



Job sharing

Work life balance fact sheet 2

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.

Benefits of job sharing

The establishment of a job sharing arrangement can bring a range of benefits to employers. These include:

- retaining experienced and valued employees;
- enabling mature age employees to remain at work rather than retire;
- attracting a wide pool of applicants for new jobs;
- bringing two sets of experience and skills to the job and workplace;
- promoting the organisation as an employer of choice; and
- making part time work available while retaining full time coverage of positions.

Eligible jobs

Almost all jobs are suitable for job sharing, including management positions. Employers should consider applications for job sharing carefully and openly. Many different full time jobs have been successfully converted into job sharing arrangements.

A job sharing example

One organisation has a senior management position which is being job shared by a female employee with a young child and a male employee on phased retirement. Each employee works half time - two set days a week plus alternate Fridays. Handover is done through emails and providing updates on workload and key issues.

How to implement job sharing

Work allocation

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

- job sharers could share the same tasks, such as in the case of receptionists and supervisors;
- the tasks could be evenly allocated or divided between the job sharers;
- job sharers could have some tasks in common which they share, and other tasks which are individually allocated to one person; or
- each job sharer could have a discrete workload with separate projects, responsibilities or tasks.

Work schedules

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

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

Communication

Many job sharing arrangements include an overlap period when the two job sharers can meet to pass on any relevant information and brief each other on work progress. Communication can also occur via written notes, emails, phone and diary entries.

Accommodation

In most cases job sharers are able to use the same office, desk, chair, phone and computer. However, where there is a significant overlap period it may be necessary to provide additional furniture and equipment.

Conditions of employment

Conditions of employment for job sharers will be the same as that for all part time employees, i.e. 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.

Dealing with job sharing requests

Be prepared. Dealing with requests for job sharing, part time work and other flexible work arrangements is made easier if there is an existing policy or and processes. Having a policy means 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 employee can be accommodated. Being creative and flexible is important.

If it is not operationally possible to meet the request, discuss the issue with the employee 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 nature of the job means that it cannot be undertaken on a part time or job share basis. There must be significant and clear business reasons why full time employment is necessary for a particular role.

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

Integrating job sharing into the workplace

The support of managers and colleagues is essential to a successful job share arrangement. Employees who job share need to be seen as a part of the regular workforce. This means wherever possible including them in team meetings, social activities and communication and consultation processes. Ongoing training and career development is as important for job sharing staff as other employees and all job sharing employees should be considered as valuable contributors who are eligible for promotion where appropriate.

It is also important to decide how the job sharing arrangement will be monitored, how employee performance will be assessed, and what will happen if one job sharer leaves or does not wish to continue job sharing.

A job sharing example

Tania is a qualified childcare worker who recently returned to work after maternity leave. Before returning to work, Tania put in a request to her employer to work 3 days per week rather than full time. Tania's employer decided that a job share arrangement would suit the operations of the childcare centre. A new staff member was then recruited on a two day per week basis to share Tania's job.

Job sharing checklist

- Policy on job sharing developed for the organisation?
- Work time schedule agreed?
- Work time schedule consistent with the relevant award or agreement?
- Duties allocated – which duties will be shared and which for specific employees?
- Overlap period / handover and communication methods agreed?
- Job share arrangement agreed by both employees?
- Job share arrangement approved by management?
- Job share arrangement and work time schedule documented?
- Copies given to all relevant staff?
- Other staff in the team informed of the job share arrangement?
- Accommodation arrangements agreed?

Where to go for more information

Further information about work life balance strategies is available from the Department of Commerce work life website www.worklife.wa.gov.au