

Union Encouragement

Statement

On 14 May 2015 the Queensland Government released the *Queensland Government Commitment to Union Encouragement Policy*.

Along with the reforms contained within the *Industrial Relations (Restoring Fairness) and Other Legislation Amendment Act 2015*, which was enacted by Parliament on 11 June 2015, this policy forms part of the Government's commitment to implement industrial relations reform.

This policy has application across the Department of Health (the Department) and all Hospital and Health Services (HHSs).

The policy encourages union membership among government employees by committing to:

- acknowledge and encourage the role union delegates and job representatives play within the workplace
- support and provide access to union delegates and officials, subject to relevant legislation
- encourage the establishment of consultative committees
- promote reasonable and constructive paid leave for employees to acquire knowledge and competencies in industrial relations
- provide new employees with union information, a membership application and union encouragement statement at appointment and on-boarding
- provide details of new employees to relevant union/s, subject to relevant privacy principles.

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1 Scope

This guideline is provided to support the consistent application of the policy across the Department and all HHSs.

This guideline is to be read in conjunction with relevant awards, agreements, human resource policies and supporting documents as listed in this guideline.

2 Responsibilities

2.1 Employee

- The employee must submit, in writing, any objection relating to the release of their name and workplace details to union/s. This objection is to be forwarded to the employee's local Payroll Services team.
- When undertaking or participating in union representative activities an employee should undertake a reasonable assessment to ensure that service delivery and work requirements are not duly affected. In making that assessment discussions with the line manager may need to occur.

2.2 Employer

- The employer acknowledges the role that union delegates/representatives undertake in the workplace.
- Health system employers are required to have in place a Health Consultative Forum to support information sharing and problem solving with unions. There may also be a requirement for the establishment of Local Consultative Forums, which would report to a Health Consultative Forum, to support engagement opportunities between the Department/HHS and unions at the local level.
- A reasonable approach to the responsible use of facilities is to be provided for union delegates when undertaking union related activities.
- The employer recognises that a union member can access their union delegate or official during paid time to discuss industrial matters, provided that service delivery is not disrupted and work requirements are not unduly affected.

3 Requirements

These guidelines have been developed to support implementation of union encouragement arrangements within Queensland Health.

The following is provided to assist understanding of the provisions:

3.1 Pre-employment

3.1.1 Applicant Kit

Candidates seeking engagement with any Department division or HHS will be provided the hyperlink to the relevant union/s website in order that they may access union information.

3.1.2 Employee commencement

The Employee Commencement form has been amended to incorporate the following statement: *On commencement of duty, your name, position title and workplace location may be provided to a relevant union for the purpose of providing the union with the opportunity to discuss with you the benefits of union membership.*

3.2 Engagement

3.2.1 Appointment

The following clause (or similar) may be used within appointment and induction material so as to satisfy the government's commitment relating to union encouragement: *'Queensland Health recognises your entitlement to join a registered union. Whilst you are not obliged to join a union, Queensland Health encourages its employees to do so. On commencement of duty, your name, job title/stream employed, workplace location, work email and date you commenced employment may be provided to a relevant union (i.e. The union/s who are parties to your relevant Queensland Health certified agreement and award) for the purpose of providing the union with the opportunity to discuss with you the benefits of union membership.'*

3.3 Employment

3.3.1 On-boarding

The provision of union information to new employees places responsibilities on the employer and unions. To ensure the employer fulfils its obligations, unions will need to provide suitable and current information for inclusion in orientation and induction materials.

Union representatives should be given the opportunity to discuss union membership with new employees during the on-boarding process.

Some examples on how this may occur include the ability to provide a presentation during orientation induction sessions, the participation in on-boarding activities, eLearning, and the provision of union information in new starter information kits/welcome packs.

As there are different approaches to on-boarding and orientation processes across the state, employers and unions should agree on union involvement in these processes at the Health Consultative Forum.

3.3.2 Leave

Employees may be eligible to attend industrial relations education sessions to acquire knowledge and competencies in industrial relations. Refer Industrial Relations Education Leave HR Policy C39 (QH-POL-154).

3.4 Reporting

3.4.1 New employees

To support the provision of new employee details to unions, a report will be accessible from the employer providing details of the employee's name, job title/stream employed, workplace location, work email and date the employee commenced employment.

Schedule 1 of this Guideline provides a template report that may be provided by the employer to unions detailing name, job title/stream employed, workplace location, work email and date the employee commenced employment.

4 Human Rights

Section 22 of the *Human Rights Act 2019* protects the right of peaceful assembly and freedom of association with others, including the right to form and join trade unions.

5 Legislation

- *Industrial Relations Act 2016*
- *Human Rights Act 2019*
- Queensland Health certified agreements and awards

6 Supporting documents

- Industrial Relations Education Leave HR Policy C39 (QH-POL-154)
- Union encouragement HR Policy F4 (QH-POL-248)

Definitions

Union	For the purpose of this policy, means an employee organisation registered under chapter 12 of the <i>Industrial Relations Act 2016</i> .
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Version control

Version	Date	Comments
1.0	21 October 2015	Developed to support re-enlivenment of Union encouragement HR Policy F4
2.0	August 2021	Updated to reflect new legislation

Schedule 1 – Sample Report Template

First Name	Surname	Job Title/Stream employed	Org Unit Name	Facility Name/work location	Work email	Date employment commenced