

This resource has been developed for the purposes of assisting in the identification and development of rehabilitation programs for injured or ill employees, and to provide detailed information about **common** job demands. When supporting an injured employee in their return to work this document is used in conjunction with Workplace Specific Details to ensure information is customised.

Description of a School Learning Support Officer (SLSO):

Under the supervision and direction of a teacher, a SLSO assists in classroom activities, school routines, and the care and management of students with disabilities and behaviour disorders.

Their role includes assisting teachers in school and community centres in:

- the implementation of individual education programs;
- providing opportunities for students to develop personal, social independent living and pre-vocational skills; and
- attending to the personal care needs of students.

A SLSO may work in an School for specific purposes (SSP) setting. This is a school for students from pre-school to Year 12 who require intensive levels of support. These schools provide a specialised educational setting in which learning support plans are collaboratively developed, implemented and monitored. Classes are based on student’s primary diagnosis. Students may have physical, intellectual or other disabilities.

This document indicates the average time spent across a working day on common work activities/physical work demands that have been identified as essential to the successful performance of the role. The frequency of performance of work tasks is described by either the Descriptor, Percentage of Time, or Amount of Time based on the average working day of 6.25 hours as follows:

Descriptor	Percentage of Time	Amount of Time based on 6.25 hours per day
Not present	0%	0
Rare	1% - 7%	<i>From 3 mins to 25 mins</i>
Occasional	8% - 33%	<i>30 mins to 2 hours</i>
Frequent	34% - 66%	<i>2 ¼ hours to 4 hours</i>
Constant	67% - 100%	<i>4 ¼ hours to 6 ¼ hours</i>

This table is derived from the US Department of Labor Physical Demand Characteristics of Work, 1996

Hours of Work and Scheduled Breaks

Hours of Work: The normal hours of work for full-time employees shall not exceed 31 hours 15 minutes per week between 8.00 am and 4.30 pm on school days. The actual hours worked by an employee in any week may, by agreement between the principal and the employee, be averaged over periods of up to 10 weeks between the hours of 7.30 am and 6.00 pm. The pattern of hours worked by an employee under such an arrangement must be approved by the principal taking into account the needs of the school.

Meal Breaks: Employees who work not less than four hours per day shall be entitled to an unpaid lunch break of not less than 30 minutes each day. Employees who work more than two hours from the commencement of the school day shall be entitled to a paid morning tea break of 10 minutes each day. Meal breaks are often staggered to meet the needs of the school and the students.

Job Profile – Functional Summary For the Position of a School Learning Support Officer

Frequency of Physical Job demands (Average % of Full Time Work Day)

Demands	Not Present	Rare (1% - 7%)	Occasional (8% - 33%)	Frequent (34% - 66%)	Constant (67% - 100%)	Demands	Not Present	Rare (1% - 7%)	Occasional (8% - 33%)	Frequent (34% - 66%)	Constant (67% - 100%)
Sitting			X			Reaching					X
Standing - Static				X		Handling					X
Standing - Dynamic					X	Pushing				X	
Walking - Flat Terrain						Pulling				X	
Walking – Slippery/ Gravel Terrain			X			Lifting			X		
Climbing – Step Stools/ Ladders		X				Carrying			X		
Climbing – Stairs		X				Fine Motor					X
Stooping				X		Tactility					X
Kneeling		X				Driving			X		
Crouching – One Off				X		Visual Function					X
Crawling		X				Speech/Auditory					X
Balancing – Above Ground	X					Use of latex gloves			X		

Tools/ Equipment Handled

Students' chairs and desks – up to approximately 3kg and 8 kg respectively, classroom furniture and soft furnishings e.g. cushions/ rugs
Computers and data projectors – For use during information technology based learning activities with students and administrative tasks.
Pens/pencils/chalk/whiteboard markers and books. Art equipment – paints, paint brushes, cardboard and collage equipment
Sports equipment – including various balls and bats
Equipment for tube feeding
Wheelchairs, hoists, walkers, positioning equipment, toileting equipment

Loads Lifted & Carried (Average % of Full Time Work Day)

Weight range	Not present	Rare (1-7%)	Occasional (8-33%)	Frequent (34 -66%)	Constant (67 – 100%)
0-5 kg			Floor to Waist to Shoulder		
6-10kg		Floor to Waist to Shoulder			
11-15kg			Floor to Waist		
15-20kg		Restraint of student*	Floor to Waist		
21-25kg+		Restraint of student*	Floor to Waist		

Note: - Loads are a guide of maximum required in a full time work day.

* Refer to Workplace Specific Details for any specific loads lifted or carried

* Physical restraint of a student should be exercised only in those circumstances where there is a real and immediate threat of injury to a person or serious damage to property and there is no other practical way of preventing the likely injury or damage. Employees to focus on prevention and strategies for safely defusing behaviour at the earliest possible stage

Job Profile – Functional Summary For the Position of a School Learning Support Officer

	Common Job Activities (used in conjunction with Workplace Specific Details)	Average Time	Critical Job Demand
1	<p>In class support Classroom based support and direction of student; involving seated monitoring of student’s behaviour, presentation of information, monitoring verbal and non verbal responses of students to information, providing answers to questions, supervision of individual learning activities and encouraging participation by student. SLSO’s work in classroom, outside or in private rooms depends on student needs.</p>	Up to 5-6 hours per day	Yes
2	<p>Playground supervision Supervision during meal breaks involves mobilising around or sitting in the playground with student</p>	Varies according to school	Yes
3	<p>Excursion supervision Excursion based support with student along with rest of class and teacher. Only if the student attracting support attends the excursion.</p>	Varies according to school	No
4	<p>Parent contact Parent liaison involves face-to face contact with parents and requiring recollection, preparation or sourcing of specific information related to student.</p>	Interacts if required during daily drop-off / pick-up	Yes
5	<p>Toileting assistance For students that are independently mobile or students who can mobilise with assistance, or students who mobilise using a wheelchair. This involves appropriate positioning of students for toileting tasks. For students who are unable to access the toilet, this involves adopting appropriate manual handling practices, positioning of students for toileting tasks and changing pads/ nappies for students as required.</p>	45 min per day, varies per day, completed on a rotational basis with other teachers and SLSO’s	Yes
<p>In support of the above activities performed during rostered duty time, the activities below are performed by most SLSOs.</p>			
6	<p>Meetings Staff meetings/liaison with teaching employees: Involving face to face meetings at which day to day operational issues, short term and long term strategic planning for the school occur.</p>	Varies according to school	Yes

Environmental Factors

The following environmental factors exist in the workplace.

Low/medium- level ambient noise (from students, traffic, school activities e.g. music practice etc) requiring considerable voice projection to be heard.

Some work may be performed outdoors or exposed to the elements.

Worker/ team relationships – the work environment may require the teacher to adjust to and manage different working styles, and demonstrate an ability to work cooperatively.

Shortened work breaks may be taken on a voluntary basis.

Teachers may also be required to address multiple demands and a large number of unplanned interruptions may occur throughout the working day.

Work may be conducted predominately in indoor, classroom environments which may have climate controls such as fans and air conditioning systems

Required to wear protective equipment – latex gloves for feeding and toileting

Regular handling of cleaning chemicals in the course of duties

Occasional handling of equipment with vibration (vacuum cleaner) in the course of duties

Core Workplace Expectations (Organisational, Interpersonal, and Psychosocial)

The following major workplace expectations have been identified with reference to DEC Policies and Guidelines and O*NET (the Occupational Information Network, a comprehensive database of worker attributes and job characteristics).

	All employees have a responsibility to comply with legislation, departmental policy, procedures and the DEC Code of Conduct, perform their duties effectively, provide impartial and accurate advice and act in a manner that promotes a productive and harmonious working environment.
	Negotiating with others - In dealing with other people, employees should be able to accommodate and tolerate different opinions and perspectives, and sort out their disagreements by rational discussion.
	Departmental employees have a duty to take reasonable care for the safety and welfare of the students in their charge.
	Establishing and maintaining effective communication – includes appropriate communication with supervisors, peers, subordinates, students, parents/carers and community members
	Employees who work with students have a special responsibility in presenting themselves as appropriate role models for those students.
	Training and Teaching Others – Includes identifying the educational needs of others, developing formal educational or training programs or classes, and teaching or instructing and assessing and reporting for effective learning
	SLSO maintain safe learning environments. Effective strategies for the management of student behaviour and the maintenance of a safe working and learning environment include WHS procedures, student welfare procedures, curriculum and environmental management.
	Investigations – participate in reporting investigation and resolution processes, including mandatory reporting of suspected child abuse or neglect, and participation as a witness or party to performance, discipline, grievance, WorkCover or other processes.
	Coordinating the work of others – SLSOs and students, balancing the individual care and attention needs of students with supervisory needs of rest of class
	Managing demanding interpersonal situations where health and other complex issues impact on students. These issues need to be understood, interpreted, communicated and managed.
	Assisting others – may require close physical contact with students to contain behaviours.
	Close nature of supportive relationships with parents, may see SLSO providing additional support in the management of difficult health and/or behavioural issues.
	Workplace demands require that staff work in a collegiate relationship to ensure appropriate support is given to students and each other.
	Have the capacity to be flexible, adaptable and willing to learn in a work environment where the day-to-day priorities and tasks may vary considerably
	Teaching context requires that SLSO have the ability to provide students with verbal, and physical prompts such as modelling and guidance to enable learning.
	Regardless of actual allocated students/class, all SLSO are responsible for all students under the care and supervision of their school during school hours.

The use of this terminology, referred to in Frequency of Physical Job demands table on page 2, helps to establish a common language for key stakeholders when describing job demands in terms of frequency of activity performance, type of posture or movement and the level of strength/ lifting required.

Definition of Physical Job Demands	
LIFTING	Raising or lowering an object from one level to another (includes upward pulling and/or exerting upward force to hold an object in static position).
CARRYING	Transporting an object, usually holding in the hands, arms or on the shoulder.
PUSHING	Exerting force upon an object so that the object moves away from the force (including stooping, striking, kicking, treading and exerting force to hold an object in static position).
PULLING	Exerting force upon an object so that the object moves toward the force (including jerking and exerting force to hold an object in static position).
SITTING	Remaining in a seated position.
STANDING	Remaining on one’s feet in an upright position without moving greater than three steps.
WALKING	Moving about on foot greater than 3 steps.
CLIMBING	Ascending or descending ladders, stairs, scaffolding, ramps, poles and the like, using feet and legs, or hands and arms.
BALANCING	Maintaining body equilibrium to prevent falling when walking, standing, crouching, or running on either elevated and unguarded, narrow, slippery or erratically moving surfaces.
STOOPING	Bending the body forward and downward by bending spine at waist, requiring full use of lower extremities and back muscles.
KNEELING	Bending legs at knees to come to rest on knees.
CROUCHING	Bending body forward and downward by bending legs and spine.
CRAWLING	Moving about on the hands and knees.
REACHING	Extending arms(s) in any direction.
HANDLING	Seizing or grasping, holding, turning or otherwise working with the hands. Fingers are only involved to the extent that they are extensions of the hand.
FINE MOTOR	Picking, pinching, or otherwise working with the fingers, other than with the whole hand or arm as in handling.
TACTILITY	Perceiving attributes of objects, such as: size, shape, temperature, or texture by touching with skin; particularly that of finger tips.

This table is derived from the Queensland Department of Education and Training Job Dictionary