

Receptionist Job Description

A free job description template for the Administration industry

Company Name: _____

Location: _____

Employment Type: _____

Reports To: _____

Date: _____

DISCLAIMER

This receptionist job description template is designed to reflect Australian workplace standards and front-office practices at the time of publication. Confirm the applicable modern award for your business and ensure compliance with all relevant employment laws.

1. Position overview

A receptionist is the first point of contact at the front desk, greeting visitors, answering and directing phone calls, and managing the reception area and meeting rooms. The role combines a professional, welcoming presence with reliable administrative support such as handling mail, data entry and appointment scheduling.

In Australia, receptionists are usually classified under the Clerks – Private Sector Award 2020 (MA000002), typically at Level 1 or Level 2 depending on experience and the range of duties performed. Note the Clerks Award is the default for clerical and administrative work — if an industry award covers the business, its clerical classifications may apply instead.

This template provides a foundation for creating clear, compliant job descriptions that attract capable front-desk staff while setting appropriate expectations for the role. Once hired, manage your team's shifts efficiently with rostering software.

2. Key responsibilities

Greeting visitors

Welcoming visitors, clients and staff at the front desk, signing them in, notifying the relevant person and ensuring a professional first impression of the business.

Answering and directing calls

Answering incoming phone calls promptly and courteously, screening and directing calls to the right person or department, and taking accurate messages.

Front desk and meeting rooms

Managing the reception area and meeting room bookings, preparing rooms for meetings and keeping the front-of-house space tidy and presentable.

Mail and couriers

Receiving, sorting and distributing incoming mail and deliveries, and organising outgoing mail and courier bookings as needed.

Data entry and diary management

Entering data accurately into systems, managing diaries and appointment schedules, and coordinating calendars for staff or clients.

Administrative support

Providing basic administrative support such as filing, photocopying, ordering supplies and assisting other teams while maintaining a tidy, well-stocked reception.

3. Skills and attributes

- Communication: Clear, friendly and professional verbal and written communication with visitors, callers and colleagues.
- Customer service: A warm, welcoming manner and the ability to represent the business professionally as the first point of contact.
- Organisation: Strong time management to juggle calls, visitors, appointments and administrative tasks without losing accuracy.
- Attention to detail: Careful data entry, accurate message taking and precise diary and appointment management.
- Computer skills: Confidence with phone systems, email, calendars and common office software for scheduling and record keeping.
- Discretion: Professional handling of confidential information and a calm, composed approach in a busy front-office environment.

4. Qualifications and requirements

The qualifications for receptionist positions are entry-level friendly and depend on the business and industry. Some are mandatory, while others are preferred or desirable.

- Working rights (required) — Eligibility to work in Australia
- Communication skills (required) — Clear, professional verbal and written communication for front-desk and phone duties
- Computer literacy (required) — Confidence with email, calendars, phone systems and common office software
- Formal qualification — No formal qualification needed — a certificate in business administration is desirable but not essential
- Previous reception experience — Experience in reception, customer service or administrative roles is advantageous but not essential
- First aid certificate — Current first aid certification is desirable in some workplaces

5. Working conditions

- Indoor front-office work in a professional environment
- Extended periods seated at the front desk using a computer and phone
- Regular interaction with visitors, clients and staff throughout the day
- Managing multiple tasks and interruptions during busy periods
- Standard business hours, with some part-time or casual shift arrangements
- Occasional support for meetings, events or after-hours coverage

6. Award information

Clerks – private sector award 2020

Most receptionist positions in Australia are covered by the Clerks – Private Sector Award 2020 (MA000002). This modern award sets minimum pay rates, penalty rates, allowances and conditions for clerical and administrative employees. View current Clerks Award pay rates.

Receptionists are typically classified at Level 1 or Level 2 depending on experience and the range of duties performed. For FY2026/27, the Level 1 year 1 ordinary rate is around \$26.97 per hour and Level 2 is around \$29.45 per hour. Casual employees receive a 25% loading, and part-time employees have a minimum engagement of 3 hours per shift. See the classification levels explained for detail. Use award interpretation software to calculate pay accurately.

Which award applies

The Clerks – Private Sector Award is the default instrument for clerical and administrative work, but it is not always the one that applies. If an industry award covers the business — for example in health, retail or hospitality — its clerical classifications may apply to a receptionist instead.

Confirm the current rates, penalties and allowances that apply to your business, and check whether an enterprise agreement applies in place of the award. When in doubt, review the coverage clauses of any industry award relevant to your operation.

7. Frequently asked questions

About the role

Q: What does a receptionist do?

A receptionist is the first point of contact at the front desk, greeting visitors, answering and directing phone calls, and managing the reception area and meeting rooms. They handle mail and couriers, enter data, manage diaries and appointments, and provide basic administrative support while keeping the front-of-house tidy and professional. It is a front-office role that combines a welcoming presence with reliable admin work.

Q: What award covers receptionists in Australia?

Most receptionist positions are covered by the Clerks – Private Sector Award 2020 (MA000002), which sets minimum pay, penalty rates and conditions for clerical and administrative employees. The Clerks Award is the default, but if an industry award covers the business its clerical classifications may apply instead. Some businesses may be covered by an enterprise agreement. Always confirm which instrument applies to your operation.

Q: What classification level should I use for a receptionist?

Under the Clerks – Private Sector Award, receptionists are typically classified at Level 1 or Level 2 depending on experience and the range of duties performed. For FY2026/27, the Level 1 year 1 ordinary rate is around \$26.97 per hour and Level 2 is around \$29.45 per hour. See the classification levels explained and our Clerks Award pay rates guide for current rates at each level.

Q: Do I need to include pay rates in a job description?

It's not legally required, but including indicative pay rates can attract more applicants and set clear expectations. You can reference the applicable award rate or use phrases like 'Award rates plus penalties' or 'Competitive hourly rate based on experience.' Check the current Clerks Award rates for guidance.

Qualifications

Q: Do receptionists need a formal qualification?

No formal qualification is required to work as a receptionist — it is an entry-level pathway with on-the-job training. Employers generally look for clear communication, computer literacy and working rights in Australia. A certificate in business administration and prior reception or customer service experience are advantageous but not essential.

Q: What computer skills should a receptionist have?

Receptionists should be comfortable with phone systems, email, calendars and common office software for scheduling, data entry and record keeping. Confidence with booking systems and basic word processing or spreadsheets is helpful. Tailor the required software skills to the tools your business uses on the front desk.

Q: What qualifications should I require vs prefer for a receptionist?

Mandatory requirements usually include working rights in Australia, clear communication skills and basic computer literacy. Preferred qualifications include previous reception or customer service experience, a business administration certificate and a current first aid certificate. Avoid over-qualifying entry-level positions, as it narrows your candidate pool unnecessarily.

Q: Can I hire receptionists without experience?

Yes. Reception is an entry-level role and many businesses hire and train staff without prior experience. Focus on communication, a professional and friendly manner, organisation and attention to detail. Clear job descriptions help candidates understand the front-desk work and self-select appropriately.

Employment

Q: Should I hire a casual or permanent receptionist?

This depends on your workload. Casual receptionists offer flexibility for variable cover but attract a 25% casual loading under the Clerks Award, and part-time employees have a minimum engagement of 3 hours per shift. Permanent part-time or full-time staff provide front-desk consistency and stronger retention. Many businesses use a mix — permanent staff for core hours and casuals for peaks or leave cover.

Q: What penalty rates apply to receptionists?

Under the Clerks – Private Sector Award (MA000002), penalty rates apply for evening, weekend and public holiday work, and casual employees receive a 25% loading on top of the ordinary rate. Overtime is payable when hours exceed the ordinary limits. Confirm the current rates that apply to your business and use award interpretation software to calculate them accurately.

Q: What is the minimum engagement for a part-time receptionist?

Under the Clerks – Private Sector Award, part-time employees have a minimum engagement of 3 hours per shift, meaning they must be paid for at least 3 hours each time they are rostered. Confirm the current rules and any casual minimum engagement that apply to your business before setting short shifts on the front desk.

Q: What should I include in a receptionist employment contract?

Key elements include: position title and classification level, employment type (casual, part-time or full-time), hourly rate, applicable award, reporting structure, main duties and required skills such as computer literacy. For casuals, include the 25% casual loading; for part-timers, note the agreed hours and 3-hour minimum engagement. Use our HR software to simplify this process.

Rostering

Q: How far in advance should I provide rosters to receptionists?

Award and agreement roosting rules vary, so confirm the notice period that applies to your business. As a general practice, providing rosters at least 7 days in advance gives front-desk staff visibility of their shifts. Using roosting software helps ensure compliance and reduces last-minute changes.

Q: How do I roster receptionists across multiple sites?

Assign shifts based on front-desk coverage needs, opening hours and each person's availability, ensuring reception is staffed during busy periods. Use roosting tools to track hours, avoid gaps and adjust cover when staff are absent. This keeps the front desk staffed without overloading individual receptionists.

Q: What breaks are receptionists entitled to?

Break entitlements are set by the applicable award or agreement and generally include a meal break for shifts beyond a set length. Because the front desk often needs continuous cover, plan breaks so reception is not left unstaffed. Use time and attendance tools to support compliance and accurate break records.

Q: How do I manage receptionist availability for roosting?

Collect availability preferences during onboarding and update them regularly. Use HR software and roosting tools to track when each receptionist can work and any constraints. Set clear policies about minimum availability and how to request changes, which simplifies front-desk planning and reduces gaps.