



Australian Government

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

MSS027003A Provide environmental advice to clients

Release: 1

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Modification History

Not applicable.

Unit Descriptor

This unit of competency covers the ability to provide verbal or written advice to clients about environmental issues, problems or aspects of environmental management plans, policies and procedures that are relevant to a specific site, project or program. Personnel are required to identify and analyse the issue or problem, source relevant information, formulate advice from a range of options and communicate the authorised advice clearly to the client. They work under the supervision of an environmental scientist or engineer, site manager or enterprise environmental manager.

Application of the Unit

This unit of competency is applicable to environmental site coordinators, environmental managers and senior environmental officers working in a range of industry sectors, such as:

- environmental monitoring, sampling and field testing (e.g. air, water, soil and noise)
- geotechnical services
- natural resource management
- occupational hygiene monitoring (e.g. air, noise and radiation)
- water supply and treatment, storm and wastewater management
- solid and hazardous waste management
- site remediation or rehabilitation
- resource efficiency (e.g. energy, water and waste auditing).

Note that the term ‘manager’ is used to refer to management of a function, project and /or program and does not necessarily imply line management.

Licensing/Regulatory Information

Not applicable.

Pre-Requisites

Not applicable.

Employability Skills Information

Not applicable.

Elements and Performance Criteria Pre-Content

Not applicable.

Elements and Performance Criteria

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| 1 | Develop and maintain specialist environmental knowledge | 1.1 | Build a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of relevant environmental issues through networking and researching examples of environmental management best practice |
| | | 1.2 | Collate and store information in accordance with enterprise requirements |
| | | 1.3 | Apply acquired information to improve the quality of work outputs |
| 2 | Define and analyse the request for advice | 2.1 | Confirm and record the source, nature and priority of the client request |
| | | 2.2 | Clarify the issue/problem/requested information and analyse the risks involved with providing advice |
| | | 2.3 | Clarify enterprise communication protocols and redirect the request to a more relevant person, if appropriate |
| | | 2.4 | Seek guidance from relevant personnel, as necessary |
| 3 | Gather and analyse relevant information | 3.1 | Identify the information required to formulate useful advice |
| | | 3.2 | Identify available sources of information that are relevant and reliable |
| | | 3.3 | Obtain external expert opinion and advice in accordance with enterprise procedures, if required |

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| | | 3.4 | Analyse available information to identify issues, principles, legal requirements, patterns and/or trends in data that are of interest to the client |
| 4 | Formulate advice | 4.1 | Develop advice options that are based on clear legislative requirements and/or sound environmental management practices |
| | | 4.2 | Clearly distinguish between fact and opinion |
| | | 4.3 | Justify any assumptions made and support conclusions with reasoned arguments and appropriate evidence |
| | | 4.4 | If necessary, discuss options with client and/or relevant personnel, incorporate their feedback and finalise advice |
| | | 4.5 | Ensure that advice is accurate and meets the client's needs |
| | | 4.6 | Obtain authorisation to release advice to client in accordance with enterprise communication protocols |
| 5 | Communicate advice to client | 5.1 | Provide timely, authorised advice in accordance with enterprise policies/procedures and in a format/manner that suits the client |
| | | 5.2 | Check and confirm client's understanding of the advice provided |
| | | 5.3 | Use feedback from clients to improve the way advice is developed and provided |
| 6 | Record details of the request and advice | 6.1 | Record accurate details of request, client contact and advice in accordance with enterprise procedures |
| | | 6.2 | File records in accordance with enterprise procedures |

Required Skills and Knowledge

Required skills

Required skills include:

- applying enterprise procedures and communication protocols when providing environmental advice to clients, identifying and assessing the risks involved
- analysing and prioritising client requests for environmental advice
- locating, analysing and synthesising relevant information from a range of sources
- taking notes, summarising and organising environmental information in a logical sequence
- explaining complex environmental management concepts, principles and procedures and legislative/regulatory requirements clearly
- listening actively and asking questions to clarify a client's understanding
- formulating advice that is accurate, valid and meets the client's needs
- presenting environmental advice using a format, style and language that suits the client and is in accordance with enterprise requirements
- providing and receiving constructive feedback
- seeking advice when issues/problems are beyond scope of competence/responsibility
- maintaining security/confidentiality of information in accordance with enterprise procedures
- maintaining records

Required knowledge

Required knowledge includes:

- common sources of environmental information relevant to job role
- environmental protection/management terminology, concepts and principles
- environmental legislative/regulatory requirements and responsibilities relevant to site/project/program
- enterprise environmental management plans, procedures, control measures and management actions for site/project/program
- site/project/program characteristics, nature of activities conducted at site, environmental management values, environmental issues, risks and impacts
- enterprise procedures for identifying assessing environmental risks and impacts, managing client relations, responding to complaints, cultural/heritage finds and other environmental incidents, and record management and reporting

Evidence Guide

Overview of assessment	Competency must be demonstrated in the ability to perform consistently at the required standard.
Critical aspects for assessment and evidence required to demonstrate competency in this unit	Assessors must be satisfied that the candidate can competently and consistently apply the skills covered in this unit of competency in new and different situations and contexts. Critical aspects of assessment and evidence include: • describing actions taken to develop and maintain their specialist environmental knowledge • following enterprise procedures for providing environmental advice to clients • obtaining and analysing sufficient information to formulate environmental advice that is accurate, up-to-date and meets the client's needs • providing authorised information using language, style and format that is readily understood • communicating advice within the expected timeframe and confirming the client's understanding • obtaining and using feedback to improve the provision of environmental advice to clients.
Context of and specific resources for assessment	This unit of competency is to be assessed in the workplace or a simulated workplace environment. Assessment should emphasise a workplace context and procedures found in the candidate's workplace. This unit of competency may be assessed with: • <i>MSS027001A Coordinate environmental management activities</i> • <i>other MSS027000 series units dealing with specific environmental management activities.</i> The competencies covered by this unit would be demonstrated by an individual working alone or as part of a team. Resources may include: • site/project/program history • relevant legislation, codes, standards, enterprise environmental management policies, plans, procedures and checklists • access to a computer, internet, data sets, enterprise reports, published case studies and research.

Method of assessment	The following assessment methods are suggested: • review of environmental advice and the supporting documentation prepared by the candidate for a range of clients • feedback from manager and clients that the candidate consistently provides timely advice that meets their needs • oral/written tests involving environmental management terms and principles, legislative/regulatory requirements, enterprise environmental management plans, policies and procedures • analysis of case studies requiring advice about issues/problems within scope of responsibility • observation of the candidate presenting advice to clients. In all cases, practical assessment should be supported by questions to assess underpinning knowledge and those aspects of competency which are difficult to assess directly. Where applicable, reasonable adjustment must be made to work environments and training situations to accommodate ethnicity, age, gender, demographics and disability. The language, literacy and numeracy demands of assessment should not be greater than those required to undertake the unit of competency in a work-like environment.
Guidance information for assessment	

Range Statement

Codes of practice	Where reference is made to industry codes of practice, and/or Australian/international standards, it is expected the latest version will be used
Legislation, standards, codes, procedures and/or enterprise requirements	Legislation, standards, codes, procedures and/or enterprise requirements may include: • federal legislation, such as: • Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999

	• Australian Heritage Council Act 2003 • Native Title Act 1993 • state/territory government legislation and regulations and local government by-laws, policies, and plans dealing with: • land use, acquisition, planning and protection • environmental protection • cultural/heritage protection • vegetation management • nature conservation and wildlife/plant protection • water and water management • soil conservation • pollution and contaminated sites • fisheries, forestry and mining operations • Australian and international standards, such as: • AS/NZS ISO 14000 Set:2005 Environmental management standards set • environmental management plan, site information about applicable legislative requirements and approval requirements • information about site processes and work schedules • information about emergency preparedness and response • monitoring/inspection procedures and management actions to prevent/control environmental impacts or risks • sampling and in-situ measurement procedures (e.g. water, air, noise and soils) • job hazard analyses • safe work procedures and work method statements • material safety data sheets (MSDS)
Environmental issues and problems	Environmental issues and problems may include: • identifying and addressing cultural heritage issues • managing site amenity and access issues • designing/conducting environmental monitoring baseline studies and social risk/impact assessments • managing expectations and addressing community concerns about impacts, community development and local employment opportunities • responding to community or stakeholder complaints • responding to environmental exceedances (e.g. noise, dust and water quality) and adverse audit findings • investigating/responding to environmental

	- non-conformance, non-compliance and incidents - informing interested parties about changes to site/project/program operations - involving interested parties in site/project/program closure planning - developing and coordinating a site rehabilitation program - developing environmental management strategies (e.g. for water use, wastewater, energy, waste and sustainability)
Information	Information may include: - legislation, regulations, guidelines, standards, codes of practice, licence conditions and approval processes - environmental management case studies, research findings and models of good practice - enterprise environmental management plans, policies, strategies and procedures - site/project initial advice statements and risk/impact assessments - records of site consultations with interested parties - site/project environmental reports (e.g. weekly and monthly monitoring) - environmental data sets, such as - satellite imagery and remote sensing data - geophysical, geochemical, geological, hydrological and meteorological data - ecological data, such as distribution of vegetation, fauna and pests - social science data, such as demographic and census information - land use data, zoning and property classifications - historical records and photographs - community surveys - maps (road and topographical) and aerial photos - site utilities/services (e.g. water, sewer, electricity and gas) - government reports - articles (e.g. online, academic, newspaper and journal)
Sources of information	Sources of information may include: - government departments and agencies (e.g. environment, climate change, agriculture and mining) - regulatory authorities

	• universities, cooperative research centres • utility authorities/companies (e.g. water, gas and electricity) • land title office and Valuer General • local government records • Geoscience Australia • Australian Social Science Data Archive • companies providing environmental services • internet, library/archive collections, annual reports and community newsletters
External expert opinion	External expert opinion may include: • government regulators • environmental consultants • contractors • solicitors • environmental scientists, engineers and planners • professional groups and organisations • community leaders tribal elders
Occupational health and safety (OHS) and environmental management requirements	OHS and environmental management requirements: • all operations must comply with enterprise OHS and environmental management requirements, which may be imposed through state/territory or federal legislation - these requirements must not be compromised at any time • all operations assume the potentially hazardous nature of samples and require standard precautions to be applied • where relevant, users should access and apply current industry understanding of infection control issued by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) and State and Territory Departments of Health

Unit Sector(s)

Environmental

Custom Content Section

Not applicable.