

Role Description

Head of Physiology



Cluster	Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport
Department/Agency	NSW Institute of Sport
Division	Performance Support
Classification/Grade	NSWIS Grade 4, Level 1
Senior executive work level standards	Not applicable
Location	Sydney
OSCA Code	262232
PCAT Code	1339192
Date of Approval	8 September 2026
Agency Website	NSW Institute of Sport (NSWIS)

Agency overview

The NSW Institute of Sport [NSWIS] is a high performance sporting organisation that supports exceptional athletes and inspires NSW communities. We reach all regions of NSW with an Olympic and Paralympic training facility based at Sydney Olympic Park and high performance hubs across NSW that provide world leading daily training environments. Our experts work in collaboration with national sporting system partners to deliver high performance support services and environments to prepare athletes and coaches for international competition.

NSWIS plays an integral part in Australia's High Performance 2032+ Sport Strategy – Win Well. We are committed to building an inclusive and sustainable sporting system that is athlete focused, exceptionally led and purposefully collaborative.

We ensure athlete safeguarding is prioritised and that the integrity of sport is embedded in our organisation.

Primary purpose of the role

The Head of Physiology provides strategic and technical leadership for the NSWIS Physiology function, ensuring the delivery of physiology services that enhance athlete performance, health, and long-term development. The role supports the Director, Performance Support in shaping the strategic direction, quality assurance, workforce capability, and continuous improvement of physiology services across the Institute.

As the discipline lead for Physiology, the role is responsible for maintaining contemporary technical standards, contributing to organisational planning, and leading the recruitment, development, and performance management of physiology staff. The Head of Physiology provides expert advice to the Executive and High Performance Senior Leadership Team and contributes to organisational strategy and high performance planning.

Delivering collaboratively across performance support teams to ensure physiology services are aligned with organisational priorities and the evolving needs of athletes and sport programs, the role also provides specialist physiology expertise to allocated programs.

Key accountabilities

- As a member of the High Performance Senior Leadership Team, lead the delivery, quality assurance and continuous improvement of Physiology services across NSWIS, ensuring alignment with organisational priorities and performance outcomes.
- Lead and manage the Physiology function, including workforce planning, recruitment, performance management, resource allocation, operational effectiveness and the development of a high-performing team culture.
- Provide technical leadership for the Physiology discipline by establishing, maintaining and advancing standards of practice, service delivery frameworks and evidence-informed approaches across all supported sport programs.
- Deliver specialist physiology services as part of an integrated multidisciplinary performance team, ensuring support is aligned to the NSWIS Physiology delivery model and contributes to athlete development and podium-level performance outcomes.
- Collaborate with coaches, athletes and performance support practitioners to design, implement, monitor and evaluate physiology strategies that optimise training adaptation, performance readiness and long-term athlete development.
- Foster a culture of innovation, collaboration and continuous improvement by challenging current practices, encouraging critical thinking and leveraging internal and external expertise to enhance athlete and program outcomes.
- Lead the translation of relevant contemporary research, innovation and emerging best practice into practical applications that improve service delivery.
- Contribute as a trusted member of multidisciplinary performance teams, effectively managing differing perspectives and resolving performance-related challenges to support athlete-centred decision-making.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with internal and external stakeholders, including National Sporting Organisations, coaches, researchers and service providers, to strengthen the impact and capability of NSWIS Physiology services.
- Provide expert advice, technical reports and strategic recommendations to senior management, coaches and performance teams to support informed decision-making and continuous improvement.

Key challenges

- Influencing coaches, athletes, performance support practitioners and sport partners across diverse sports and environments to adopt evidence-informed physiology strategies that optimise athlete development and performance outcomes.
- Maintaining best-practice standards and consistency of physiology service delivery across multiple sport programs, practitioners and performance environments while responding to evolving athlete and sport needs.
- Integrating physiology expertise within multidisciplinary performance teams to ensure physiological insights are effectively translated into athlete planning, training, recovery and competition strategies.

Key relationships

Internal

Who	Why
Director, Performance Support	To support delivery of NSWIS physiology services
Director High Performance and Managers	To work collaboratively to support athletes and ensure effective performance teams
NSWIS Coaches	To support the delivery of a high performance sport program
NSWIS Performance Team	To support an integrated performance approach and collaboratively support athletes
NSWIS staff and Managers	To work collaboratively to support athlete performance and drive organisational effectiveness

External

Who	Why
NSWIS Partners	Foster collaborative relationships that inform and support achievement of system and sport outcomes, including NSOs, AIS, SIS/SAS, Universities and industry partners.
NSWIS Athletes	To support individual athlete performance planning and implementation.

Role dimensions

Decision making

This role has autonomy and makes decisions that are under their direct control. Refers to the Executive decisions that require significant change to program outcomes or timeframes or are likely to escalate.

This role is fully accountable for the delivery of work assignments on time and to expectations in terms of quality, deliverables, and outcomes.

Reporting line

The role reports to the Director, Performance Support.

Direct reports

Sports Physiology Practitioners
Sports Physiology Providers
Graduate Assistant, Physiology
Interns, Physiology

Budget/Expenditure

Authority and approval level as defined in NSWIS delegations.

Key knowledge and experience

- Demonstrated experience leading and developing teams within multidisciplinary high performance sport environments.
- Proven ability to diagnose complex performance challenges and design integrated, evidence-informed solutions in collaboration with coaches and performance support practitioners.
- Demonstrated success leading individuals and teams to achieve performance outcomes while contributing to organisational objectives and strategic priorities.
- Experience providing high-quality technical advice, insights and recommendations to senior leaders, coaches and key stakeholders to support informed decision-making.
- Advanced knowledge and practical expertise in sport physiology, including the operation, application and governance of sport science technologies, systems and testing environments.
- Demonstrated ability to lead and influence within multidisciplinary performance teams, integrating physiology expertise into athlete performance planning, preparation and monitoring.
- Proven experience developing, implementing and evaluating physiology strategies and programs based on athlete, coach and sport needs, and adapting approaches in response to performance data and evolving requirements.
- Strong understanding of the Australian high performance system and the role of physiology in supporting athlete performance and long-term development.

Essential requirements

- Experience in managing, leading, and developing people to achieve performance outcomes
- 6+ years in the provision and application of Physiology services to high performance athletes
- Bachelor of Exercise Science, Movement Science or Sports Science
- Master's Degree in Sports Science
- ESSA Level 1
- Current Working with Children check
- Current First Aid and Resuscitation certificate

Capabilities for the role

The [NSW public sector capability framework](#) describes the capabilities (knowledge, skills and abilities) needed to perform a role. There are four main groups of capabilities: personal attributes, relationships, results and business enablers, with a fifth people management group of capabilities for roles with managerial responsibilities. These groups, combined with capabilities drawn from occupation-specific capability sets where relevant, work together to provide an understanding of the capabilities needed for the role.

The capabilities are separated into **focus capabilities** and **complementary capabilities**.

Focus capabilities

Focus capabilities are the capabilities considered the most important for effective performance of the role. These capabilities will be assessed at recruitment.

The focus capabilities for this role are shown below with a brief explanation of what each capability covers and the indicators describing the types of behaviours expected at each level.

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
 Personal Attributes	Display Resilience and Courage Be open and honest, prepared to express your views, and willing to accept and commit to change	• Be flexible, show initiative and respond quickly when situations change • Give frank and honest feedback and advice • Acknowledge when someone challenges your ideas, seek to understand why and respond appropriately • Raise and work through challenging issues and seek alternatives • Respond professionally when under pressure and in challenging situations	Adept
 Personal Attributes	Manage Self Be persistent, self-reflect and commit to learning	• Be a professional role model for colleagues, set high personal goals and take pride in achieving them • Actively seek, reflect on and act on feedback about your performance • Reflect on and use negative feedback as an opportunity for growth and improvement • Take the initiative and act in a decisive way • Pursue and apply new knowledge and practices relevant to your organisation to improve outcomes	Advanced
 Relationships	Communicate Effectively Communicate clearly, pay attention to others and respond with understanding and respect	• Present with credibility, engage diverse audiences and test whether they understand you • Translate technical and complex information clearly and concisely for different audiences • Create opportunities for others to contribute to discussion and debate • Set an example by promoting information sharing across your organisation • Manage complex communications that involve understanding and responding to multiple and divergent viewpoints • Explore creative ways to share information and communicate with diverse audiences • Leverage insights from people with lived experience to shape communication and engagement strategies • Write clearly, concisely and persuasively in a range of styles and formats	Advanced
 Relationships	Work Collaboratively Collaborate with others and value their contribution	• Encourage a workplace culture that values collaboration • Communicate with other teams to improve information sharing • Share lessons learned with other teams and business units • Identify opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders, including people with lived	Adept

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
		experience, to develop better processes and solutions - Actively use digital information platforms, collaboration tools and other digital technologies to share information and work with diverse audiences to solve problems and improve services - Consider diverse cultural perspectives to provide insights into collaborative work	
 Results	Deliver Results Achieve results by using resources efficiently and committing to quality outcomes	- Seek and apply the expertise of key individuals to achieve business outcomes - Lead a culture of achievement and acknowledge others' input - Determine how outcomes will be measured and guide others on evaluation methods - Investigate and create opportunities to enhance the achievement of business objectives - Make sure others understand the need for on-time and on-budget results and how success is defined - Control business unit output to ensure government outcomes are achieved within budget and on time - Progress organisational priorities and ensure resources are acquired and used effectively	Advanced
 Results	Think and Solve Problems Think, analyse and consider the broader context to develop practical solutions	- Make recommendations based on evidence by researching and critically analysing information and identifying interrelationships - Anticipate, identify and deal with issues and potential problems that may impact organisational goals and the customer experience - Think creatively to come up with new ideas to resolve issues and improve customer experience - Seek input and ideas from people with different backgrounds and experiences - Participate in and contribute to team or business unit initiatives to resolve common issues or barriers to effectiveness - Identify and share business process improvements to enhance effectiveness - Analyse data and information to identify insights and communicate findings in a clear and meaningful way	Adept
 People Management	Manage and Develop People Engage with and motivate staff, and develop their capability and potential	- Refine roles and responsibilities over time to achieve better business outcomes - Recognise talent, develop team capability and succession plan	Advanced

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Behavioural indicators	Level
		- Coach and mentor staff and encourage professional development and continuous learning - Prioritise dealing with team and individual performance issues and ensure your organisation uses a consistent approach - Implement performance development frameworks to align workforce capability with your organisation's current and future priorities and objectives - Develop systems to promote cultural capability as a means of ensuring the cultural safety of all colleagues	
 People Management	Manage Reform and Change Support and champion change, and help others to engage with change	- Support teams to develop new ways to work and generate new ideas for dealing with challenges - Actively promote change processes to staff and participate in communicating change initiatives across various levels within your organisation - Provide guidance, coaching and direction to others who are managing uncertainty and change - Encourage staff to participate in change processes and provide guidance, coaching and support - Identify workplace cultural barriers to change and implement strategies to manage these barriers - Involve employees in decisions that will affect them	Adept

Complementary capabilities

Complementary capabilities are also identified from the Capability Framework and relevant occupation-specific capability sets. They are important to identify performance required for the role and development opportunities.

Note: capabilities listed as 'not essential' for this role are not relevant for recruitment purposes, however, may be relevant for future career development.

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Description	Level
 Personal Attributes	Act with Integrity	Be ethical and professional, and uphold and promote the public sector values	Adept

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Description	Level
 Personal Attributes	Value Diversity and Inclusion	Be inclusive and respect diverse backgrounds, experiences and perspectives	Intermediate
 Relationships	Commit to Customer Service	Provide customer-focused services in line with public sector and organisational objectives	Adept
 Relationships	Influence and Negotiate	Gain consensus and commitment from others, and resolve issues and conflicts	Adept
 Results	Plan and Prioritise	Plan to achieve priority outcomes and respond flexibly to changing circumstances	Adept
 Results	Demonstrate Accountability	Be proactive and responsible for your actions, and follow legislation, policy and guidelines	Adept
 Business Enablers	Finance	Understand and apply financial processes to achieve value for money and minimise financial risk	Intermediate
 Business Enablers	Technology	Understand and use available technology to maximise efficiencies and effectiveness	Adept
 Business Enablers	Procurement and Contract Management	Understand and use procurement processes to ensure effective purchasing and contract performance	Intermediate

Capability group/sets	Capability name	Description	Level
 Business Enablers	Project Management	Understand and use effective ways to plan, coordinate and control projects	Intermediate
 People Management	Inspire Direction and Purpose	Communicate goals, priorities and vision, and recognise achievements	Adept
 People Management	Optimise Business Outcomes	Manage people and resources effectively to achieve public value	Adept