

SSAPP13 Merchandise Planner

Disclaimer

These Occupational Frameworks and Skill Profiles have been developed as workforce planning, occupational mapping and skills reference resources for the Australian textile, clothing and footwear (TCF) industry. They are intended to describe the typical functions, responsibilities, skills and capabilities associated with occupations across the industry.

These documents are not intended to replace or override industrial instruments or employment arrangements, including awards, enterprise agreements, employment contracts, position descriptions, classification structures, licensing or regulatory requirements, or other statutory obligations. Where differences arise, the relevant industrial, legislative or regulatory requirements take precedence. The Skill Profiles should be used as complementary reference documents to support workforce planning, career development, training and skills recognition.

1. Job role

TCF sub-sector	Apparel
Functional area	Merchandise Planning and Buying
Job role	SSAPP13 Merchandise Planner
Job role description	Plans and manages apparel inventory, sales forecasts and stock allocation across retail and online channels. The Merchandise Planner analyses historical sales data, seasonal trends and demand forecasts to determine product quantities and stock distribution. The role works closely with buyers, product managers and retail teams to ensure product availability while maintaining profitability and efficient inventory levels.
Performance expectations	• Develop merchandise plans based on sales forecasts and demand analysis. • Determine product quantities and stock allocation across retail channels. • Monitor sales performance and inventory levels. • Adjust merchandise plans in response to changing market conditions. • Support pricing and markdown strategies to manage inventory. • Ensure stock availability aligns with retail and online demand. • Maintain accurate merchandise planning documentation. • Collaborate with buying, retail and supply chain teams.
Specialisation	Retail merchandise planning, demand forecasting, inventory optimisation and apparel range performance management.
Application in other TCF sectors	• Footwear merchandise planning and retail inventory management. • Textile product distribution and stock planning. • Uniform and workwear inventory planning programs. • Technical apparel retail planning. • Retail planning functions across fashion and lifestyle sectors.

2. Key tasks and critical work functions

Key tasks	• Develop seasonal merchandise plans and forecasts. • Analyse sales data and retail performance trends. • Determine product quantities and stock allocations. • Monitor inventory levels and stock turnover. • Support promotional pricing and markdown planning. • Coordinate product availability with buying and supply chain teams. • Maintain merchandise planning systems and reports. • Analyse performance of product categories and ranges.
Critical work functions	• Ensuring product availability for retail and online channels. • Maintaining optimal inventory levels and stock turnover. • Supporting profitability through effective inventory planning. • Balancing product demand with supply constraints. • Providing accurate demand forecasts for buying decisions. • Monitoring product performance across retail channels.

3. Technical skills

Demand forecasting	Analyse sales trends to predict product demand.
Merchandise planning systems	Use retail planning and inventory management software.
Sales data analysis	Interpret retail performance metrics and product trends.
Inventory management	Monitor stock levels and turnover rates.
Stock allocation	Determine product distribution across retail channels.
Pricing and markdown planning	Support pricing strategies to manage inventory.
Retail analytics	Analyse category performance and product lifecycle.
Supply chain coordination	Coordinate product availability with sourcing and logistics teams.

4. Generic Skills

Analytical thinking	Interpret complex retail data and forecasting models.
Commercial awareness	Understand retail margins, pricing and inventory risks.
Communication	Coordinate planning information with buying and retail teams.
Problem solving	Respond to stock shortages or oversupply issues.
Organisation	Manage seasonal planning timelines and reports.
Attention to detail	Maintain accuracy of merchandise planning data.

5. Emerging skills

Emerging skills	• AI-supported demand forecasting and retail analytics. • Advanced merchandise planning software. • Integration of retail and e-commerce planning systems. • Data-driven inventory optimisation.
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	Sustainable inventory management and waste reduction.
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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 bachelor's degree in Fashion Business, Merchandising, Retail Analytics or Supply Chain Management.

7. Job progression

Possible job progression	Merchandise Planning Assistant → Merchandise Planner → Senior Merchandise Planner → Merchandise Planning Manager / Head of Merchandise.
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8. Classification

Australian Qualifications Framework	AQF Level 5-6
Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Skill Levels	Skill Level 2
Open Source Classification of Occupations for Australia (OSCA)	619932 Merchandise Planner



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