

Public Sector Procurement Profession

Role Statement

The public sector procurement profession, including contract management, is the dedicated workforce that has primary responsibility for championing government outcomes through agency procurement spend in collaboration with service providers.

Defining the Procurement Function

1. The Procurement Function is responsible for delivering compliant, value for money procurement outcomes. It does this through establishing an agile, mobile, resilient, trusted, and capable workforce with broad-based capabilities, with a focus on those with strong commercial and inter-personal skills.
2. As a trusted adviser, procurement is involved in the initial make/procure/grant decisions, and where procurement is the best solution, co-designing the specific requirements with relevant stakeholders. Procurement then encompasses an extensive range of activities across the procurement life cycle, including establishing a governance framework, planning, sourcing, and contract management.
3. Governments require procurement activities to closely align with their strategic objectives of delivering greater public outcomes, in accordance with public sector integrity values. This is done by strategically leveraging government spend and through delivering to their communities more efficient, effective, and sustainable economic, environmental, ethical, safety and social benefits.
4. To achieve these objectives, there is an increasing acknowledgement of the evolution procurement has undertaken over the past 10 years, moving from a focus on transactional activities, to one which is much more strategic, and outcomes focused. It has seen an increase in the scale and scope of procurement activities, and a greater capacity to achieve increasingly complex outcomes. As such, a more strategic future-focused leadership approach also requires a greater investment in workforce capability development.
5. Procurement professionals therefore actively work to build the workforce expertise needed to strategically deliver their services as a trusted business partner. They work with diverse stakeholders, including industry, to guide and translate their procurement requirements into effective sourcing solutions which must consistently deliver successful outcomes whilst aligning to broad government and agency objectives.

Establishing a Procurement Capability Framework

6. Defining the scope and structure of the profession will further enable public sector agencies to identify and effectively manage their procurement workforce. This work is supported by articulating the range of core procurement capabilities and generic business skills necessary to deliver public value.
7. Several core procurement capabilities reflect procurement life cycle phases: Governance and Assurance (including input into organisational strategy); Planning; Sourcing; Evaluation and Negotiation; and Contract Development and Management (with a focus on relationship management).
8. These are supported by a knowledge and application of relevant Business Law, notably contract law and public sector procurement legislation; as well as how to manage Industry Engagement activities, including supply chain management practices to ensure security of supply and to eliminate modern slavery.
9. These capabilities then underpin and directly support the overarching Identifying and Engaging with Risk capability to ensure that all procurement risks are effectively managed to support procurement strategy execution.

10. While these core procurement capabilities appear standalone, they operate within an inter-dependent system. For example, the negotiation or contract development capabilities are applicable across every procurement life cycle phase. Further, where an agency separates the role of developing a contract from contract management, those performing a contract management role still require the core procurement proficiencies to achieve value.
11. Core procurement capabilities and generic business skills are defined at the proficiency levels of: awareness, foundation, practitioner and expert. Each public sector jurisdiction would outline its core procurement capability proficiency requirements relevant to each position or level, including for delegates approving procurement activities. Whilst not every procurement officer must be an 'expert' in every core procurement capability, it is assumed they will achieve a foundation level proficiency shortly after entering the procurement workforce. For those working in a specialist procurement sector, such as ICT, construction, health, education, Defence materiel, or social and human services, additional specific training could supplement these core procurement capabilities.
12. Generic Business Skills are those skills which are important to procurement but are also relevant to multiple public sector professions. A procurement officer must understand these business skills and how they intersect with procurement, however they may not need the same level of proficiency as a core procurement capability. For example, while not every procurement officer is going to be involved in policy development activities, they would still be engaged in understanding and implementing policy depending on the scale of a procurement.
13. To support internal skills development opportunities and to help baseline workforce proficiencies, the Procurement Capability Framework also forms the basis for delivering a fit-for-purpose integrated vocational, undergraduate and postgraduate procurement educational system, complemented by professional certifications, that independently attest to knowledge and skills. Please note: the Procurement Capability Framework is a companion document to the Role Statement and they should be read together.

Achieving a Procurement Profession

14. To effectively support them within the public sector, procurement workforces need to be clearly identified within a recognised and common professional structure.
15. Recruitment of new members should be based on the alignment of their capacity or potential to apply the identified core procurement capabilities and related business skills. Once recruited, those within the procurement workforce would then rely on the available opportunities to develop, though a comprehensive professional career pathways framework, to meet the needs of their current roles and future career aspirations.
16. Procurement Functions must invest in a range of procurement professionalisation initiatives, including support for formal training courses and educational qualifications, coaching and mentoring, and tailored on-the-job work experience. This is necessary to tap potential, engage staff and to establish a talent pipeline to support the longer-term leadership needs of the function.
17. The lower-level procurement courses are also available to upskill critical stakeholders, such as delegates or those in related disciplines, who directly or indirectly impact procurement service delivery, to build their awareness or foundation level proficiencies to support compliant value for money procurement outcomes.
18. Development opportunities are also critical to progress the entire procurement workforce towards the practitioner and expert levels of proficiency required to deal with increasing complexity and to consistently deliver improved outcomes to government.
19. Ultimately, Procurement Functions should continue to commit to meaningful workforce planning initiatives that enable them to have the right people, with the right skills, in the right procurement jobs, supported by quality data and a shared professional terminology.