equal employment opportunity, equity and diversity principles
- public sector legislation such as occupational health and safety and environment legislation in the context of conflict resolution

## Evidence Guide

The Evidence Guide specifies the evidence required to demonstrate achievement in the unit of competency as a whole. It must be read in conjunction with the Unit descriptor, Performance Criteria, the Range Statement and the Assessment Guidelines for the Public Sector Training Package.

### Units to be assessed together

- *Pre-requisite* units that must be achieved prior to this unit: *Nil*
- *Co-requisite* units that must be assessed with this unit: *Nil*
- *Co-assessed units* that may be assessed with this unit to increase the efficiency and realism of the assessment process include, but are not limited to:
  - PSPETHC501B Promote the values and ethos of public service
  - PSPGOV504B Undertake research and analysis
  - PSPGOV505A Promote diversity
  - PSPGOV507A Undertake negotiations
  - PSPGOV511A Provide leadership
  - PSPGOV512A Use complex workplace communication strategies
  - PSPGOV514A Facilitate change
  - PSPLEGN501B Promote compliance with legislation in the public sector
  - PSPOHS501A Monitor and maintain workplace safety

### Overview of evidence requirements

In addition to integrated demonstration of the elements and their related performance criteria, look for evidence that confirms:

- the knowledge requirements of this unit
- the skill requirements of this unit
- application of Employability Skills as they relate to this unit
- management of conflict in a range of (3 or more) contexts (or occasions, over time)

### Resources required to carry out assessment

These resources include:

- public sector legislation, and organisational policy, procedures and protocols relating to conflict management
- public sector and organisational grievance procedures
- strategies and guidelines for dealing with workplace conflict
- case studies and workplace scenarios to capture the range of situations likely to be encountered when managing conflict

### Where and how to assess evidence

Valid assessment of this unit requires:

- a workplace environment or one that closely resembles normal work practice and replicates the range of conditions likely to be encountered when managing conflict, including coping with

difficulties, irregularities and breakdowns in routine

- management of conflict in a range of (3 or more) contexts (or occasions, over time).

Assessment methods should reflect workplace demands, such as literacy, and the needs of particular groups, such as:

- people with disabilities
- people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people
- women
- young people
- older people
- people in rural and remote locations.

Assessment methods suitable for valid and reliable assessment of this competency may include, but are not limited to, a combination of 2 or more of:

- case studies
- observation
- portfolios
- questioning
- scenarios
- simulation or role plays
- authenticated evidence from the workplace and/or training courses

**For consistency of assessment**

Evidence must be gathered over time in a range of contexts to ensure the person can achieve the unit outcome and apply the competency in different situations or environments

## Range Statement

<p>The Range Statement provides information about the context in which the unit of competency is carried out. The variables cater for differences between States and Territories and the Commonwealth, and between organisations and workplaces. They allow for different work requirements, work practices and knowledge. The Range Statement also provides a focus for assessment. It relates to the unit as a whole. Text in <b><i>bold italics</i></b> in the Performance Criteria is explained here.</p>	
<p><b><i>Causes of conflict</i></b> may include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• differences of opinion</li> <li>• different ways of working</li> <li>• poor communication</li> <li>• competing needs</li> <li>• cross-cultural issues</li> <li>• abuse of power</li> <li>• workplace bullying</li> <li>• customer dissatisfaction</li> <li>• gender issues</li> <li>• inter-generational issues</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Conflict</i></b> situations/events may include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work pressures</li> <li>• organisational restructures</li> <li>• conflicts/incidents among work colleagues</li> <li>• refusals to follow directions/guidance</li> <li>• customer complaints/dissatisfaction</li> <li>• disagreements between members of the public</li> <li>• bystander behaviour, for example when policing compliance or dealing with service difficulties</li> <li>• drug or alcohol affected persons</li> <li>• persons suffering emotional distress</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Communication techniques</i></b> may include:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• verbal and non-verbal language</li> <li>• questioning and listening</li> <li>• cooperative language</li> <li>• control of emotions, voice and body language</li> <li>• constructive feedback</li> <li>• reflection</li> <li>• summarising</li> <li>• re-phrasing</li> <li>• paraphrasing</li> <li>• presenting options</li> <li>• using language and concepts suited to the occasion and the other party</li> <li>• showing a willingness to compromise</li> </ul>
<p><b><i>Legislation, policies and</i></b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State/Territory or Commonwealth legislation, regulations and</li> </ul>

<b><i>procedures</i></b> may include:	<p>organisational policies, procedures and guidelines relating to conflict management in the public sector, including equal employment opportunity, equity diversity, occupational health and safety, privacy, confidentiality, anti-discrimination, harassment, dispute resolution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• public sector standards</li> <li>• codes of practice</li> <li>• codes of ethics</li> <li>• code of conduct</li> <li>• security standards</li> </ul>
<b><i>Resolution strategies</i></b> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• relocation</li> <li>• changed procedures</li> <li>• office re-organisation</li> <li>• change in reporting lines</li> <li>• change in behaviour</li> <li>• disciplinary action.</li> </ul>
<b><i>Social and cultural differences</i></b> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• beliefs and values</li> <li>• social conventions</li> <li>• family relationships</li> <li>• cultural observances</li> <li>• verbal and non-verbal language</li> </ul>
<b><i>Support</i></b> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mediators</li> <li>• counsellors</li> <li>• interpreters</li> <li>• human resources staff</li> <li>• grievance officers</li> <li>• team leaders</li> <li>• managers</li> </ul>
Conflict management <b><i>strategies</i></b> may include:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mediation</li> <li>• counselling</li> <li>• assertiveness training</li> <li>• time out</li> <li>• reflective listening</li> <li>• mapping the conflict</li> <li>• seeking win/win outcome</li> <li>• workable compromise</li> <li>• confrontational coaching/mentoring</li> </ul>

## Unit Sector(s)



Not applicable.

## **Competency field**

Working in Government.