# 1. ROLE AND DUTIES OF A STATE ELECTORAL RETURNING OFFICER

A Western Australian Electoral Commission returning officer is a highly responsible administrative position, supervising the conduct of an election for a State electoral district or region in support of the Electoral Commissioner.

The job covers a wide range of tasks including assessing and booking polling places, selecting and appointing polling staff, delivering training, handling logistics and materials distribution, taking nominations, conducting the district level count of ballot papers and declaring the poll.

## General Duties

Under the direction of the Electoral Commissioner, a State returning officer performs the following specific duties and tasks.

- Be available for contact and duty throughout the election period
- Provide ongoing security and safe-keeping for polling materials
- Maintain records and accounts
- Maintain staff payment records in accordance with requirements
- Respond to enquiries from candidates, electors, polling site contacts and polling officials
- Respond to media enquiries of a statistical or factual nature
- Transport materials and undertake incidental travel
- Conduct whole of district counts and declare the poll
- Competently utilise computing equipment and software to facilitate requirements

## Specific Duties

*Prior to the issue of the Writ*

- Inspect and assess proposed polling places and confirm bookings if suitable (including mobile polling sites) and dispatch documentation for hire of premises where required
- Source alternate polling places if a venue is not suitable or available, in consultation with WAEC staff
- Complete and forward polling place profiles for each polling place to the WAEC by the due date
- Read training manuals and memorandums
- Attend all training sessions and complete online training
- Become familiar with polling requirements and historical records for the district or region
• Select polling place staff from applicants registered online
• Prepare offers of appointment to staff
• Prepare and dispatch provisional offers of appointment to polling staff (if applicable) as well as manuals and workbooks
• Liaise with potential candidates regarding nomination procedures and their obligations
• Liaise with neighbouring district returning officers regarding any dual polling places and other relevant matters
• Review polling place human resource and materials schedule
• Liaise with Returning Officer Liaison Officer regarding any additional staff and material resources

Between the issue of the Writ and nomination day
• Receive independent candidate nominations during and outside business hours
• Receive and remit any candidates’ deposits to the bank
• Follow up outstanding staff offers of appointment
• Contact polling place managers by phone to confirm availability
• Reconfirm bookings and access to premises with polling place contacts
• Follow-up outstanding hire of equipment if required

At close of nominations
• Set up and attend place of nominations for close of nominations
• Conduct draw for positions on ballot paper and transmit the final nomination details and results of the draw to the WAEC
• Remain available for contact until confirmation that all details are in order is received from the WAEC and you have confirmed proof of ballot paper artwork

Between close of nominations and polling day
• Arrange training venue and notify staff regarding face-to-face training sessions
• Receive and check staff packs
• Follow up any incomplete staff documentation
• Receive and reconcile ballot papers received
• Receive and check other polling place materials
• Allocate ballot papers and materials to polling places
• Conduct face-to-face training session for polling place managers and assistant polling place managers (evening and/or week-end)
• Conduct face-to-face training session for declaration issuing officers (evening and/or week-end)
• Conduct face-to-face training session for mobile polling teams (evening and/or weekend)
• Supply ballot papers and materials to polling place managers
• Replace polling place staff on an as needs basis
• Coordinate the conduct of mobile polling

On polling day
• Visit polling places during polling hours
• Respond to candidate and public enquiries
• Receive and monitor the receipt of primary vote and 2CP count figures from polling places
• Enter progressive polling place figures into the online Election Management System WA (EMSWA)
• Check-in polling place materials returned by polling place managers

After polling day and the first few days thereafter
• Reconcile polling place manager returns
• Complete statistical returns
• Check and verify staffing records used for payment of polling officials
• Complete staff returns and assessments for polling place and casual staff
• Conduct a fresh scrutiny of ordinary ballot papers
• Sort, check and package electoral rolls for return to the Scanning Centre
• Sort and package all used and unused materials for return to store
• Record number of unused ordinary ballot papers
• Package all used ballot papers for return to the WAEC
• Sort and reconcile all declaration votes issued at polling places in District
• Return (or arrange for the return) materials to Count Centre at the time allocated
• Conduct a fresh scrutiny of Legislative Assembly ordinary votes (flick check bundles and informality review) on the Monday or Tuesday following polling day

After the close off for postal votes (first Thursday after polling day)
• Conduct full distribution of preferences/two un-excluded candidate preference count
• Conduct informal vote survey
• Conduct recount(s), if required
• Declare the poll
• Return used Legislative Assembly ballot papers to the WAEC
• Write and return a post-election report to the WAEC
• Complete claim for out-of-pocket expenses and finalise accounts
• Participate in post-election evaluation process
2. REQUIREMENTS OF THE POSITION (OR SELECTION CRITERIA)

**Essential:**
Applicants must be able to demonstrate that they can meet the following selection criteria –

- Demonstrated administration, management and project management skills with the ability to meet tight deadlines
- Well developed written communication, verbal and interpersonal skills
- Team leadership skills and the ability to work as a flexible team member
- Demonstrated ability to train and supervise staff
- Competence in the use of computers, including sound skills and familiarity with Excel, Word and Outlook
- Evidence of strong numeracy skills, an eye for detail and the ability to follow required procedures
- Knowledge and experience of election processes (or their equivalent)

In addition, applicants must be currently enrolled on the WA Electoral Roll; have no active involvement or official connection with a political party; and have a current drivers licence and access to a motor vehicle.

3. REMUNERATION

District returning officers are engaged on a casual basis and are paid a flat fee for conducting a State district election. There are a number of remuneration categories depending on the number of polling places and mobile polling institutions within a district. There are work peaks and troughs over a period of several months, with some weeks where there may be no work commitments.

Gross payment for a State general election ranges from approximately $13,000 to $18,000 depending on the district category. In addition ROs are able to claim expenses such as travel, accommodation and telephone usage at prescribed Government rates.