

Position description

Position title	Associate – Evidence and Impact
Reports to	Manager
Date established	2 July 2026
Direct reports	N/A
Employment status <i>(Full-time, part-time, contract length, FTE)</i>	Full-time

Background

The Sax Institute is a trusted national leader in the use of evidence. We bring together the broadest range of evidence, tools and methods, data, and trusted partnerships across governments, communities, services and academia. We connect evidence, data and decision-makers to generate independent intelligence, support better decisions and create real-world impact for a healthier future for every generation.

Division – Evidence & Impact

The Evidence & Impact Division is Australia’s go-to Systems Intelligence partner. We work on a range of health and wellbeing issues, with a focus on mental health and suicide prevention, family, domestic and sexual violence, and patient flow and workforce planning. The division’s emphasis on systems science integrates its capabilities across the full decision lifecycle — from evidence synthesis and benchmarking, to dynamic simulation modelling and decision labs, to monitoring frameworks and implementation science, to complex impact and economic evaluation, and scaling. Staff work as a single division in a matrix model, contributing across all service areas depending on project needs and their expertise.

Purpose of position

The Associate is an early-career evidence practitioner who leads a portfolio of projects, with a focus on evidence synthesis and the division’s Evidence Check service — including Accelerated Evidence Snapshots, Rapid Evidence Checks, and full Evidence Checks. The Associate brings the research methods expertise, attention to detail, and client communication skills these services require. They take end-to-end responsibility for Evidence Checks and other small and low-complexity projects — scoping and planning work, acting as the primary interface between clients and external experts, overseeing delivery, and ensuring all outputs are quality-assured, on time, and on budget.

Reporting to a Manager, the Associate brings demonstrated skills in evidence synthesis and research methods, and actively develops their capabilities across the division’s full range of service areas. They take accountability for the quality of their own work and the outputs of any contractors or experts they coordinate, and they invest in building the technical and professional skills needed to grow into more senior roles.

Key accountabilities

Key accountabilities	Performance expectations
Technical practice and leadership	- Leads evidence synthesis projects across the division's Evidence Check service — including Accelerated Evidence Snapshots, Rapid Evidence Checks, and full Evidence Checks — delivering approximately 16 projects per year. Some of these will be delivered internally where the scope and subject matter allow, with external subject matter experts engaged when additional specialist knowledge is required. - Applies best-practice rapid and systematic review methods, including AI-supported tools for searching, screening, data extraction, quality assessment, and reporting. - Applies qualitative and quantitative research methods to personally deliver project tasks, including literature searching, data collection (surveys, interviews), analysis of administrative data, evidence synthesis, and report writing. - Develops working knowledge across the division's broader capability areas — including evaluation, simulation modelling, system mapping, and implementation science — building the skills needed to contribute flexibly across the division's project portfolio. - Takes personal responsibility for the quality of all outputs, whether produced individually or with the support of contractors or external experts, applying and promoting the highest standards of rigour.
Project management, delivery and financial performance	- Leads a portfolio of projects, taking end-to-end accountability for planning, delivery, and close. - Develops and maintains project plans, timelines, and risk registers, and ensures all deliverables are on time and on budget. - Escalates risks and issues to the Manager or other senior staff early, ensuring clients and the division are never caught off guard. - Identifies, recruits, and engages contracted researchers and subject matter experts from research organisations and other relevant bodies — working within Sax Institute procurement and contracting processes to ensure contributors are appropriately scoped, contracted, and supported. - Coordinates and manages contractors throughout delivery — briefing them clearly, maintaining productive working relationships, holding them to agreed timelines and deliverable standards, and quality-assuring their outputs before they reach clients. - Ensures quality assurance processes are followed across all projects, including independent internal review of deliverables. - Manages project administration including ethics compliance, financial tracking, and procurement documentation in line with Sax Institute processes.

	Manages the logistics, communication and documentation of stakeholder workshops, knowledge brokering meetings, and policy dialogues.
People, culture and learning	- Takes proactive ownership of personal technical and professional development — identifying learning needs, seeking feedback, and building skills across the division's service areas and methods. - Participates actively in team meetings, peer learning sessions, and divisional initiatives, and maintains consistent availability during agreed working hours. - Supports junior team members and colleagues, sharing skills and contributing to a culture of learning and continuous improvement. - Role models curiosity, accountability, and care for colleagues and clients. - Follows and promotes adherence to organisational business processes and policies, including those relating to procurement, contracting, ethics, project management, and financial management.
Client and stakeholder relationships	- Serves as the primary day-to-day contact for clients on assigned projects, building reliable, professional relationships grounded in clear communication, responsiveness, and consistent delivery. - Acts as the interface between clients and external subject matter experts — translating client needs and priorities into clear direction for external contributors, and communicating findings and progress back to clients in accessible terms. - Manages client expectations proactively throughout project delivery: communicating progress, flagging scope or timeline risks early, and ensuring clients are never surprised. - Promotes the organisation's brand and value proposition through the quality of every client interaction, and identifies any opportunities to extend or deepen client relationships, flagging these to the Manager.
Business development, external profile and strategic contribution	- Supports the division's business development activities as directed, including contributing to project scoping discussions, proposals, and tender responses. - Stays current with developments in evidence synthesis methods, sector trends, and funder priorities relevant to the division's focus areas, and shares relevant insights with the team. - Contributes to division and Institute strategic initiatives as needed.

Selection criteria: Qualifications, Skills, Experience and Personal qualities

Essential

To be successful the Associate should demonstrate the following technical and behavioural competencies:

- **Research degree:** An honours, masters, or PhD in public health, social sciences, economics health sciences, or a related field, or equivalent demonstrated research experience.
- **Evidence synthesis:** Demonstrated experience conducting literature searches, screening studies, extracting data, assessing methodological quality, and synthesising findings.
- **Research methods:** Strong working knowledge of qualitative and quantitative research methods, with the ability to apply these across a varied project portfolio.
- **Project management:** Proven ability to manage projects or work packages end-to-end, including planning, tracking deliverables, managing timelines, and escalating risks appropriately.
- **Client communication:** Experience acting as a client or stakeholder contact — communicating professionally, managing expectations, and maintaining trust through consistent delivery.
- **Contractor coordination:** Experience coordinating the inputs of contractors, researchers, or subject matter experts, including briefing contributors and quality-assuring their outputs.
- **Written communication:** Strong written communication skills, with the ability to synthesise complex information and produce clear, well-structured reports, presentations, and briefings for varied audiences.
- **Self-directed learning:** Proactive approach to learning — self-aware about capability gaps, motivated to develop new skills, and comfortable seeking direction and feedback.
- **Organisation:** Strong organisational skills and attention to detail, with the ability to manage multiple competing priorities and maintain high standards under time pressure.

Desirable

- **Rapid/systematic reviews:** Experience conducting or contributing to rapid reviews, scoping reviews, or systematic reviews.
- **Review tools:** Familiarity with AI-supported evidence synthesis tools or reference management software (e.g. Covidence, Rayyan, Endnote).
- **Focus areas:** Familiarity with one or more of the division's focus areas: mental health and suicide prevention; family, domestic and sexual violence; or patient flow and workforce planning.
- **Workshops:** Experience designing and facilitating stakeholder workshops, knowledge brokering sessions, or policy dialogues.
- **Broader methods:** Some exposure to evaluation, simulation modelling, or implementation science methods.
- **Econometrics:** Econometrics skills, including familiarity with causal inference methods, regression analysis, or the application of economic methods to health or social policy questions.
- **Ethics:** Familiarity with human research ethics frameworks and experience preparing or supporting ethics applications.
- **Networks:** Networks or relationships with government, research, or sector stakeholders.

Challenges

- Managing multiple projects with competing timelines — prioritising effectively, flagging risks early, and keeping clients informed so deliverables are never late or off-scope.

- Acting as the bridge between clients and external subject matter experts — translating client needs clearly, managing expectations on both sides, and maintaining quality and coherence across each engagement.
- Developing a working knowledge of the division's full capability suite — including evaluation, modelling, and implementation science — beyond core evidence synthesis skills, to contribute effectively to a matrix team.
- Balancing the structured, process-driven demands of the Evidence Check service with the varied and sometimes unpredictable nature of broader project work.

Key stakeholders and relationships

- Manager (reporting line)
- Colleagues across the division
- Clients and partner organisations relevant to assigned projects
- Contracted researchers and externally engaged subject matter experts
- Sax Institute cross-divisional colleagues (e.g., Communications, Business Transformation, Data and Research Services)