

# Health practitioners and dental officers – Professional development allowance and leave

## Human Resources Guideline (QH-GDL-146-1)

### Statement

The purpose of this guideline is to provide additional clarity regarding the entitlement for professional development allowance and leave for eligible health practitioners and dental officers.

The details of this entitlement are contained within the *Health practitioners and dental officers – Professional development allowance and leave HR Policy C42*, and clauses 6.2, 6.3 and 6.4 of the *Health Practitioners and Dental Officers (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No. 4) 2022 (HPDO4)*.

### Contents

1	Professional development package – background.....	1
2	Quick facts.....	2
3	Professional development leave (PDL).....	2
3.1	Reasonable travel time.....	4
3.2	Rostering tips.....	4
4	Professional development allowance (PDA).....	5
5	Taxation.....	5
	History.....	5

## 1 Professional development package – background

This material is provided to assist line managers to manage the professional development entitlement for eligible health practitioners (HP) and dental officers (DO). Information contained in this guideline does not replace any policy or agreement/award information otherwise available.

The entitlement to professional development leave (PDL) will be paid as incurred and the expenditure will be allocated against the relevant cost centre at the time the leave is taken. The professional development allowance (PDA) will be paid via payroll and Pay As You Go (PAYG) tax will be withheld.



## 2 Quick facts

- The PDL entitlement must be used for activities or items relevant to the practice of HP or DO's and development for the role. Relevance of activities should be discussed between the HP or DO and their line manager.
- Approval for further professional development funding and leave is at the discretion of the line manager/delegate and dependent on proof of expenditure of the employee's PDA on approved professional development activities.
- PDL and PDA accrual follows the employee between the department units and/or hospital and health services (HHSs).
- All PDL is paid at ordinary hours, regardless of when it is rostered, and no penalties will be applied, including shift penalty payments.
- Employees need to apply for this leave, and it is to be rostered.
- Where professional development opportunities have been discussed, these should be included in the employee's performance and development (PAD) process.
- Ad hoc PDL applications that have not previously been included in the employee's PAD are to be considered equitably and should not be unreasonably refused.
- Employees can access PDL to attend virtual/online professional development conferences/courses. This includes online courses being facilitated overseas.
- Employees can access PDL for non-conference/course development activities, as long as the proposed learning activities and anticipated outcomes can be demonstrated.

## 3 Professional development leave (PDL)

- PDL hours are accrued each fortnight, so after each full year of employment an employee will have three days (pro-rata for part-time) accrued. This does not limit an employee accessing all, or part, of their PDL at the commencement of each year, resulting in a potential negative balance of up to 24 hours.
- PDL balances will be displayed on myHR.
- PDL will cease accruing once the equivalence of two years entitlement (48 hours) is achieved. Once any leave debit occurs, the accrual will recommence.
- A PDL rostered day or subsequent travel time may be converted to sick leave if applicable. In such instances, the PDL balance will be re-credited. Such sick leave will be processed in the usual manner and employees should follow the current approval and notification processes in the unit. Part-time employees taking PDL as an additional shift may cancel this leave and have the balance re-credited - sick leave may be accessed in this instance.
- Any penalties that arise from an employee taking PDL or associated travel time resulting in more than full-time hours will be the responsibility of the department/HHS.
- While on PDL, the employee continues to accrue long service leave and annual leave.
- PDL attracts relevant superannuation contributions.
- Accrual of PDL occurs on ordinary hours worked and all paid leave, including half pay leave, at the full rate. Overtime worked is not recognised for accrual purposes.

- Whilst an employee is on any form of unpaid leave, any positive or negative PDL balances will be held despite the length of this leave. The balance may be accessed and will recommence accrual on return from unpaid leave.
- HPs and DOs seconded out of their respective classification stream will have the positive or negative PDL balance held. PDL will not accrue and may not be accessed until the employee returns to their respective HP or DO stream.
- A negative PDL balance can be held of up to 24 hours negative balance. At the end of the PDL accrual year, employees would be expected to have a nil balance. If the employee has a negative balance at the anniversary date, leave taken in the upcoming year will be adjusted accordingly.
- Line managers are to monitor and appropriately manage such negative balances.
- Line managers need to be mindful of the PDL balance of an employee when approving professional development activities to minimise the risk of having large negative leave balances.
- Employees who work in two permanent part-time positions in the same Department/HHS, or between Department/HHSs, will have all ordinary worked hours contribute to the one accumulated balance. In such circumstances both line managers will need to communicate pending approvals (prior to recording in the payroll system) to monitor and manage leave balances.
  - For aggregate employees, both line managers will need to communicate pending approvals (prior to recording in the payroll system) to assist in the monitoring and managing of leave balances.
  - For concurrent employees, the pro-rata balance will display on each assignment's payslip.
- Should an employee terminate employment with Queensland Health, negative leave balances are waived and are not recoverable. If the employee is re-employed by Queensland Health, the accrual balance recommences at zero.
- Should an employee terminate employment with Queensland Health, and hold a positive PDL balance, such balance will not be paid out. This positive balance will be reinstated, if eligible, should they return to employment within 12 months.
- If a full-time employee wishes to access PDL and PDL associated travel on a day that they are not rostered to work, the employee needs to seek approval from their line manager regarding their absence from the workplace to attend the professional development activity. PDL is subject to organisational convenience and equity, and should not be unreasonably refused.

- To access PDL on shifts not rostered to work:
  - Full-time employees must seek approval for a roster change
  - Part-time employees must seek approval for an additional shift or a roster change.

Current Arrangements							
	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Week 1	8:00	8:00	8:00	8:00	8:00	Off	Off
Week 2	8:00	8:00	8:00	8:00	8:00	Off	Off
Possible rostering arrangement							
	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun
Week 1	8:00	8:00	8:00	8:00	8:00	Off	Off
Week 2	Off	8:00	8:00	8:00	8:00	PDL	Off

Where employees are using their entitlement to PDL for overseas travel, ministerial approval is not required.

### 3.1 Reasonable travel time

- Reasonable rostered travel time associated with PDL is to be approved at the employee's immediate supervisor's discretion and would constitute the most economical and practical route possible to and from an activity.
- Travel time is always paid at single time and is treated as paid leave not debited from any existing leave balances.

### 3.2 Rostering tips

- PDL and travel time should be planned, applied for and rostered the same as other leave processes.
- PDL and travel time may be full or part shifts, but travel time cannot exceed eight hours, single time on any one day.
- PDL must be a minimum of one hour.
- Line managers should follow the usual clinical staffing/resource decision processes associated with other leave types.
- Employees approved to undertake PDL are to have their PDL rostered. For rostering purposes, PDL is to be considered a rostered shift and is to be managed as such. PDL on non-rostered days outside 76 hours per fortnight could incur overtime. A roster adjustment should be planned within the same fortnight so that the employee does not exceed their usual hours.
- Part-time employees may have PDL rostered as an additional shift above their appointed hours at the line manager's discretion.

- Changes to rosters should be communicated in the same manner roster changes are currently communicated in the Department/HHS – this may be through an attendance variation and claim form (AVAC).
- PDL can be followed or preceded by other leave types such as recreation leave.

#### 4 Professional development allowance (PDA)

- PDA accrues on ordinary hours worked and all paid leave, including half pay leave, at the full rate.
- Overtime worked is not recognised for accrual purposes.
- No accrual occurs on unpaid leave, including proportionate leave (i.e. the purchased leave period) and workers compensation.
- Employees cannot use the travel hub service or receive any additional travel allowances.
- Employees also need to arrange their own travel insurance if required.

#### 5 Taxation

- Employees should contact the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) or seek independent financial/taxation advice regarding claiming taxation deductions for self-education expenses incurred using the PDA.

### History

Date	Change
11 October 2024	Guideline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reformatted and amended to update references and naming conventions</li> <li>• clarification payment of PDL while on Higher Duties moved to HR policy C42.</li> </ul>
June 2020	Guideline formatted as part of the HR Policy review.
October 2018	New guideline to support the Health practitioners and dental officers – Professional development allowance and leave HR Policy C42.