
Job sharing - how to guide

Pay equity recommendation sheet five

Providing and encouraging job sharing in the workplace will increase the pool of available skills and talent for employers. Greater availability of job sharing and part time work will allow employees who do not wish to work full time to more fully participate in the workforce.

This pay equity 'recommendation sheet' provides information on how to put in place viable job sharing arrangements to assist in attracting and retaining valuable staff.

What is job sharing?

Job sharing is the sharing of one job by two or more employees who work on a part time basis. The employees share the work, hours, salary and entitlements allocated to one job.

Job sharing arrangements are suitable for most positions. There are a range of reasons employees may want to work in a part time or job share arrangement, including:

- combining work and family responsibilities
- return from parental leave
- to undertake study or
- phased retirement arrangement

Eligible jobs

Almost all jobs are capable of job sharing, including management positions. Employers should consider any application for job sharing carefully and openly. Some of the most traditional full time jobs have been successfully converted into job sharing arrangements.

Advantages of job sharing

- Retention of experienced and valued employees
- Attraction strategy – may attract a wide pool of applicants for new jobs
- Brings two sets of experience and skills to the job and workplace
- Organisation can be seen as an employer of choice
- The job is filled on a full time basis



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Dealing with requests for job share arrangements

Be prepared. Dealing with requests for job sharing, part time work and other flexible work arrangements is made easier by having a policy or position on job sharing and processes in place to examine requests from employees. Having a policy means that decisions can be made consistently, fairly and quickly.

When an employee makes a request for job sharing / part time work, managers should thoroughly consider the request and examine ways in which the request could be accommodated. Being creative and flexible is important. If it is not possible to meet the request exactly as made by the employee, discuss the issue and try for an alternative arrangement that suits everyone.

If a request is to be denied, it should only be on the basis that the job cannot be undertaken on a part time or job share basis, and there must be significant and clear business reasons why full time employment is a reasonable requirement for a particular role.

Any decisions made in relation to approval of job share arrangements should be documented in writing and a copy provided to the relevant employee. If a request for job share is denied, the employee should be provided with the reasons in writing.

A job sharing example

One government agency has a senior management position being job shared by two long-term employees, a female employee who has a young child, and a male employee who is on a phased retirement arrangement. Each works two days each week, and they alternate each Friday, so that each works exactly half time hours. Handover is done through emails, providing updates on workload and key issues.

How to implement job sharing

Work allocation

In a job sharing arrangement, work can be allocated in a number of ways:

- job sharers could share the same workload, such as in the cases of receptionists and supervisors;
- job sharers could have some tasks in common which they share, and other tasks which are individually allocated to one person; or

Work schedules

Any work schedule arrangement is possible as long as it is convenient for the organisation and employees involved. Some of the most common job sharing work schedules are:

- each employee works two and a half days per week with a hand over at midday on Wednesdays;
- one employee works mornings and the other works afternoons with a handover in the middle of the day; or
- one works two days and the other works three days each week.

Accommodation

In many cases job sharers use the same office, desk, chair, phone and computer. If job sharers' work time overlaps for longer periods, an extra desk, phone and computer may be needed.

Communication

Most job sharing arrangements include an overlap by the two sharers so they can pass on any relevant information and brief each other on work progress. Communication can be through written notes, emails, the phone, or, in some cases, by diary entries and administrative systems.

Conditions of employment

As job sharers are working on a part time basis, their conditions of employment will be the same as that for all part time employees, that is pro rata pay entitlements based on the number of hours worked. Job sharers are eligible to be paid for any sick leave or annual leave taken on a day they would normally have worked, or if a normal work day is a public holiday.

A job sharing example

Tania is a qualified childcare worker who recently returned to work after maternity leave. Before returning to work, Tania she put in a request to her employer to work 3 days per week rather than full time. Tania's employer considered the request, and recognised that the childcare centre could easily operate with a job share arrangement for Tania's position. A new staff member was recruited, on a two day per week basis to share Tania's job.

Integrating job sharing into the workplace

For a job share arrangement to be successful it must be accepted and supported by management and fellow employees. Employees who choose to job share must be seen as a part of the regular workforce. This means job sharing staff must continue to be included in team meetings where possible, social activities, and communication and consultation processes. Ongoing training and career development is just as important for part time staff as any other employees, and all part time employees should be considered as valuable contributors who are eligible for promotion where appropriate.

Consideration should also be given to how the success of the job sharing arrangement will be monitored and how the performance of each employee will be assessed. Organisations should also consider ahead of time what will occur if one job share partner leaves the job or does not wish to continue job sharing.

Job sharing checklist

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| Work time schedule agreed? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Work time schedule consistent with the relevant award or agreement? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Duties allocated - which duties will be shared and which for specific employees? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Overlap period / handover and communication methods agreed? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Job share arrangement agreed by both employees? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Job share arrangement approved by management? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Job share arrangement and work time schedule documented? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Copies given to all relevant staff? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other staff in the team informed of the job share arrangement? | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Accommodation arrangements agreed? | <input type="checkbox"/> |