

SSAPP11 Head of Design

1. Job role

TCF sub-sector	Apparel
Functional area	Product Design and Development
Job role	SSAPP11 Head of Design
Job role description	Leads the operational design function for apparel brands and product ranges. The Head of Design manages design teams responsible for developing garments and knitwear collections aligned with the brand's creative direction and commercial strategy. The role translates the Creative Director's vision into practical product development outcomes and coordinates design activities across designers, technical teams and product developers.
Performance expectations	• Lead and manage apparel design teams across product categories • Translate creative direction into commercially viable collections • Coordinate seasonal design development and product timelines • Ensure garments meet brand aesthetic, quality and fit expectations • Collaborate with product developers, technical designers and merchandising teams • Guide designers in materials, silhouettes and garment construction • Oversee design review processes and product approvals • Support innovation and product development across apparel and knitwear ranges
Specialisation	Operational leadership of apparel design teams including fashion design, knitwear design and product development coordination.
Application in other TCF sectors	• Footwear design management • Textile and fabric product design leadership • Uniform and workwear product range development • Outdoor and technical apparel design teams • Fashion accessories and lifestyle product categories

2. Key tasks and critical work functions

Key tasks	• Manage design teams across apparel product categories • Coordinate seasonal product design development • Review garment concepts, sketches and prototypes • Ensure designs meet brand, technical and commercial requirements • Work with merchandising and buying teams on range planning
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	• Collaborate with product development teams on technical feasibility • Monitor design timelines and product development milestones • Provide mentorship and guidance to design staff
Critical work functions	• Ensuring alignment between creative direction and product design outcomes • Maintaining quality and consistency across apparel collections • Coordinating collaboration between design and product development teams • Ensuring designs are manufacturable within sourcing constraints • Supporting commercially successful product ranges • Developing design team capability and performance

3. Technical skills

Apparel design leadership	Lead development of garment collections across categories.
Collection development	Structure seasonal product ranges and design workflows.
Garment construction knowledge	Understand apparel pattern, fit and construction methods.
Knitwear product knowledge	Understand knitwear garment design and yarn characteristics.
Design review processes	Evaluate designs for aesthetics, functionality and manufacturability.
Product development coordination	Work closely with technical designers and developers.
Design tools and software	Use digital design and product development systems.
Brand management	Ensure design output reflects brand identity and positioning.

4. Generic Skills

Leadership	Lead and mentor multidisciplinary design teams.
Communication	Coordinate design information across teams.
Strategic thinking	Align product design with business strategy.
Decision making	Approve design directions and product concepts.
Collaboration	Work with merchandising, sourcing and production teams.
Innovation	Encourage new design ideas and product experimentation.

5. Emerging skills

Emerging skills	• Digital fashion design platforms • 3D garment design and virtual sampling technologies • Sustainable and circular apparel design approaches • Integration of consumer data in design decision making • Digital collaboration tools for product development
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6. VET Qualifications and Skill Sets

Entry-level preparation	MST50122 Diploma of Apparel, Fashion and Textiles or equivalent
Advanced development	MST60122 Advanced Diploma of Apparel, Fashion and Textiles or equivalent and / or bachelor 's level study in Fashion Design, Textile Design, Fashion Business or Product Development.

7. Job progression

Possible job progression	Senior Designer → Head of Design → Creative Director
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8. Classification

Australian Qualifications Framework	5-6
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Skill Levels	Skill Level 1 - Design Manager
Open Source Classification of Occupations for Australia (OSCA)	Head of Design - Apparel



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