

1 PURPOSE

To specify the principles and procedures for the conditional advancement of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers above their substantive level up to classification level OO9.

2 APPLICATION

This policy applies to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health workers appointed in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Career Structure 2007.

3 GUIDELINES

Guidelines may be developed to facilitate implementation of this policy. The guidelines must be consistent with this policy.

4 DELEGATION

In accordance with the Queensland Health Human Resource Delegations Manual, the Director-General will approve all advancements under the Conditional Advancement Scheme.

5 REFERENCES

- *Public Service Act 2008*
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Career Structure 2007
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Scope of Practice
- Performance Appraisal and Development HR Policy G9
- Performance Improvement HR Policy G11
- Guide for the Resolution of Informal Complaints at the Local Level
- IRM 3.5 Grievance Resolution and EB6 Grievance Settling and Industrial Disputes (Preserved)

6 SUPERSEDES

- This is a new policy

7 POLICY

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Conditional Advancement Scheme is a process whereby the health worker can seek recognition of their outstanding achievement and performance and be paid at a higher salary level, while remaining in their substantive position.

The successful applicants continue to perform all of the duties and responsibilities of their substantive position.

The continued payment of the higher salary level is dependant upon the health worker being assessed through a Performance Appraisal and Development (PAD) process as continuing to perform at the level to which they have been advanced.

Each financial year the number (quota) of advancement positions which will be funded is determined.

The number of advancements awarded is dependent on the quota, irrespective of the number of applicants achieving a score above the cut-off point. The highest ranked applicants, depending on the quota, will receive salary advancements.

8 APPLYING THE POLICY

8.1 Eligibility

To be eligible to apply for conditional advancement, employees are to:

- be employed as a health worker in accordance with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Career Structure 2007;
- have a minimum substantive classification level of OO3; and
- have a current PAD plan which confirms their performance exceeds the requirements of their position.

It is the responsibility of the health worker's supervisor to ensure a PAD plan is in place.

Applicants do not need to be at the top pay point of their substantive classification level before applying for conditional advancement.

8.2 Criteria for Assessment

An applicant's outstanding achievement and performance is assessed according to the following four **Assessment Criteria**:

1. Demonstrated leadership, influence and professional/clinical judgement in service delivery to meet the needs and priorities of consumers, the community and Queensland Health;
2. Well developed communication, interpersonal and negotiation skills used to develop professional and multi-disciplinary partnerships for the purpose of improving consumer outcomes;
3. Well developed skills in relation to change in clinical/professional practice and quality improvement activities to optimise consumer and service outcomes; and
4. Demonstrated key role and influence in the training and development of relevant health service providers that may include, but is not limited to, student/trainee health workers

in **one or more** of the following **Recognition Areas**:

1. Advanced clinical skills
2. Research and education relevant to the business of the health service
3. Community development

according to the following **Specific Focus Areas**:

<u>Specific Focus Area</u>	<u>Classification Level</u>
National level	OO9
State level	OO8
More than three Districts	OO7
More than one District	OO6
District	OO5
Community	OO4

8.3 Application Process

- Applications for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Conditional Advancement are called in July each year, closing on the last day of September each year (an “application round”). Employees may apply for conditional advancement once only during an application round.
- In its first year of operation (2009), the coordinator of the Conditional Advancement Scheme will advise the relevant dates for the application round.
- Applications must be submitted in writing, in a statement addressing the **Assessment Criteria** against their chosen **Recognition Area/s** at their nominated **Classification Level**. The Classification Level may be higher than the one immediately above their existing substantive classification level (i.e. applicants have the opportunity to advance by more than one classification level).
- The written statement is to be accompanied by a résumé and other documentation as specified in the application kit. A strict word limit will apply to the written application and résumé. A kit containing application forms, assessment criteria and guidelines will be available to all applicants.
- In making a recommendation, district management is to consider whether the applicant’s attributes (skills, abilities, aptitude, qualifications, knowledge, experience and personal qualities) are directly relevant to the district’s services and priorities. The applicant’s attributes are the skills, abilities, aptitude, qualifications, knowledge, experience and personal qualities that an applicant is applying to have recognised through the advancement scheme. If a district indicates that the skills claimed by the applicant are not aligned with the district’s strategic priorities, or not relevant to the services provided by the district, an application will not be assessed further.
 - Unsuccessful applicants can access the relevant QH grievance procedure in accordance with section 8.7 of this policy.
- An applicant must be exceeding the performance requirements of their current classification level to be considered for advancement. This is to be confirmed through a PAD process at the health service district level in accordance with the Performance Appraisal and Development HR Policy G9.
- Two written references are required to be submitted with an application. One of these may be supplied by the applicant’s supervisor.

- An applicant's supervisor will be asked to endorse an application. It is expected that an applicant will discuss their application with their supervisor.
- Whether the supervisor endorses an application or not, applications must be forwarded to a senior manager/head of unit knowledgeable in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workers Scope of Practice for endorsement.
- Senior manager endorsement must be followed by district chief executive officer endorsement, before the application is forwarded to the coordinator of the Conditional Advancement Scheme (Statewide Recruitment - Queensland Health Shared Service Provider). The coordinator is to convene the assessment panel.

8.4 Assessment of Applications

- Central panels assess the written applications against the **Assessment Criteria** for the relevant **Recognition Area** in relation to the nominated **Specific Focus Area/s**, using a merit-based process.
- Assessment is based on merit as defined in Section 28 of the *Public Service Act 2008* (i.e. abilities, aptitude, skills, qualifications, knowledge, experience and personal qualities).
- One panel is assigned to assess applications for each classification level.
- The role of the panel is to assess and score the applications only.
- All applications from health workers received during an application round will create one total applicant pool. All applications within the pool will be ranked, based on the assessment scores.
- The panel may contact the applicant during the assessment of an application to clarify information contained in their application.
- The panel may contact nominated referees during the assessment of an application. A referee can make comment regarding the **Assessment Criteria**, **Recognition Area** and/or **Specific Focus Areas** contained in an application.
- Panels may also contact others, such as a supervisor, to clarify/verify aspects of an application. The applicant will be advised if a person other than those referees nominated by the applicant is to be contacted.
- Panels will be constituted by the coordinator of the Conditional Advancement Scheme (Statewide Recruitment - Queensland Health Shared Service Provider) for approval by the Executive Director, Corporate Services (via HR Branch, Corporate Office).
- Each assessment panel will comprise of two expert content knowledge people (health workers at a senior level) and an independent person to assess the written applications. The independent person may be from HR Branch or the Indigenous Workforce Unit (both within Corporate Office), or district HR.

- An applicant must achieve a minimum score (i.e. the cut-off point) to be considered for advancement.
- The number of advancements awarded will be dependent on the funded quota, irrespective of the number of applicants achieving a score above the cut-off point. There are to be qualitative statements explaining the basis of the allocation of scores. The highest ranked applicants, depending on the funded quota, receive advancements.
- In each application round, if no applications reach the minimum score, no advancements are approved.
- The Director-General or delegate is to approve all advancements under the Conditional Advancement Scheme.

8.5 Successful Applicants

- Successful applicants are advised in writing of the outcome of the assessment process, namely to which classification level they will be advanced.
- Successful applicants are to receive advancements subject to ongoing satisfactory performance at that level and alignment with health service district strategic directions.
- Successful applicants are awarded the title “Conditionally Advanced Health Worker” during the period that they continue to satisfactorily perform at the nominated classification level.
- Successful applicants are advanced to pay point one of the higher classification level to which their advancement has been approved.
- The new salary level is payable as of the first day of January in the year following the application round.
- The achievement and maintenance of advancement is based upon continuing performance, not past performance of an employee.
- Employees will be returned to their substantive classification level if:
 - they no longer retain the position that led to their advancement due to either voluntary transfer or movement to another position;
 - they are absent from the workplace for more than three months;
 - there is a change in the role they are required to perform resulting from changes in service delivery or technology; or
 - they are assessed through a PAD process as not continuing to perform at the level to which they have been advanced (see sections 8.8 and 8.9).
- Annual salary increments are considered by the candidate’s supervisor after each accumulated 12 month (FTE) period, subject to ongoing satisfactory performance at the advanced level, confirmed by a PAD process.

- Superannuation contributions by both the employer and the employee are based on the salary classification level at which the successful applicant is remunerated for the duration of the advancement.
- All entitlements due to a successful applicant are paid at the higher salary classification level during the period that they continue to undertake the higher level role.

8.6 Unsuccessful Applicants

- Unsuccessful applicants are advised in writing of the outcome of the assessment process.
- Unsuccessful applicants can request feedback regarding their application and the outcome of the assessment process. Open and honest feedback should be provided by the chair of the assessment panel, particularly in relation to factors which precluded the candidate from being recommended for advancement.

8.7 Appeals and Grievances

- Any applicant who considers that the Conditional Advancement Scheme process was not applied appropriately to their application can access the relevant Queensland Health grievance procedure.
- Before lodging a grievance, applicants must obtain feedback provided by the assessment panel and discuss this with their supervisor. A grievance can only be lodged in relation to the process and not the merit of the application. Grievances are not a 'second chance' to provide more information for consideration by the panel.
- Applicants have no entitlement to lodge a promotion appeal against an individual conditional advancement as this scheme does not involve permanent appointment to a vacant position.
- The coordinator of the Conditional Advancement Scheme (Statewide Recruitment, Queensland Health Shared Service Provider) can review the process by which an application was assessed. The coordinator may reconvene an assessment panel to reconsider the application if they have any concerns about process issues.
- A health worker who is still aggrieved after the coordinator of the Conditional Advancement Scheme has reviewed the process in relation to their application can access the relevant Queensland Health grievance procedure.

8.8 Performance Management

- Monitoring of work performance is part of the normal PAD process in accordance with the Performance Appraisal and Development HR Policy G9.
- An employee's PAD must also include measurement against the **Assessment Criteria** in relation to the **Specific Focus Area** and **Recognition Area** used to award the health worker advancement.

8.9 Performance Improvement Process

- The process for managing unsatisfactory performance is outlined in the Performance Improvement HR Policy G11. In the first instance, unsatisfactory performance is to be managed through the process outlined in this policy.
- Employees who are identified as not performing at a satisfactory level are to be given a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate that they can raise their performance level and can continue to perform at an advanced level.
- If, following implementation of the performance improvement process, an employee's work performance does not improve to a level consistent with the classification level to which they have advanced, the employee's supervisor is to notify the coordinator of the scheme within Statewide Recruitment, QH Shared Service Provider. This notification must outline in writing the specific concerns with the employee's performance and all steps taken by the district/service to address these concerns. A copy of this notice is to be provided to the employee concerned. After receiving this notification, the coordinator is to reconvene the assessment panel for their classification level.
- Prior to taking any further action, the assessment panel for that year will review the notification and determine whether any further information is required before progressing the matter. The panel may, but is not required to:
 - interview the employee and/or district management to ascertain the validity of the concerns;
 - suggest strategies for addressing the performance concern, including setting a time frame for further review;
 - seek advice from a person recognised for their expertise in the relevant area;
 - propose that the employee undergo an assessment related to the performance concern;
 - decide to commence the process for return to the employee's substantive classification level; or
 - undertake any other activity that the assessment panel deems appropriate.
- If the assessment panel decides to commence the process for the employee to return to their substantive classification level they are to:
 - Outline the grounds, in writing, as to why the assessment panel is of the view that the employee should be returned to their substantive classification level and provide the employee with at least 14 days to respond; and
 - Request the employee, in writing, to show cause as to why they should not be returned to their substantive classification level.
- The employee may request an interview with the assessment panel, or the chair of that panel if all of the panel are not available within a reasonable period of time. The purpose of the interview is to clarify the reasons for the proposed return to the employee's substantive classification level, and any other associated issues.

- Should the employee choose to have union or other representation, all costs associated with this will be met by the employee. Any other costs incurred by the employee (e.g. travel costs) will only be met where there has been prior written approval by the district chief executive officer/state manager.
- Upon receipt of the employee's response, the assessment panel will convene and make a written recommendation to the relevant district chief executive officer. This recommendation will clearly identify whether the employee should be returned to their substantive classification level and the reasons for this, or outline another course of action.
- The employee is advised in writing of:
 - the outcome of the process;
 - if the decision is that the employee is to be returned to their substantive classification, the date that this will occur; or
 - any other relevant action.

9 DEFINITIONS

Application Round	Applications for Conditional Advancement are called in July each year, closing on the last day of September each year. (The new salary level is payable from the first day of January in the year following the application round.)
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10 HISTORY

November 2008	Developed as a result of a commitment in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Worker Career Structure 2007 and following discussion in the Indigenous Interest Based Bargaining Group.
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