

Guide to part time and job share work for junior doctors in South Australia

Purpose:

In SA Health we are committed to putting people at the centre of everything we do. We believe that promoting positive and flexible workplace cultures where staff feel valued is an important part of this picture. With the right support and working arrangements, our staff are better prepared to help build and deliver sustainable high quality health care services.

The South Australian Medical Education and Training (SA MET) Unit has developed this guide to assist all parties involved in the process of recruiting medical interns and junior doctors to part time or job share positions. This guide should be considered in line with Local Health Network (LHN) recruitment and selection processes.

It is important to note that the SA MET Unit is not the employer of South Australian junior doctors and as such does not negotiate or approve employment contracts for junior doctors.

The content of this document is also applicable to vocational trainees if no arrangements are already in place at the college. If processes to facilitate part time work are already in place, trainees are to liaise directly with their college.

Background to general junior doctor recruitment:

SA MET Unit recruits and allocates trainees to positions in SA on behalf of the LHNs. The SA MET Unit coordinates the recruitment of medical graduates seeking their initial training position as a doctor as well as for junior doctors in their subsequent training years (Postgraduate Year 2+ (PGY2+)).

The following key principles are considered when developing and reviewing junior doctor recruitment in SA:

- Patient safety and quality care is paramount
- Equity of access to high quality care for patients through a well-trained and fairly distributed workforce
- Equity of access to excellent medical training for the medical workforce
- Medical training and workforce development is core business of Health Services
- Teaching and training are integral parts of medical practice
- Fairness and transparency is required in all recruitment processes
- Recruitment and selection processes comply with relevant legislation

Internship requirements

The Medical Board of Australia (MBA) is the registering authority and determines registration requirements and standards. The registration standard *Granting general registration as a medical practitioner to Australian and New Zealand medical graduates on completion of intern training* can be accessed at <http://www.medicalboard.gov.au/Registration-Standards.aspx>. This standard defines the supervised intern training requirements that must be completed in order for graduates of Australian and New Zealand medical programs, accredited by the Australian Medical Council and approved by the Medical Board of Australia, to be eligible for general registration. To be eligible for general registration graduates must satisfactorily complete at least 47 weeks equivalent full time experience as an intern in supervised clinical practice completed in an approved hospital, general practice or ambulatory locations. The registration standard allows internship to be completed part time, however the 47 weeks of experience must be completed within a period of no more than three years.

Job share and part time employment for junior doctors

Job share and part time employment is defined as a person or persons voluntarily seeking to work less than full time hours. Medical graduates may request to complete their internship or PGY2+ years on a part time or job share arrangement through the annual centralised applications. LHNs can negotiate terms of employment on a case by case basis potentially using options suggested below. Interns must work a minimum of 0.5FTE so that internship may be completed within a two year period.

Interns

The SA MET Unit will:

- Continue to allocate medical graduates to intern positions across the LHNs (including those who apply for part time internship) using current allocation processes.
- Liaise with LHNs if an eligible medical graduate is allocated to their network.

Offers are made via a randomised process and based on applicants' category groups. After an offer is accepted, the applicant(s) and employer will negotiate the request to complete their internship on a part time basis.

PGY2+

The SA MET Unit will:

- Notify program coordinators at the Local Health Networks if an applicant is seeking part time work.
- Continue to allocate junior doctors to PGY2+ positions across the LHNs (including those who apply for part time) using current allocation processes.

Approval for a junior doctor to work part time is at the discretion of the LHN. An applicant's request to work part time may be declined if facilitating a part time work arrangement would create an unjustifiable hardship on the hospital or network. "Unjustifiable hardship" is defined in section 84 of the *Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)*. Where the applicant is refused part time work, the reasons must be clearly documented against the criteria in this section.

The *Equal Opportunity Act 1984 (SA)* prohibits unlawful discrimination against a person with caring responsibilities. Employers are required to review each applicant's request on a case by case basis where the person has such responsibilities and determine whether they can accommodate the applicant(s) request to complete their internship position on a part time basis. "Caring responsibilities" are defined in section 3 of the *Act*.

Part Time Considerations:

- The Medical Board of Australia allows internship to be completed on a part time basis.
- Where an intern wishes to work part time, a two year contract will be offered to cover the duration of internship.
- Junior doctors employed part time are required to perform the duties of the position description however described for the (pro-rata) hours they are employed. This would include an expectation that they attend education, work a combination of days, evenings and nights, and participate in the after-hours roster on a pro-rata basis.
- Accommodating a part time junior doctor may require re-organisation of the way that medical cover is managed in the terms to which they are assigned. It may be easier to do this in some terms compared to others.
- Emergency Medicine is an example of a term where a part timer may be more readily accommodated than others as there is less chance of it interfering with ongoing patient care and all medical staff work a rotating shift roster.

Possible arrangements that may assist in accommodating part time work:

- Part time work in Emergency Medicine may be accommodated more readily than in some other areas with the possibility that the junior doctor could work back to back terms in order to fulfil the requirements for general registration. Other terms that are purely shift based and not requiring ongoing patient care may also be completed using this arrangement.
- Medical and surgical terms, where possible, may be best completed full time. LHNs may find it easier to accommodate a part time employee who is able to agree to this arrangement e.g. an internship could be completed in 18 months, with the first term part time, second full time, third part time etc. Alternatively medical and surgical terms may be completed in shorter continuous bursts, e.g. 5 weeks on, 5 weeks off, 5 weeks on, 5 weeks off, with relief cover provided for the time the part time intern does not work.
- Working one term on and one term off may also be a good way to accommodate part timers as it allows the junior doctor access to all terms with few restrictions arising from the need for ongoing patient care.
- Part timers may often act as effective relievers in terms.
- Part timers may be allocated to GP terms where agreed with a GP practice, particularly where there was agreement for the junior doctor to be allocated for two consecutive terms.
- Part time junior doctors must commit to attend education and training sessions and are obligated to be present for clinical handovers.
- In certain terms it may be possible to pair an intern with a PGY2 in a 'job-share' arrangement if accreditation and supervision requirements can be met.

Job share - Additional considerations over and above those applying to part time work:

- It is extremely important for job sharers to formulate a proper handover process and establish a professional working relationship in order for the job-share arrangement to succeed.
- It is considered good practice for job-sharers to have a period of formal handover each week. LHNs may wish to note that this may incur an additional cost to the LHN.
- Each intern in the job share arrangement will need to work 0.5 FTE to ensure that each intern meets requirements for general registration within a reasonable timeframe of two years.
- There may be limited room for failure of a term which could result in difficulties gaining general registration for both job share partners within a two year period.
- Job sharers must attend 50% of the education sessions held at the hospital. Where there is an arrangement for junior doctors to work a 2 day week then a 3 day week, this may affect which day of the week is shared.
- Both job sharers must participate in the after-hours roster. Working out of normal hospital hours is important to gain experience in different situations.

Some arrangements that may more readily accommodate job share:

- To account for each applicant working 0.5 FTE, job sharers may generally benefit from being allocated to a term for two consecutive terms to ensure they are able to fulfil the requirements for general registration.
- Job share may work as a week on, week off scenario.
- Where job sharers are completing a surgery term, they must both be able to attend theatre. If theatre is a set day of the week, this may need to be the day that they alternate from week to week.
- Taking leave at the same time may make managing job share easier to accommodate. Alternately where leave is to be taken separately, taking leave during a relief term, or one job-share partner working full-time to cover whilst the other is on leave may be more readily accommodated.
- Job sharers may be required to commit to completing their contracts as a 'part time' employee as flexibility cannot be guaranteed and their job-share partners are dependent on them.

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For more information

SA Medical Education and Training Unit
Level 5 – Citi Centre Building
Telephone: 8226 7231

www.samet.org.au

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