

# Human Resources Policy

## Administrative stream – relief staff

**Policy Number:** B33 (QH-POL-155)

**Publication date:** June 2022

**Purpose:** To outline the process for the effective operation and management of administrative staff for in-house relief opportunities, relief pools and the appointment of permanent relief staff to vacant positions of a non-relieving nature. This process is designed to promote fair and equitable access to at level and higher duties opportunities.

**Application:** This policy applies to employees in the administrative stream working for Queensland Health.

**Delegation:** The 'delegate' is as listed in the relevant Department of Health Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual, or Hospital and Health Services Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual, as amended from time to time.

### Legislative or other authority:

- Queensland Public Health Sector Certified Agreement (No. 10) 2016 (EB10)
- Public Service Commission Directive No. 08/20 – Casual employment
- Public Service Commission Directive No. 09/20 – Fixed term temporary employment.
- Public Service Commission Directive No. 12/20 – Recruitment and Selection
- Public Service Commission Directive No. 18/20 - Supporting employees affected by workplace change

### Related policy or documents:

- Recruitment and Selection HR Policy B1 (QH-POL-212)
- Fixed temporary Employment HR Policy B25 (QH-POL-243)
- Casual Employment HR Policy B26 (QH-POL-110)
- Higher Duties HR Policy B30 (QH-POL-260)
- Supporting employees affected by workplace change HR Policy B36 (QH-POL-237)

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## 1 In-house relief process for administrative staff at classification AO3 and above

Arrangements for in-house relief for administrative staff at classification AO3 and above have been designed to promote fair and equitable access to at level and higher duties opportunities. They provide backfill of temporarily vacant positions due to planned leave or secondment of the incumbent. The arrangements are only for circumstances greater than one week, and when relief periods are for less than 12 months. Continuous or consecutive extended periods of leave accumulating to greater than 12 months are to be managed in accordance with Recruitment and Selection HR Policy B1.

### 1.2 Relief registers

Local HR units are to hold a relief register of administrative stream staff requesting the opportunity to be considered for relieving opportunities in their geographic area (within their unit, facility or across their Hospital and Health Service (HHS)/division). HR units are to advise staff of the mandatory information to be provided for inclusion on the register, for example, a local CV template.

Local HR units should seek expressions of interest (EOIs) for staff to be added to the relief register every six months. Staff may however apply at any time to be added or removed from the relief register. It is incumbent on interested staff to ensure they are registered with the local HR unit and remain on the updated register if they wish to access relieving opportunities.

New employees are to be advised of the ability to access relieving opportunities, and the process required to be included on the relief register.

Performance appraisal and development activities are also to be used as an opportunity to identify staff wishing to be given an opportunity to relieve in at level or higher classification level positions.

### 1.3 Filling an in-house temporary vacancy

On becoming aware of a temporary vacancy of less than 12 months duration (i.e. a vacancy not requiring a full merit selection process), the line manager is to first check whether there are any employees affected by workplace change to fill the position (refer Supporting employees affected by workplace change HR Policy B36) before proceeding to fill the vacancy.

When there are no employees affected by workplace change, the manager is to request a copy of the relief register from their local HR unit. The manager is to first seek to fill the position with a candidate from the local area who is on the relief register.

When more than one local candidate is determined suitable for appointment to a vacancy, a simple closed merit process is to be conducted between those employees only, which could include:

- a brief CV (refer attachment two); an informal interview; a work sample exercise that relates to the key attributes of the role; a brief (verbal or written) referee report from the employee's current/recent line manager confirming their ability to undertake the job.

The manager is to check mandatory qualifications, registrations and other pre-employment checks required for the vacant position. The selection decision is to be documented in a brief selection report, in accordance with Recruitment and Selection HR Policy B1 (contact your local HR unit).

When a manager is unable to fill the relief positions from the relief request list, recruitment can be undertaken in line with Recruitment and Selection HR Policy B1, for example, an EOI.

In order to maximise the learning experience for staff relieving in higher classification level positions, the staff are to be provided with the following:

- an accurate role description outlining duties and responsibilities
- a brief handover and discussion of current work priorities with both the incumbent and the line manager
- regular informal performance monitoring and constructive feedback
- de-briefing at the end of the period of relief with the relief position line manager and their substantive line manager, to consolidate the new learned skills.

#### 1.4 Special arrangements for AO3 relief

The relevant HR unit is to ensure that for periods greater than one week, AO2 staff on the relief register are to be offered higher duties. Fixed term temporary, casual or agency staff are not to be used for AO3 leave relief unless exceptional circumstances exist, i.e. when a qualification is required for the position and no staff on the relief register have that qualification. Such circumstances are to be discussed at the next health consultative forum (HCF) or equivalent.

## 2 Appointment of permanent relief staff to non-relieving positions

Administrative staff employed as permanent relievers at AO2 or AO3 classification level for a period of 12 months or more are to have first option to be placed in a vacant position in which they have relieved and where the role is of the same classification level.

This is to occur prior to advertising or registering the vacancy with staff search for deployment/redeployment purposes.

When more than one permanent reliever expresses an interest in a vacant position, a closed merit process will be conducted. All permanent relievers who have expressed an interest in the vacancy will be assessed on their relevant experience to the vacant position. The unsuccessful candidate/s are to have first option of the next suitable position/s.

Relievers are to be appointed to the position through transfer at level (refer Recruitment and Selection HR Policy B1).

### History:

June 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– amended to update references and naming conventions</li> <li>– merged Appointment of Permanent Relief Staff to Non-Relieving Positions - Administrative Stream HR Policy B31 and Relief Pool – Administrative Stream – Guidelines HR Policy B34 into this policy</li> <li>– updated recruitment processes in line with Recruitment and selection HR Policy B1</li> <li>– reflected changes to employees requiring placement following the release of the supporting employees affected by workplace change Directive 18/20.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
October 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amended to:</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- reflect changes to Surplus Employees and Priority Placement Employees HR Policy B36 following the release of directives 12/09 and 14/09.</li> <li>- reflect that either the QHSSP or local People and Culture unit may be responsible for maintenance of the register.</li> <li>- ensure staff have the option to register for at level relief opportunities.</li> <li>- Include selection report approval section for panel members.</li> </ul>
July 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protected IRM 4.5-1 reformatted as part of the HR policy consolidation project in accordance with EB7- amended to allow for AO3 relief pool positions.</li> </ul>
March 2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IRM 4.5-1 In House Relief Process for Administrative Staff at AO3 Positions and Above amended.</li> </ul>
January 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IRM 4.5-1 In House Relief Process for Administrative Staff at AO3 Positions and Above</li> </ul>

## Attachment One – Relief pool guidelines for administrative stream

### 1 Administrative relief pools

The purpose of the relief pool is to provide Queensland Health with a mechanism to backfill absences and position vacancies to meet service delivery needs and avoid impacts on staff workloads.

The effective operation and management of administrative relief pools ensures continuity of administrative services and assists in supporting the provision of high quality health services. Administrative relief pools:

- provide work areas with administrative support from appropriately skilled staff
- reduce backlogs and workload issues in certain areas
- enhance training opportunities for administrative staff.

Administrative relief pools need to be flexible and take into account individual work area needs, as well as business and service requirements, in line with resource management processes. Some work areas already provide built-in arrangements to cover leave.

Relief pools provide a structure to backfill and support administrative positions which occur as a result of various forms of planned or extended leave, including but not limited to:

- annual leave
- sick leave
- maternity/parental leave
- training
- short periods of long service leave
- higher duty appointments
- secondments.

#### 1.1 Consultation

Consultation on the creation, development and operation of relief pools is to occur through Hospital Consultative Forums (HCFs - or equivalent), with the relevant unions and through other relevant staff consultation processes.

#### 1.2 Establishment of pool/organisational requirements

Queensland Health is committed to maximising permanent employment.

- Every effort is to be made to establish a pool of permanent relief staff when practical and appropriate.
- Relief pools are to be adequately staffed and resourced.
- The operational demands on relief pool resources are to be considered in annual funding/budget allocation processes.
- The use of casual employment in relief pools is to be in accordance with Casual Employment HR Policy B26 and endorsed by the EB10 Implementation Group (EB10IG).
- Temporary positions in relief pools are to comply with the requirements of Fixed term temporary employment HR Policy B25.

### 1.3 Determination of relief needs

- Positions with direct patient/client contact are to be back-filled (e.g. ward reception, admissions, clinics, emergency departments).
- In consultation with staff, a planned leave roster arrangement is to be implemented to identify when and where relief requirements exist.
- The relief pool is to be structured (when no other built-in arrangements exist), to manage absences on the basis of an average of six weeks per full-time equivalent (FTE) employee. The relief requirements may be greater than six weeks per FTE employee when leave on half pay arrangements are accessed.

### 1.4 Training and development

- All relief pool employees are to receive training prior to commencing their relief duties. This training is to be structured and cover the range of skills required for relieving. The training program for relief staff is to be documented and developed by the coordinator of the relief pool, in conjunction with the supervisor/s of those work areas where relief is to be provided.
- When on-the-job training is required, such training is to be provided by an appropriately skilled and authorised person.
- Staff development and performance within these pools is to be managed in accordance with Queensland Health processes.
- The relief pool is to be made up of the skills required to work and relieve in the areas being covered. There may need to be cluster relief pools where specialist skills/knowledge is required (e.g. mental health, ward clerks).

### 1.5 Coordination of relief opportunities/requests

- All relief pools are to have an appointed coordinator who manages the needs of the relief pool and coordinates relief pool placement.
- The relief pool coordinator is to be provided with the necessary resources to manage the relief pool in accordance with this policy.
- Relief pool arrangements are to have the ability to be shared across locations/work areas where practical, in accordance with the appropriate consultation processes.

### 1.6 Dispute processes

Disputes which arise from the creation, implementation or operation of the relief pool arrangements are to be managed in accordance with grievances and dispute resolution processes determined under the current enterprise bargaining (EB) agreement.

### 1.7 Terms and conditions of the relief pool

The following considerations are useful to effectively establishing an administrative relief pool:

- The terms and conditions of the relief requirements are to be communicated to the applicants for the relief pool, particularly when these relate to changed working hours, travel, etc. Applicants for the pool are to accept the terms and conditions.
- Relief staff are to be paid in accordance with the relevant industrial instrument for the time they are performing relief (e.g. when travel or shift entitlements are applicable, these are to apply for the period of the relief).
- When there is a business need to change the terms and conditions of the relief requirements, relief pool members are to be consulted about these changes and the new terms negotiated with them prior to implementation.

## 1.8 Example models of relieving arrangements

### Metropolitan and regional

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- Built-in relief arrangements within divisions/HHSs/units/facilities/clusters where possible.
  - Permanent administrative relief pool to cover planned leave supported by casual relief pool to cover other specific leave periods.
  - Business/unit manager role in ensuring adequate orientation and training to relievers in consultation with team leaders and the relief pool coordinator.
  - Relief pool coordinator role to manage needs of relief pools, recruit to pool through merit selection processes, and coordinate relief pool training and placement.
  - Learning centre/staff development role in accessing, delivering and the provision of administrative training.
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### Rural/remote

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- Built-in relief arrangements and permanent relief pools within units where possible.
  - Casual relief pool to cover specific leave periods and planned leave.
  - Shared relief pool across HHSs/locations where practicable.
  - HR unit manage/maintain relief pool – recruitment, merit selection processes, needs of relief pools.
  - Director corporate services/finance manager/business manager (or equivalent role) – manage relief pool orientation, training and placement.
  - HR manager/staff development officer (or equivalent role) sources, accesses and coordinates administrative training in consultation with business manager or equivalent.
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## 2 Review processes

- The requirements of the relief pool are to be reviewed at least annually (e.g. in January or in accordance with the planning cycle) in line with consultation processes contained within this policy.
- On a six monthly basis, a report is to be provided to the local HCF or equivalent for consultation purposes only and action when appropriate, detailing the following information:
  - number of instances when relief has not been provided due to unavailable resources
  - turnover rates of staff within the relief pool
  - reasons for staff leaving the relief pool.
- In addition to the local review, a report is to be generated for submission to the EB10IG on a 12 monthly basis which details:
  - number of instances of relief provided
  - number of instances when relief has not been provided due to unavailable resources
  - turnover rates of staff within the relief pool
  - reasons for staff leaving the relief pool.