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Global Skills Matrix



The globally recognised career framework
for administrative professionals

The Global Skills Matrix

The Essential Training Resource for the World's Administrative Professionals

Global Skills Matrix



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If Not Now, When?



As a publication, we have been vocal in our commitment to gaining recognition for the administrative profession since the very first issue in 1989.

My own 'road to Damascus' conversion to the cause is well documented. Back in 2011 at a course in Milan, and then a few weeks later in London, I was blown away by the passion for and commitment to the role shown by the delegates of both events. But the frustration was also palpable. Their businesses did not understand what they did, failed to recognise the role as a profession and almost universally could not grasp the potential of using them properly.

Something had to be done, and as a former Publishing Director, I have made it my mission over the last 10 years to change the way the world works with its administrative professionals. It's what I received my OBE for back in June.

The opportunity to chair the World Administrators Summit in 2015 was both an honour and an extraordinary opportunity to look at ways to truly change the world for the half a billion people who work in administration. The main item on the agenda? How to professionalise the role.

The representatives from the associations that gathered in Papua New Guinea agreed that the most effective way to instigate real change was to produce a global framework for career progression, and thus began one of the largest pieces of research ever undertaken for the profession – one that produced some shocking results.

- There were over 160 job titles for administrators
- 58% of administrators felt underutilised

- 73% felt their organisation didn't understand the role or potential impact of using them properly

- 60% felt there was little or no opportunity for career progression within their organisation

Something clearly needed to change, but with the World Administrators Alliance and its members working on a purely voluntary basis, it has taken time to disseminate the data gathered to ensure that the resulting report is robust and fully based on the findings of the research, rather than opinion.

In 2018, in Frankfurt, it was decided that a Global Skills Matrix was required which would ensure that, irrespective of country, businesses could refer to a document that explained the skill sets required at each level to progress through the administrator's career path.

It was also decided not to use job titles. With over 160 job titles being identified, we wanted to ensure that every business and every administrative professional recognised themselves within the matrix. To give you an example, a PA in the UK could work on reception or for the CEO whilst a PA in the USA would usually be working for a celebrity or person of high net worth; the title would more normally be Administrative Assistant. And in Europe, the most common title is Management Assistant. It is no wonder that there is so much confusion. Instead, there are Levels 1-5 in the Matrix to allow you to map the titles you already have to the levels.

We also agreed not to produce job descriptions. Every business and every Assistant has their own version of what the role is, but the majority of administrative

professionals have that catch-all at the bottom of their generic job description stating, 'and anything else we might like to throw at you.' We have, however, produced role descriptions. These are for those who work for businesses where job descriptions are not provided at all, in order to give guidance as to how to produce one.

The importance of a job description which explains what your role is cannot be underestimated.

A well-written job description helps both the employer and the employee to manage expectations, and at the heart of the Matrix is performance measurement. It gives both parties clarity around the skills and tasks needed to excel at every level. Each Assistant will have their own journey, and some may not want to progress to the higher levels, but a business will require a world-class administrative function at every level in order to underpin their stakeholders' goals and KPIs.

Employees will also be able to create personal goals for advancing in their current role.

Great job descriptions promote accountability and result in increased productivity, as employees understand exactly what is expected from them in order to allow them to progress.

And so began the mammoth task of working through which skills and tasks fell into which level. The task force, headed by New Zealand's AAPNZ President, Vicki Faint, spent the next two years assembling that particular puzzle before the recommendations came back to the 2020 Online World Administrators Summit for tweaks, and it was finally approved for publication in 2021 by the heads of associations and networks from 29 countries.

This is a piece of work that is particularly pertinent at this time. There has never been a more important time for organisations to utilise their administrators to their full potential. Covid-19 has increased the need for management to be more agile and to operate at maximum capacity. Organisations need to ensure the ROI on their executives' salaries is maximised. A career administrator with clear goals and objectives, combined with personal development and career progression opportunities, is a key component for achieving this.

So now you've got it, what are you going to do with it?

We have been presenting the document and what it will do for the businesses that adopt it at events and to companies all over the world since its launch on 16 September. The rest of the year is packed with further presentations. The feedback from the profession, your executives, HR professionals and recruiters who specialise in Administrative Recruitment is unanimous in its enthusiasm for the changes the Global Skills Matrix will beckon in. It is the missing part of the jigsaw, the bridge between how the world has been for administrative professionals and the future of the profession. But only if you take action.

We are living through a unique time for the future of work. We're recreating what business looks like, and nobody yet knows quite what that looks like.

As everything just changed, what's one more change?

The timing of the release of the Global Skills Matrix couldn't have been better. As businesses return to the office, many are re-examining how to structure their administrative functions to ensure best return on investment in terms of efficiency, finances

investment and contribution. The Matrix gives them a framework based on six years of extensive global research to work with.

But what I am most excited about is that our research showed that prior to the Matrix, most executives didn't know what they needed or what their Assistant was capable of. We have already seen that when they study it, they conclude that if other businesses are using their Assistants in this way, they are missing a trick. This opens the door to having these difficult but necessary conversations.

This time is never going to come again. The time to start this conversation is now. I truly believe that if business was to use its administrative functions properly, it would change the economy.

The supplement includes a 'Letter to HR', written by Sarah Richson, one of the top 10 HR influencers in the world. She explains clearly the implications of embracing the Matrix for your business, for your executive and for you.

For 10 years we have been talking about the changes necessary to shape the role into what so many of you have wanted it to be. We are on the cusp of changing the working lives of the half a billion of you who work in this profession, but only you can do it.

You MUST take this opportunity to share the information with your business. We are happy to support and even to have conversations with HR or your board, where you deem it necessary, but you need to go do the thing.

We would love to hear your stories as you begin this journey. Please write to me at lbrazier@executivesupportmedia.com and let me know how you are getting on.

A final mention must go to those who have ensured that the Global Skills Matrix finally saw the light of day: Eth Lloyd, who led the initial stages, Helen Monument, who drove the final stages, Vicki Faint, who collated and wrote the report (assisted by Eth Lloyd), and the rest of the Task Team – Nita Rebello (India), Cathy Harris (South Africa), Wendy Rapana (New Zealand), Florence Katano (Uganda), Andrew Jardine (United Kingdom) and Veronica Cochrane (United States of America), Advisor.

Thank you all for your dedication in bringing the Global Skills Matrix to fruition.

Now let's go change the world!



Lucy Brazier OBE

Introducing the Global Skills Matrix

The Global Skills Matrix will show businesses the true value that administrative professionals add to their bottom line, explains Helen Monument

I can't believe the day has finally arrived when we can say that the Global Skills Matrix is officially launched. Discussions first started on this topic at the World Administrators Summit in Papua New Guinea in 2015, when representatives from administrative associations from around the world discussed international position titles and accreditation/certification for the first time. There was unanimous agreement by the delegates that the professionalization of the role and a change in its perception were long overdue, and it was up to us to take up that challenge.

That is exactly what happened. It started with a global survey on position titles, tasks and networking of over 3,000 administrative professionals from 60 countries. This is still the largest international survey ever conducted where the topic was focused on administrative professionals.

Our research showed exactly the extent to which the role is misunderstood and how those who perform it feel undervalued and underutilized. It provided the basis for a new topic: "Position Titles and Career Pathways." At the 2018 World Administrators Summit in Frankfurt, it was obvious that the task was extremely complex. A new task force was created to take the project forward. They delivered a unifying framework for administrative professionals with which, irrespective of country or industry, it is possible to identify five levels of work, with defined tasks and required skills for those levels. This work, six years in the making, gives you the tool that you see today: the Global Skills Matrix.

We're not aiming to change the 160 job titles in use or to force standard job descriptions on the profession. What we have achieved is a global framework on which any administrative professional can find themselves in one of the five levels, understand what tasks and skills are expected of them at that level, and see how they need to develop in order to address their skills gap or progress through their career. It's also not written in stone. We expect that as this framework gets used, we will adjust and adapt as we receive feedback and as the world of work changes over time.

At the very first International Secretarial Summit, organized by Professional Secretaries International (PSI) in New York in 1992, Mary Jane Caragher, President of PSI, said this:

"...secretaries have become managers of the sophisticated technology used in corporate global communications. They have a key role in the functioning of the world economy. Secretaries not only know how to communicate globally but must also understand complex aspects of international business... they have a deeper understanding of how the global economy actually works than some of the ivory tower experts who lack day-to-day hands-on experience with the nitty-gritty realities of the global economy... the stereotype is gone, and we are now managers of information and as such, we need to tell the world what we do. We are flexible enough and have the talent to change with the times and communicate at a worldwide level."

At the WA-Alliance, we now use the term administrative professional, but it's clear that what was being said by those in the profession 30 years ago is just as relevant today. It's time for change, and the Global Skills Matrix is that catalyst for change.

The Global Skills Matrix will change the perception of the role. It will show businesses the true value that administrative professionals add to their bottom line. It will change professional development and the career path of millions of administrative professionals and trainers who can now target their products directly at one of those five levels.

Six years of research, dedication, commitment and teamwork have resulted in the resources that we are making freely available on our website. Whether you are an administrative professional, part of an association or company network, an executive, an HR Manager or a recruiter, we are convinced that by using this tool, you will help the World Administrators Alliance to change the lives of administrative professionals around the globe.



Helen Monument inspires and encourages Assistants to be the best they can be by sharing 30 years of experience as a management support professional. Her career has taken her from Secretary to Office Manager and Business Support Team Leader, so she understands the profession inside out. Helen now offers coaching, counselling, mentoring and training to Assistants at all levels. She is also the Chair of the World Administrators Alliance, whose aims are to guide,

influence, positively develop and elevate the global administrative community. Helen is a stimulating, knowledgeable and entertaining conference speaker.

Helen is also part of our Speaker Bureau. If you are interested in Helen training your Assistants or speaking at your event, either virtually or in person, please visit executivesupportmagazine.com/speaker-bureau.



A Valuable Tool to Show the Way

Including the Chief of Staff role in the Global Skills Matrix will provide clarity to a role which is fundamentally different to that of an EA and is there to provide a result, not a service, says Hallie Warner

I was thrilled to see the Chief of Staff role (Level 5) included in the Global Skills Matrix. This role is not just another title for Executive Assistant or Senior Executive Assistant. The roles are fundamentally different and require a different mindset, level of responsibility, training, and often compensation.

Strategic business partnerships come in all forms, from the entry-level, task-oriented, organized employee to the strategic leader and advisor who represents their executive in meetings and handles projects on their behalf.

Each level is not necessarily a stepping stone to the next, but a dynamic career choice in its own right. However, for those individuals who are looking to take on more responsibility and new challenges, the Global Skills Matrix is a valuable tool to show the way.

The Chief of Staff Pathway

While the next career step after Executive Assistant is not always Chief of Staff, it can be, which is why I think it's important that the Chief of Staff pathway was included here – particularly because, very often, I see Level 4 administrators operating at Level 5, but without the title and benefits. I suspect this also happens across the other levels.

While the Chief of Staff role is one of the more difficult roles to define, I like to think of a Chief of Staff as a Force Multiplier: the right hand to a leader; the strategic partner that helps a leader build and run a wildly successful business.

The day to day responsibilities of a Chief of Staff vary greatly across leaders, companies, and industries but I believe the role can be summarized by three key components:

Organization

Organize the ideas, projects, people, time, and resources necessary to keep all companies moving forward.

Communication

Communicate the vision, ideas, projects, or process to the necessary people. This includes creating content, providing context, and helping connect the dots across all organizations to create opportunities and growth.

Delegation

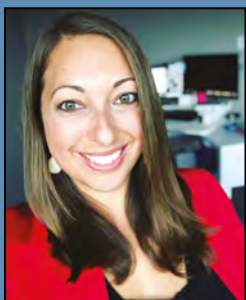
Delegate projects and tasks to the appropriate people, support them, and hold them accountable to the results.

In short, if you are considering moving towards a Level 5 administrator role, or if you are hiring a Level 5 for your organization, keep in mind that the Chief of Staff role is there to provide a result, not a service (for example, Level 1 and Level 2 provide services).

Remember, each role serves a different purpose, and it's important to understand not only whom you need to hire, but at what level your current team members are serving (and to create job descriptions and career paths that reflect that).

The clarity provided by the Global Skills Matrix will finally create some standard language and a framework around these complex and nuanced positions.

WRITER
HALLIE WARNER



Hallie Warner serves as Chief of Staff to the Founder and CEO of Adam Hergenrother Companies. She is the co-author of *The Founder & The Force Multiplier: How Entrepreneurs and Executive Assistants Achieve More Together*. Hallie has worked side-by-side with Adam Hergenrother for over 10 years, ensuring that Adam's vision is clarified, communicated, and executed. She also provides strategic counsel to key leaders within the

organization and leads special projects focused on the growth of the organization.

Hallie is also part of our Speaker Bureau. If you are interested in Hallie training your Assistants or speaking at your event, either virtually or in person, please visit executivesupportmagazine.com/speaker-bureau.

A New Pathway

The Global Skills Matrix will continue to evolve, and Simone White is excited to see how this document will help shape the future of our industry

25 years ago, when I first walked through the doors of the Victoria & Albert Museum in London as a typist, I certainly was not thinking what my next career step would be. In fact, I did not think of my role as a career at all.

My role at the V&A was a temporary position and, in that respect, that was exactly how I saw the role of Assistants. I was not aware that anyone chose it as a career. It was never discussed as a role of choice (or even an option to consider) at career fairs, but rather as a stop gap to make sure funds were still coming in!

Now, decades on, the view I had then is one still shared by so many outside the profession – ‘It’s not a career, it’s a job’, or ‘It’s an easy stepping stone to a real career’. Very few see it as a role that requires skill and qualifications or as a profession that one can have success in.

This prevailing thought that the role is easy or temporary has eroded the view of the profession over time, not only for those outside it, but for those of us who work within it. Do I even need to mention the word ‘just’!

For those of you reading who have been in the field a while, you will recall at one time there were some very strict parameters for one to be considered a proficient Assistant. There was even a pathway to show growth – Office Junior, Office Assistant, Senior Assistant, Executive Assistant (or similar) – and with these roles came the relevant gravitas and salary.

Over the past two decades, the role of the administrative professional has rapidly evolved almost beyond recognition, and these lines of progression have become blurred. With each financial crisis or downturn, the scope and responsibilities of the role have grown; the fundamentals often remain the same, but additional layers of responsibility have been added, from office management to marketing, social media to social responsibility. So, whilst the breadth of the role has increased, the perception and recognition of the role for the most part have stagnated. It is quite possible to have an Executive Assistant with no experience sit alongside

another with decades of it – but their skillsets and behaviours are incomparable.

For us to remain invaluable, our roles need to be understood not only by us, but by those who we support, those who hire us into firms and those who recruit in our industry. For us to have viable careers, there also needs to be a recognised standard which highlights not the tasks that are carried out in their minutia, but the common competencies that our experience gives us. The value of administrative professionals can only increase where there is a commonality of expectations and behaviours, which, when universally applied, elevates the profession and those who work within it and alongside it.

With the release of the Global Skills Matrix (GSM) by the World Administrators Alliance (WAA), we have the start of such a framework. Created to provide a transparent view of not only tasks that can be carried out, but the skill sets required, as well as a pathway of progression, the GSM provides the tools for administrative professionals to articulate their value in a way that they may have been unable to do before as a collective.

This document does not list a series of role descriptions, as administrative roles are quite unique – yet there is a common thread which runs through every role, and differentiation is assessed through experience, competencies, responsibility and accountability. This Matrix enables administrative professionals to see what those differentiators are in tangible ways. It provides a framework that can be used to highlight what you bring to the table, enabling you to be recognised not only for the support role you play but for the impact you have as an individual.

Described as a ‘living document’, the GSM will continue to evolve, and I am excited to see how this document can help shape the future of our industry. My younger self would no doubt have appreciated a document like this when I decided that being an administrative professional was not a temporary thing! My current self is delighted to be given the opportunity to watch it truly come to life.



Simone White has worked within administration for nearly 25 years. Passion for administration motivated her to create a global internal network for Assistants. Simone collaborates with administrative professionals and business leaders to promote the inclusion of Assistants as active, impactful participants as well as executors, raising awareness of the historical bias towards the profession. She has presented globally on topics such as Leadership,

Ownership and Belonging, and Inclusion. Simone is an EPAA Fellow and an Advisory Board member for Practically Perfect PA. Her work has been recognised and celebrated with awards from Women in Investments in 2021 and WeAreTheCity in 2016. Simone is also part of our Speaker Bureau. If you are interested in Simone training your Assistants or speaking at your event, either virtually or in person, please visit executivesupportmagazine.com/speaker-bureau



Clarifying the Assistant Role

The Global Skills Matrix is one of the most important and influential announcements from the administrative profession this century, says Richard Arnott

The Global Skills Matrix will benefit all Assistants, whether they be new entrants or seasoned professionals. It will also be of significant benefit to businesses and organisations who have, to be frank, never really treated the role as something that merited the same level of investment in career development and progression as other roles.

We all agree that executives and organisations benefit from having Assistants... that is taken as read. There is little point in an organisation employing and paying senior management and executives' large salaries and then expecting them to undertake administrative tasks. The problem, however, is that many managers and executives, especially younger ones, struggle to recognise what they can gain by having an Assistant. Some think the role is purely transactional, and they think it is quicker and easier to do some tasks themselves (booking travel being a prime example). That may be the case in a simple, straightforward world, but when changes happen, it is then that we find executives spending too much time on routine tasks. Others do not appreciate just how much help a skilled Assistant can be at contributing to and delivering strategies – being the completer/finisher to the executive's intuitive ideas.

The Global Skills Matrix will enable organisations to clarify the role of Assistants to executives, enabling them to pick the level of Assistant that they really need. It will also open the executives' and managers' eyes to what is available. This is likely to be above and beyond what they considered the role to be. I can see organisations looking to align the various Global Skills Matrix levels with the existing management structure in the organisation. I can see management levels being listed alongside the level of Assistant that is available for that management level. Organisations will, of course, all be different, but being able to identify and align the type of support that different management levels may need will be invaluable.

In my experience, the provision of a career path for Assistants has not always been a priority for businesses, and neither has been the provision of an effective annual appraisal. In terms of the latter, many of my ACEA® delegates say that they either do not get appraised or, if they do, their boss struggles to know what to say or what to measure their performance against, or struggles to give meaningful development goals. This was very common when I was an executive, and to be honest, the appraisal of my Assistants was always the most difficult one because of the lack of HR support and lack of real clarity over the role, its responsibilities and the internal career path available to my Assistant. Quite a few of my Assistants had to move into other roles to progress in their careers, as there was nowhere for them to go internally. This resulted in quite a high churn rate as incumbents became frustrated with having no perceived future or, importantly, no ability to earn more.

The Global Skills Matrix will make the conducting of meaningful appraisals and the setting of personal development goals a lot easier for managers and executives, which in turn will lead to enthused Assistants who are less likely to be demotivated and less likely to look for other opportunities to further their career or increase their take-home pay.

Those in the administrative profession have been waiting for this for a long time, and it was only ever going to come from the profession itself. It is a fantastic piece of work. Those in the profession now see their career path ahead of them; they now know what they need to do to get there and what training they need to develop their skillsets.

I take my hat off to those who have worked diligently over the years to get this launched. It is a tremendous effort which will cause ripples, if not waves, across the profession for decades to come. Well done to all those involved.



Richard Arnott BA, FInstAM, FITOL is a Director of BMTG (UK) Ltd and is the author and lead presenter of the [ACEA®](#) program. In his career, Richard was an accomplished Managing Director, International Programme Director and Big 4 Management Consultant specialising in project/programme management, strategic business

transformation and change management within the financial services, utilities, logistics and infrastructure sectors. Richard sits on the Editorial Board of Executive Support Magazine and speaks at Executive Support LIVE. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Administrative Management ([IAM](#)) and a Fellow of the Institute of Occupational Learning.

Using the Global Skills Matrix

This tool is aimed at clarifying what an administrator does and how they support and contribute to their employer, explains Lucy Brazier

The Global Skills Matrix is a globally recognised framework for administrators and HR teams that, irrespective of country, makes it possible to identify levels of work for a given role and career progression opportunities to realise the potential to an organisation of an effective administrator.

The information contained in the Global Skills Matrix is intended to assist you in understanding where you fit in your organisation and how you can progress. It is also to assist your executive, your HR department, and recruiters to better understand the roles administrators fulfil and the structure and range of tasks within those roles, and to show a clear career pathway for those who wish to progress.

This tool is not intended to change position titles within your organisation or your country. It is aimed at clarifying what an administrator does, how they support and contribute to their employer and how globally this sits together, providing a career pathway.

How to Use This Tool

For administrators, very often the most important thing is to know where your role fits. To do this, the following steps to use the Global Skills Matrix may be the best approach.

Step 1

Check the skills in the different levels of the Global Skills Matrix to find the level which largely matches your skills.

Step 2

Check the tasks in the Tasks Matrix to see which level largely matches the tasks that fit with those in your own position description or that you do in your day-to-day work.

Step 3

If your company has not created a job description for you which reflects your role, you may find it useful to view the Role Profiles for each level to create your own using the skills and tasks listed in the matrices. The role profiles are for guidance only. They are aimed at those from smaller businesses and those who currently may not have a position description to refer to.

Further Information and Resources

You may want to share the Letter for HR, included with this supplement, with your HR department, and to make your executives aware of the existence of this new global framework for career progression.

Both Helen Monument and I have committed to spend much of the next year talking about the Matrix to whoever needs to hear about it. If you would like us to speak to your HR department, please contact me at lbrazier@executivesupportmedia.com.

You can also use the scripted PowerPoint presentation featured on the [Global Skills Matrix](#) website to present the report to your peers or your internal network, as well as the pre-recorded webinar featuring Helen and I. We are both very happy to deliver this talk or to be interviewed live either virtually or in person.

Administrators are valuable within the workplace. But their value can be so much greater with the right approaches, with the correct training and education, with the right frameworks and ways of working, and with a better understanding of how they can assist their managers. The Global Skills Matrix opens the door to these important and difficult conversations and allows you to take the first step in owning your career.



Lucy Brazier, OBE is one of the world's leading authorities on the administrative profession. She is the CEO of Marcham Publishing, a global force synonymous with world-class conferences and training, including [Executive Support LIVE](#) and [Modern-Day Assistant](#), and home of [Executive Support Magazine](#), the gold standard of training in print for administrative professionals. Lucy is passionate about ensuring the Assistant role is truly recognised as a career and not just a job, and is dedicated to supporting

the development of both senior and aspiring administrative professionals. She has keynoted at almost every major conference for Assistants in the world and has a unique overview of the role and where it is heading.

Lucy is also part of our Speaker Bureau. If you are interested in Lucy training your Assistants or speaking at your event, either virtually or in person, please visit executivesupportmagazine.com/speaker-bureau.

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Global Skills Matrix

FULL REPORT



Delegates from 21 countries at the 2018 10th WA-Summit in Frankfurt, Germany



WORLD ADMINISTRATORS

ALLIANCE

Global Skills Matrix

A globally recognised framework for administrators and HR teams that, irrespective of country, makes it possible to identify levels of work for a given role and career progression opportunities to realise the potential to an organisation of an effective administrator.

>160 different job titles

and many job titles meaning different things dependent on the employer, sector or where an administrator is based geographically. This means a lack of clarity when it comes to performance management of administrative professionals.

Executive Support
Executive Assistant
Personal Assistant
Administrative Assistant
Management Assistant
Business Support

58% of administrators felt underutilised

73% felt their organisation didn't understand the role or potential impact of using them properly

60% felt there was little or no opportunity for career progression within their organisation

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Global Skills Matrix

Background

The World Administrators Alliance (WAA) is a non-profit trade association that represents administrative associations, networks, and administrators from across the globe. Its purpose is to guide, influence, develop and elevate the administrative profession, to create a global community that works together for the benefit of all.

At the 2018 10th WA-Summit the International Position Titles Team presented their report which was the results from a worldwide survey that received over 3,000 responses. This survey was primarily focussed on position titles as requested by the Delegates from the 2015 9th WA-Summit. It asked about titles, tasks, and perceptions. The subsequent report and discussion by Delegates at the 10th WA-Summit led to the following new recommendation/outcome.

THAT this Report forms the basis for further discussions on Position Titles later in this 10th WASummit 2018

The new topics of Position Descriptions and Career Pathways led to useful discussions and the following outcome.

Outcomes on Position Descriptions and Career Pathways:

A Task Force was developed which included Andrew Jardine (UK), Cathy Harris (SA), Wendy Rapana (NZ), and Florence Katano (Uganda), with Veronica Cochran (USA) supporting.

The discussions by the Delegates at the 2018 WA-Summit led to the following outcome:

The Task Force was asked to create a unifying framework for administrative/office professionals and HR departments such that, irrespective of

country, it is possible to identify levels of work – i.e. performance expectations, salary ranges and career pathways – for a given job/role profile.

The new Task Force was expanded to include Vicki Faint from New Zealand to take the lead and this report is the outcome of the consultation and discussions within the Task Force over the past two years.

Why Now?

There has never been a more important time for organisations to utilise their administrators to their full potential. Covid-19 has increased the need for management to be more agile and operating at maximum capacity. An organisation needs to ensure the ROI on their executives' salaries is maximised. A career administrator with clear goals and objectives, combined with opportunities for personal development and career progression is a key component for achieving this.

Are your job descriptions up to date? Do you organise administrator specific training? Do you have a clear career progression for your administrator team? Do they have objectives and KPIs in place for the next year?

If your answer to any of these questions is no, then now is the time to review and take actions.

PLEASE NOTE: within this document the term “Administrator” is used as a generic to cover all the 160 titles around the world. As an overarching term it links with the World Administrators Summit and the newly incorporated World Administrators Alliance.



Global Skills Matrix

Introduction

Administrators generally work with managers and executives (or in some countries for wealthy or celebrity individuals and families), undertaking a variety of business support tasks.

They often act as the manager's first point of contact. Managers often rely heavily on their administrators, trusting that work will be handled efficiently in their absence; discretion and confidentiality are therefore essential attributes of a successful administrator.

Administrators need extensive knowledge of the organisation in which they work. They need to know who key personnel (stakeholders) are, both external and internal, and understand their manager's, and by extension, the organisation's aims and objectives.

In addition, administrators are likely to be responsible for miscellaneous tasks to support their managers, which will vary according to the sector and to the manager's requirements, e.g., completing some corporate governance reporting (to ensure that the business is being run properly and complying with legislation and regulations) or conducting research.

Depending on circumstances some administrators do all the administrative work themselves, while others take responsibility for recruiting and training junior staff and delegate some less demanding and confidential work to them.

Finally, for those administrators who work as an assistant for a wealthy family or individual, instead of for a corporation the work undertaken may cover home or personal life maintenance tasks, such as ensuring household bills are up to date or hiring cleaners.

For additional details on job titles, see the table on page 17 of this report.

Job Titles Covered

Job titles for administrative roles, will vary according to the employer. In some organisations, the job titles 'personal assistant' and 'executive assistant' are interchangeable. In others, an executive assistant is more senior than a personal assistant and will take on more responsibility, such as some corporate governance or team organisation work. In some organisations, a personal assistant role is an entry-level job; in others, it requires a great deal of experience and is paid accordingly.

This matrix includes titles arising from the [2017 worldwide survey conducted for the WA-Summit 2018](#), such as:

Administrative Assistant includes administrative assistant (including coordinator, specialist and associate) and senior administrative assistant.

Personal Assistant includes personal assistant, senior assistant and virtual assistant.

Project Administrator includes project administrator (including coordinator, specialist and associate).

Executive Assistant includes executive assistant (including senior executive assistant), chief executive assistant (or chief administrative assistant), senior executive assistant.

Office Administrator includes office manager and office administrator (including operations assistant or operations manager).

Secretary includes executive secretary, secretary.

An additional title which is becoming more common at the highest levels is that of Chief of Staff (especially in the United State of America).

In some organisations/countries it may be required to work overtime during peak times and when deadlines are close. Many administrative professionals follow their manager's schedules, which could mean these roles are rarely 9-to-5.



Global Skills Matrix

Skills & Personal Qualities

In addition to relevant experience and administrative knowledge, you will need to show evidence of the following:

1. Skills

- exceptional written and oral communication skills
- excellent technology skills including knowledge of a range of software packages
- good organisational and time management skills
- the ability to research, digest, analyse and present material clearly and concisely
- excellent interpersonal skills
- tact and diplomacy
- negotiating skills
- problem solving
- emotional intelligence

2. Personal Qualities

- the ability to work under pressure and to tight deadlines
- honesty and reliability
- self-motivating
- flexibility & adaptability to juggle a range of different tasks and to work extra hours to meet deadlines
- attention to detail
- discretion and trustworthiness: you will often be party of confidential information
- service orientation

There are also a number of specific skills which may give you a competitive advantage. For example, shorthand and audio typing are still used, and knowledge of a foreign language in many countries may be essential, in others useful, and in yet others not required.

PLEASE NOTE: All skills gained at each level are transferrable through all levels as they make up your skills and knowledge base.

Credentials

Generally no formal academic qualifications are required as standard, although some employers may require candidates to have minimum qualification at a specific level, and some may prefer degrees.

Although this area of work is open to a large range of people, a qualification in business, management and/or administration increases your opportunities.

Additionally, some subjects are more relevant for certain industries, e.g. English literature for publishing and law for legal work.

Entry without a degree is possible as personal qualities, experience and general administrative skills are typically considered more important.

A qualification in ICT or MOS certification may also be valuable or even required.

There is also advantage in attaining relevant professional certifications from professional bodies within the administrators' own country as a further demonstration of skills and knowledge.

It is unusual to enter directly into a senior position as a recent graduate (at whatever level) due to the level of experience expected of you. However, it is not impossible and one way of increasing your chances would be to study for a relevant qualification. Relevant qualifications are designed to equip individuals with the skills essential for this profession.

International Credentialing Information will be added to the matrix at a future date once this research has been completed.



Global Skills Matrix

How to Use This Tool

For those who are administrators very often the most important thing is to know where your role fits. To do this the following steps to use the Global Skills Matrix may be the best approach.

Step 1: Check the skills in the different levels of the Global Skills Matrix to find the level which largely matches your skills.

Step 2: Check the Tasks, in the Tasks Matrix to see which level largely match the tasks that fit with those in your own position description or that you do in your day-to-day work.

Step 3: You may find further and more detailed information in the Role Profiles which are linked at the bottom of each level to help you find a match/similarity.

If your company has not created a job description for you which reflects your role, you may find it useful to view our Role Profiles for each level or to create your own using the skills and tasks listed in our matrices.

For tools to help you to utilise this report fully please visit <https://www.globalskillsmatrix.com/>

At this stage look wider than solely you and your role, to see how you fit within the administrative profession. This information will assist you with determining a pathway for yourself either within your current employment or outside of it, to develop a pathway.

The information contained in the Matrix is intended to assist you as an administrator in understanding where you fit and how you can progress. It is also to assist your executive, your HR Department, and recruiters to better understand the roles administrators fulfil, the structure and range of tasks within those roles, and show a clear career pathway for those who wish to progress.

This Tool is not intended to change position titles within your organisation or your country. It is aimed at clarifying what an administrator does, how they support and contribute to their employment and how globally this sits together providing a career pathway.



Global Skills Matrix

Conclusion

One of the biggest factors causing ambiguity and confusion about the role of the administrator is poor position/job descriptions (PDs/JDs). Far too often, PDs/JDs written for administrators fail to fully grasp the complexities of the roles and the numerous ways in which the administrator supports their executive/manager. In many cases, existing PDs/JDs are completely out of date, describing little more than the simplest routine, everyday tasks that have been performed by administrators for decades.

Inaccurate PDs/JDs too often contribute to a lack of understanding of the depth of the administrative professional role, which in turn leads to undervaluing the administrator in the organisation, ill-advised rationalisation of the administrator role in some organisations, equally ill-advised rationalisation of administrators and a general failure to make the most of the potential of the administrator.

Professional certification or academic qualifications (referred to as credentialing), where available in countries, will be more fully set out in the **International Credentialing Report**, once completed. Gathering information about qualifications globally is complex. Phase 2 of this project, once endorsed, will be the gathering of data in respect to global qualifications and credentialing for inclusion in this report.

However, it should be noted that as this is a living document, information on relevant and appropriate qualifications from every country is welcomed, so that the document can be updated and is fully relevant for all Administrative Professionals internationally.

Administrators are valuable within the workplace. But their value can be so much greater with the right approaches with the correct training and education, with the right frameworks and ways of working, and with a better understanding of how they can assist their managers.

PLEASE NOTE:

1. This report is a living document and is open to be modified, added to or adjusted as required.
2. The role profiles linked to the Global Skills Matrix are for guidance only. They are aimed at those from smaller businesses and those who currently may not have a position description to refer to.



Global Skills Matrix

Level 1

Responsibilities/Tasks

The job itself can encompass a wide variety of different duties and responsibilities/tasks. Level 1 administrators generally provide support to a team or group of people, a department, or a specific business function. 'Support' in this context means that the administrator handles operational/administrative tasks, including but not limited to:

- Generating documents following organisation standards
- Using software (spreadsheets, databases, presentations, websites, etc.)
- Booking meetings and planning staff events
- Filing
- Covering reception
- Answering the phone, taking messages, and re-directing calls
- Receiving incoming and outgoing mail
- General administration knowledge

In addition, Level 1 administrators are likely to be responsible for miscellaneous tasks to support their executive(s)

Finally, it is also possible (most commonly in the USA) for an entry level administrator to work for a wealthy family or individual, instead of for a corporation. If this is the case, the work of the Level 1 administrator may also cover home or personal life maintenance tasks, such as ensuring household bills are up to date or hiring cleaners.

Skills & Personal Qualities

In addition to relevant experience and secretarial and administrative knowledge, you'll need to show evidence of the following:

1. Skills

- Technical (computer, software, apps, AI (application), social media, etc.)
- Verbal and written communication (e.g. drafting basic standard letter memos, emails and internal communications)
- Interpersonal and customer service
- Organisational and planning (including multitasking)
- Ability to focus and attention to detail
- Problem solving
- Discretion and confidentiality
- Prioritising

2. Personal Qualities

- Able to work under pressure and to tight deadlines
- Self-motivated
- Flexible and adaptable to juggle a range of different tasks and to work extra hours to meet deadlines
- Honest and reliable
- Attentive to detail
- Discrete and trustworthy: you will often be party to confidential information
- Service orientated

There are also a number of specific skills which may give you a competitive advantage. For example, shorthand and audio typing are still widely used, and knowledge of a foreign language may be useful.

[Level 1 Role Profile](#)



Global Skills Matrix

Level 2

Responsibilities/Tasks

It is expected that Level 2 administrators will carry the expertise learned at Level 1 into Level 2. They are also expected to manage much more, including but not limited to:

- Managing calendars and scheduling
- Managing meeting documentation
- Minute taking
- Travel co-ordinating
- Project assistance
- Operations duties including perks, parking, and maintenance registers
- Human Resource assistance e.g. onboarding / offboarding and payroll
- Manage own time and prioritise
- Confidently arrange and participate in video conference calls and on-line meetings

The best Level 2 administrators often act as partners with the person or people they support. To do so successfully, they must understand not only the details of the executive's job, but also how he/she thinks and makes decisions. Level 2 administrators are often trusted with a great deal of confidential business and personal information, so discretion and good judgement are essential skills.

Skills & Personal Qualities

In addition to relevant experience and secretarial and administrative knowledge, and including the skills gained at Level 1, you will need to show evidence of the following:

1. Skills

- Sound basic office procedures, processes, and office management knowledge
- Time management
- Self-motivated
- Cultural awareness
- Ethical awareness
- Decision-making

2. Personal Qualities

- Typing, filing, and other clerical skills are important, but the best Level 2 administrators often have strong personalities that are exhibited through several beneficial soft skills:
- Communication
- Managing your own time
- Trustworthiness
- Multitasking

There are also a number of specific skills which may give you a competitive advantage. For example, shorthand and audio typing may still be used, and knowledge of a foreign language may be useful.

Qualifications

According to our research, Level 2 administrators typically have at least a professional qualification, though some employers might prefer candidates with an academic degree or qualification. Previous administrative or secretarial experience is required.

What to Expect

Level 2 administrators' roles can be demanding and challenging, but also very rewarding. With the right partner, an administrator can become an invaluable business ally and a powerful part of the team.

Level 2 administrators typically work in an office setting and interact with visitors, callers, and other executives in addition to their own bosses. Work can be fast-paced and demanding, and the gatekeeper role sometimes requires Level 2 administrators to say no to people who do not want to take no for an answer.

Employers

Level 2 administrators work in a range of large, medium-sized and small organisations across all sectors.

[Level 2 Role Profile](#)



Global Skills Matrix

Level 3

Responsibilities/Tasks

- Support and supervise administrative staff
- Assist project teams in timely completion of projects
- Manage and maintain budgets for projects, office expenditure e.g. stationery
- Maintain administrative and personnel databases correspondence, HR functions including managing, recording and maintaining employee leave time records
- Research and recommend suppliers
- Actively seek constant improvement of processes
- Effectively manage multiple managers
- Manage email in-box(es) of executive(s) to agreed level
- Present at meetings
- Implements or maintains disaster recovery plan
- Organise meetings (e.g. strategic planning day), conferences and events
- Meeting administration including preparation of agenda, papers, and minutes
- Awareness of staff morale

Skills & Personal Qualities

1. Skills

- Staff management
- Resilience and stress tolerance
- Mentoring
- Delegation
- Negotiation
- Higher level communication skills
- Project/event coordination/management
- Understanding of organisation's and executive(s)'s objectives, goals and KPIs
- Office coordination (e.g., budgeting, perks, parking, vehicles, and maintenance)

2. Personal Qualities

The Level 3 administrator is a specialised management position that requires being in touch with all elements of a company. A good Level 3 administrator is often a sign of a successful and productive office environment and having that kind of impact takes a certain set of skills. Hiring managers will look for a candidate with these traits to find a Level 3 administrator who can really make an impact.

- Optimistic
- Shows initiative and anticipation of needs
- Active interest in the company's well-being
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to be accessible and friendly

Qualifications

You can become a Level 3 administrator with strong and extensive administrative experience and by holding professional qualifications. It may also be helpful to hold an academic degree. However, a qualification in the following subjects may be particularly helpful:

- Business administration/business management
- Computing and information technology
- Human resource management
- Management
- Public administration.

Many Level 3 administrators often enter at Level 1 and work their way up with experience. Some employers may ask for a management qualification at Level 3. You don't usually need a postgraduate qualification to become a Level 3 administrator, but some candidates choose to do further study in a business-related field.



Global Skills Matrix

What to Expect

- Work is often office-based. The size and style of the office will depend on the organisation you work for. For example, you may have an office to yourself or share with a team in an open-plan office. Alternatively working from home has become more accepted due to Covid-19 and hot-desking may have become common for the times when people do go to the office.
- Jobs are available in towns and cities throughout most countries. There may also be opportunities with smaller businesses, perhaps sole-charge, in rural locations.
- In most posts, smart, professional dress is expected, particularly in customer-facing roles.
- The work can be challenging, as you're often responsible for meeting targets and deadlines and disciplining staff.
- You may travel between offices if you're working at split-site locations or other branch offices, or sometimes farther afield for training and conferences.

[Level 3 Role Profile](#)



Global Skills Matrix

Level 4

Responsibilities/Tasks

As a Level 4 administrator, you will be a leader in your own right and will be using all the skills used at Levels 1, 2 and 3.

New responsibilities include:

- Prepare and maintain company documents and reports
- Higher level management of in-box for manager(s) and self
- Review and gain approval for expense reports
- Support preparation of project documents, reports, brochures, and budgets
- Manage and coordinate employee recruitment, performance evaluation and termination processes
- Prepare and maintain office procedures
- Research and compile basic briefing documents
- Confidently analyse data
- Attend leadership meetings as part of the leadership team
- Conduct governance activities and meeting administration (e.g., AGM, Board Member onboarding), including preparation of agenda, papers, and minutes

Skills & Personal Qualities

1. Skills

- Integrity
- Writing (drafting letters and reports)
- Leadership
- Strategic thinking
- Critical thinking
- Complex analysis and evaluation
- Proactively supporting and driving the organisation's and executive's objectives, goals and KPIs
- Ability to work autonomously
- Stakeholder knowledge
- Project management knowledge
- Financial knowledge
- Business knowledge, including 'of the business'
- Governance legislation and meeting knowledge

2. Personal Qualities

- Knowledge of administrative and governance procedures
- Organised and good planning ability
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Accurate and detail orientated
- Time management and prioritisation
- Teamwork
- Leadership
- Computer proficiency
- High levels of cognitive flexibility; comfortable switching between strategic and operational thinking

Qualifications

A professional qualification may be required for some roles. Some employers may require an academic degree for a Level 4 administrator. In specialised industries, such as the legal and medical fields, employers often require specific training or experience.

What to Expect

Your work involves standard office hours during weekdays. You may have an option to work parttime. You are generally expected to meet deadlines and attend a lot of meetings. Your work is mainly office-based, but you may have to travel for some meetings. On occasion it may be necessary to work longer hours to accommodate lengthy meetings and to complete reports, such as the company annual report, for regulatory deadlines.

Employers

Level 4 administrators work in a range of different organisations in the private, public and not-for-profit sectors.

Work Experience

A Level 4 administrator usually requires some targeted on-the-job training to learn the more detailed aspects of their role within a specific industry.

[Level 4 Role Profile](#)



Global Skills Matrix

Level 5

Why are we including the Chief of Staff Role?

This is a very senior role. A Chief of Staff is the equivalent of a senior vice president in most companies. It is not a senior assistant role, although a few senior assistants have moved from a level 4 to a level 5 once they have received training in change management and people management.

We have included the role here because much like the rest of the profession, there is confusion in businesses as to what the role is. Many businesses are promoting senior assistants to this role because they are not sure how else to promote them.

Including this level seeks to clarify the difference between a Level 4 and a Chief of Staff.

Responsibilities/Tasks

Accordingly, the responsibilities are many and varied; the high-level responsibilities will include:

Management

- Large/complex project management skills
- Manage office of the CEO, including direct reports, co-ordinate and oversee team-based administrative support for CEO – seamless and orderly day-to-day operations, calendar and engagements
- Work closely with members of senior leadership teams to organise and align strategic priorities
- Work closely to manage communication and/or confidential matters for key stakeholders
- Lead recruitment processes for members of staff
- Organise and establish plans from ad hoc and inconsistent practices
- Perform analysis on results and use data to drive strategic direction
- Understand key priorities for the larger organisation and shape agenda accordingly
- Manage research and advance planning for the CEO

- Ensure that the processes designed to aid integration, such as board meetings, strategic planning, business reviews, executive council, events, etc., run smoothly

Communications

- Identify and manage priorities and critical issues that have public impact and require the attention of the CEO
- Serve as an 'early warning system' to signals from the environment, assess and, when appropriate, pass on to the CEO
- Develop and execute a consistent high-volume communication strategy from the Office of the CEO in partnership with senior management
- Oversee and refine Office of the CEO communication high-volume strategy with senior team leaders and the broader organisation
- Oversee event and travel planning to ensure integrated content and message management that takes full advantage of the opportunity
- Create drafts of speeches, letters, and other formal CEO communications, including collaborating with corporate resources to develop or refine strategic processes for such communications

Strategy

- Collaborate in strategic and business planning processes as they relate to or intersect with the Office of the CEO
- Complement the broader corporate strategic planning process, priorities and platform by ensuring connectivity with the CEO and executive leadership team agenda(s), priorities, action planning and messaging
- Push CEO agenda forward and track priorities, including saying no when appropriate
- Own or identify areas for special projects related to the CEO's needs
- Prepare CEO for speeches, press events, policy events, and general meetings
- Provide a second opinion on issues, playing 'devil's advocate'
- When necessary and appropriate, represent CEO or act on the CEO's behalf in meetings



Global Skills Matrix

and/or events internal and external to the corporation

- Attend all senior management and strategy meetings
- Communicate with the CEO on key priorities, decisions, and action items
- Manage email follow-up, correspondence, and process facilitation
- Ensure the CEO is working on the most important items for the company

Skills & Personal Qualities

As befits a senior role, this position usually requires a highly experienced and capable professional, and often with a consultancy or troubleshooting background. In addition, particular skills and qualities are a high priority:

1. Skills

- Broad understanding of all areas of business including change leadership, compliance and planning
- Advanced research, analysis and briefing
- Internally facing role maximising the efficiency and operations of the organisation and CEO
- Works with the CEO representing as required
- Strategic thinking, understanding, and knowledge
- Leadership and management expertise with organisational and strategic dexterity
- Sensitivities of cultural diversity and inclusion
- High level communication/interpersonal skills (esp. listening, tact, diplomacy, negotiation, problem solving, emotional intelligence, judgement, decision making) across all levels of the organisation
- High performing team building/relationship skills
- Large/complex project management skills

2. Personal Qualities

- Conscientious and reliable
- Able to work under pressure with tight, often shifting, deadlines
- Executive presence and personal impact, demonstrating comfort speaking internally or externally on behalf of the CEO
- Flexible when required, handle change and ambiguity with positivity
- Self-confident and credible
- Extremely trustworthy with the ability to handle confidential matters and sensitive information or situations with discretion
- Proactive and decisive
- High levels of cognitive flexibility; comfortable switching between strategic and operational thinking

[Level 5 Role Profile](#)



Global Skills Matrix

The Global Skills Matrix (GSM) does not focus on job titles or job descriptions, as many organisations already have their own internal frameworks and sector specific duties for their administrators. Nor does it include recommendations for remuneration because this will vary dependent on geography and sector. However, it does form a basis for much needed discussion on all of these areas within individual organisations.

This GSM is a living document and should be modified, added to or adjusted as required both to fit your organisation and as the profession changes.

It is assumed that each higher level includes the skills of the previous level(s). For example, the Level 3 skills are in addition to those in L1 & 2.

1 ▶ Entry Level	2 ▶ Transactional	3 ▶ Transactional + Strategic	4 ▶ Strategic	5 ▶ Chief of Staff
<i>Reactive first role or returner</i>	<i>Reactive</i>	<i>Reactive -> Proactive</i>	<i>Fully Proactive</i>	<i>Leader</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication skills - written, on the phone, & face to face Technology - knowledge of office software e.g. Microsoft Office or Google equivalent Basic social media Organisational & planning skills Attention to detail & accuracy Information collection & management Customer service orientation Adaptability & flexibility Teamwork Discretion, confidentiality & integrity Emotional intelligence Problem solving Self-motivated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of administrative procedures and processes Strong communication skills Knowledge of principles & practices of basic office management Time management, prioritising Decision making Ethical awareness Cultural awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diplomacy & negotiation Higher level communication skills Foresight, anticipation, & initiative People management Digital fluency across a wide range of platforms Design skills Data analysis Project / event management Mentor / Coach Understanding of the organisation's & executive(s)'s objectives, goals, & KPIs Resilience & stress tolerance Delegation Office co-ordination/ management e.g. budgeting, parking, vehicles & maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Usually board level / C-Suite Strategic planning Critical thinking Complex problem solving Complex analysis & evaluation Leadership Leading projects Ability to work autonomously Understanding of all key business areas ie: risk management, business finance, marketing, HR, customer management, governance Sector specific specialism or technical knowledge Proactively supporting & driving the organisation's & the executive(s)'s objectives, goals, & KPIs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broad understanding of all areas of the business Internal facing role maximising the efficiency & operations of the organisation & CEO Works with the CEO representing as required Advanced research, analysis & briefing Strategic thinking, understanding, & knowledge Leadership & management expertise with organisational & strategic dexterity Sensitivity of cultural diversity & inclusion High level communication & interpersonal skills (esp. listening, tact, diplomacy, negotiation, problem solving, emotional intelligence, judgement, decision making) across all levels of the organisation High performing team building & relationship skills Large/complex project management skills



Tasks Matrix

The Global Skills Matrix should be used in conjunction with this Tasks Matrix. It should be noted that this is not an exhaustive list of tasks. It is purely a guide to provide a basis for discussion when creating job descriptions and career plans.

It is assumed that each higher level includes the tasks of the previous level(s). So, for example, the tasks listed in Level 3 are in addition to those in Levels 1 & 2.

1 ▶	2 ▶	3 ▶	4 ▶	5 ▶
Entry Level	Transactional	Transactional + Strategic	Strategic	Chief of Staff
<i>Reactive first role or returner</i>	<i>Reactive</i>	<i>Reactive -> Proactive</i>	<i>Fully Proactive</i>	<i>Leader</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Answering the phone, taking messages, & redirecting calls to appropriate colleagues ▪ Filing ▪ Data entry ▪ Creating spreadsheets ▪ Creating / updating presentations ▪ Producing text documents ▪ Covering reception ▪ Processing & directing mail & incoming packages or deliveries ▪ Prepare outgoing mail ▪ Monitoring stocks of office supplies (toner, stationary etc) & reporting shortages ▪ Assisting with copying, collecting & distributing office paperwork ▪ Booking meeting rooms & managing small events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Calendar management ▪ Travel arranging ▪ Email triage ▪ Organises meetings ▪ Expenses ▪ Minute taking ▪ Preparing documents for meetings & business trips ▪ Sets up conference calls / virtual meetings ▪ Schedules own priorities ▪ Works with realistic time estimates ▪ Can juggle multiple tasks ▪ Project assistance ▪ Operational assistance ▪ May support teams or office functions i.e. HR, finance, sales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organise events / meetings / conferences ▪ Finds ways to improve personal administrative processes ▪ Assists project teams in timely completion ▪ Answers basic emails on behalf of principal ▪ Manages & maintains basic budgets ▪ Manages a small team of transactional administrators ▪ Mentors / coaches more junior administrators ▪ Maintains & updates administrative & HR databases, records, correspondence ▪ Supports HR functions ▪ Manages multiple managers effectively ▪ Presents at meetings ▪ Implements or maintains a disaster recovery plan ▪ Prepares systems to track workflow & responsibilities ▪ Responsible for meeting administration incl. preparation of agenda, papers & minutes ▪ Confidently participates in online meetings/ video calls ▪ Researches & recommends suppliers ▪ Formatting & proof reading ▪ Awareness of staff morale 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oversees & supervises all administrative functions incl. training recommendations, identifying frustrations, & implementing improvements in processes ▪ Attends leadership meetings as part of the leadership team to support principal ▪ Prepares & maintains company documents & reports ▪ Answers complex emails on behalf of principal ▪ Reviews & approves expense reports ▪ Leads projects ▪ Takes the lead in preparation of project documents, reports, brochures & budgets ▪ Manages & coordinates processes for employee recruitment, performance evaluation & termination ▪ Prepares & maintains office procedures ▪ Manages & maintains budgets ▪ Responsible for governance meeting administration including preparation of agenda, papers & minutes ▪ Researches & compiles basic briefing documents ▪ Confidently analyses data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Manage office of CEO incl. direct reports ▪ Takes meetings & represents on behalf of CEO ▪ Acts as communication arm for CEO with staff & stakeholders ▪ Takes over projects the CEO is too busy to do ▪ Works with CEO's direct reports to ensure projects are delivered on time ▪ Able to challenge ideas, offer a different perspective & skills, & asks the right questions ▪ Prioritises for the CEO, to ensure they're working on the most important items ▪ Helps complete priority items for the CEO, senior management, & across the team ▪ Keeps the CEO accountable for commitments ▪ Keeps the CEO accessible & open to new ideas, proposals, & practises ▪ Leadership of strategic initiatives ▪ Researches new revenue streams / projects ▪ Researches & creates complex briefing documents e.g. strategic direction & advanced planning, speeches, events, & meetings ▪ Manages rhythm / integration of the business e.g. reoccurring leadership meetings ▪ Monitor employee satisfaction & explore frustrations ▪ Recruit & hires for high level positions & to ensure succession planning



Global Skills Matrix

Overview of common position titles for each level and the key differences between the levels

Competence Level	Common Position Titles Include	Key Differences
Level 1 Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative Assistant • Administrative Officer • Administrative Co-ordinator • Secretarial roles (basic) • Receptionist (often seen as a general administrator) • Business Support 	<p>This covers any role involving general administrative duties for a minimum of 50% of the hours worked and provided by a team or individual to an area of the business, but not exclusively on a one-to-one basis with a nominated executive.</p>
Level 2 Transactional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Assistant • Personal Assistant • Virtual Assistant • Office Manager (sole charge in small to medium businesses) • Other one-to-one support roles e.g. some Business Support roles • Some lesser responsibility Secretarial¹ roles Often seen as an “Assistant”, e.g. Team Assistant 	<p>Any role that has a primary focus on providing business support on an individual basis (i.e. one-to-one). In some cases, this may be concurrently to more than one executive, however the nature of the work is still of a one-to-one nature.</p> <p>Knowledge is developing depth, duties become more self-directed and widen.</p>
Level 3 Transactional to Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Assistant • Personal Assistant • Office Manager (some staff management) • Office Supervisor • Operations Manager • some higher responsibility Secretarial roles • Management Assistant 	<p>Any administrative role where management/supervision of staff is a key component of the role, on top of any administrative duties. This staff involvement incorporates supervision, mentoring, and delegation.</p> <p>This difference should be recognised in the formal description of duties and responsibilities to differentiate it from informal staff supervision, i.e. staff management duties should be clearly identified for the role.</p>

¹Secretary is not commonly used throughout the world; however, it is still commonly used in much of Asia and in some specific roles in some countries, consequently it is important to be listed here.



Global Skills Matrix

Competence Level	Common Position Tiles Include	Key Differences
Level 4 Strategic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often seen as an Administrative Specialist, higher responsibilities. Administrative specialist roles often have additional responsibilities, e.g. managing events, projects, and governance documentation: • Administration Manager • Executive Assistant to (e.g.: CEO / Board / General Counsel, etc.) • Project Administrator • Project Co-ordinator • Secretary (e.g. Board Secretary) • Business Partner (e.g. Executive Business Partner) 	<p>Any administrative role where a minimum of 50% of the hours worked are sector-specific or involve specialist or technical knowledge. This includes project work, legal, educational, medical, and governance, etc</p>
Level 5 Chief of Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chief of Staff 	<p>The Chief of Staff (CoS) generally works behind the scenes to solve CEO organizational problems, spearhead new projects, and maximize the CEO's time and focus. This individual works directly with the CEO's direct reports, resolving conflicts and issues as they arise.</p> <p>Often, they act as confidante and advisor to the chief executive, serving as a sounding board for ideas. The private sector role especially requires the proactive identification of issues that could impact the successful execution of the CEO's commitments and responsibilities, which include conducting Board meetings and a heavy reliance on frequent travel.</p> <p>The CoS makes the CEO aware of and brings their focus and attention to challenging issues, providing a framework and positioning of innovative ideas, to help resolve recurring problems and mitigate risk.</p>

An Open Letter to HR Professionals

Sarah Richson rates as one of the top 10 HR advisors in the world. In this open letter to your HR department she provides you with an easy way to 'copy & paste' the reasoning behind the Matrix, and share it with your business.

We hope you will find our global skills framework useful to you as an HR department. It will increase clarity around performance expectations and establish a clear link between individual and organisational performance for the administrative roles in your organisation. When implementing this framework, care needs to be taken to balance detail with flexibility and avoid an overly prescriptive and non-inclusive approach. We highly recommend a two-pronged approach that includes both the administrative staff and their supervisors in order to achieve full value.

More recently, however, there's been growing awareness that job performance requires a mix of behaviour, attitude and skill, and the terms are now more often used interchangeably.

This framework will also help you unpack the behaviour behind competent performance, such as critical thinking or complex problem solving, and it describes what people bring to the job.

The Global Skills Matrix can be useful to support talent strategy and guide HR department activities in areas such as recruitment, talent development and performance management. However, this will only be successful in supporting decision-making if it accurately reflects the needs of both the organisation and administrative roles in terms of skills, experience, and behaviours.

HR departments can adopt this skills framework to achieve the following goals:

- Enable consistency across job adverts for administrative roles and accuracy in attracting the right candidates.
- Provide greater ability to assess and hire the right candidate by embedding accurate requirements in interview questionnaires and rubrics.
- Aid fair performance appraisal and related reward packages based on the level.
- Increase employee effectiveness due to clarity of role expectations and results for both the administrative role holders and their supervisors.
- Improve organisational understanding of the administrative role and the different levels of capability required.
- Achieve better analysis of training needs by the learning and development team.
- Enable better career management and succession planning for administrative roles.

When contextualising this, one should therefore take into account job and person specifications and an organisation's medium- and long-term needs for talent, and should reflect the organisational ethos and values.

Communicating the purpose of the Skills Matrix is essential so that managers and administrative professionals in your organisation have a shared organisation-wide understanding and can implement it effectively when making hiring decisions, assessing performance, or building succession plans. The Matrix is a starting point to define shared expectations of skills, behaviours, and performance, but applied flexibly depending on the context of the organisation and individual staff's development levels and aspirations.

The Global Skills Matrix will be periodically reviewed and informed by future-focused workforce planning to assess the nature and requirements of future changes in administrative roles to reflect the changing nature of jobs and will remain open to diverse career paths.

This letter is also available on the Global Skills Matrix website at <https://globalskillsmatrix.com/>



Sarah Richson (MBA, MCIPD, AOEC, MIHRM) is an expert in growth strategy, international business and human capital strategies with deep experience of talent architecture and management within the African terrain. Sarah has held highly complex roles with a global scope of leadership overseeing 20+ geographies across the UK, us, Asia and Africa. She demonstrates deep passion and expertise in fast-growth companies, successfully transforming unstructured environments into organised, high-performing spaces through

policy and governance. Sarah's expertise is multi-dimensional and includes years as a leadership development professional, culture specialist and HR consultant working on both European and local African assignments.

Sarah is also part of our Speaker Bureau. If you are interested in Sarah training your Assistants or speaking at your event, either virtually or in person, please visit executivesupportmagazine.com/speaker-bureau.

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