

Recruitment and selection of ancillary staff in schools and preschools policy

This is a mandated policy under the operational policy framework. Any edits to this policy must follow the process outlined on the [creating, updating and deleting operational policies](#) page.

Overview

This policy provides direction on the principles and requirements for recruitment and selection of ancillary staff in schools and preschools. It must be read with the [recruitment and selection of ancillary staff in schools and preschools procedure \(PDF 815KB\)](#) which describes the processes, considerations and employee entitlements in more detail.

Scope

This policy applies to all school and preschool ancillary staff employed as:

- School Services Officer (SSO)
- Early Childhood Worker (ECW)
- Government Services Employee (GSE)
- weekly paid staff appointed to a department site.



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Detail

These principles underpin the policy:

- schools and preschools should have flexibility to select the best available ancillary staff who suit their needs and circumstances within established and agreed industrial frameworks
- the department is committed to appointing existing permanent ancillary staff into permanent positions wherever possible and recognises that permanent part or full-time employment is the preferred form of engagement.

The [merit selection procedure \(PDF 666KB\)](#) outlines the approved processes for merit selection across the organisation. All selection panels for ancillary staff must follow that procedure when selecting suitable applicants for appointment.

Appointment of ancillary staff to schools and preschools is by the Chief Executive or delegate under section 121 of the [Education and Children's Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#) and the [Public Sector Act 2009 \(SA\)](#) (as modified) in respect to school service officers and early childhood workers.

The department is obligated to make sure the employment entitlements and conditions of individual ancillary staff are met. These are defined within legislative and industrial frameworks.

Schools and preschools are responsible for effective workforce planning to ensure they have the right balance of ancillary staff to meet the needs of the site.

Permanent ancillary staff who require consideration for placement to a school or preschool will be given preferential consideration for vacant positions in schools or preschools.

Outcomes

The policy aims to:

- increase the overall percentage of permanent staff relative to temporary/contract staff
- place all permanent staff in a school or preschool, that will then reduce the number of permanent staff held against temporary vacancies
- support selection and placement processes throughout the year. The policy will be evaluated against its success in achieving these outcomes.

Workforce profiles

The Principal, in consultation with the personnel advisory committee (PAC), will develop a workforce profile for their school. Preschool directors will develop their site's workforce profile in consultation with their staff.

The workforce profile will identify staffing requirements, taking into account the current and future needs of the site. The profile will be regularly updated to reflect changes to the school/preschool requirements:

- composition of the workforce
- school requirements

- student and child profile
- enrolments and attendances
- budget.

Schools and preschools will have ancillary staff positions that reflect the operational requirements of the site.

Filling vacancies

Describing vacancies

Schools and preschools must describe vacant ancillary staff positions consistent with the requirements in their workforce profile.

Schools and preschools can declare joint vacancies across more than 1 site at the same classification level. This will allow schools and preschools to declare permanent vacancies of greater than 15 hours per week (hpw).

The Principal will in all cases, except where it is not practicable because of the nature or urgency of the matter, consult through the personnel advisory committee (PAC) at the school on all vacancies. This is in line with clause 3.5 of the South Australian School and Preschool Education Staff Enterprise Agreement 2024 and any specific requirements established in the PAC handbook.

Preschools should make sure that all vacancies are consistent with their workforce profile and in line with the National Quality Framework.

The position descriptions must detail if the vacancy is permanent or temporary and other relevant information, as described in the [recruitment and selection of ancillary staff in schools and preschools procedure \(PDF 815KB\)](#) ('the procedure').

For all vacancies resulting from permanent ancillary staff employees winning permanent positions, or by ancillary staff employees resigning, retiring, etc, it is expected that a permanent position will be described by the school or preschool unless strong evidence can be provided as to why the resultant vacancy cannot be filled permanently.

Classification level

The appropriate classification level for vacancies will be reviewed and/or confirmed by an HR Business Partner.

School Services Officer (SSO) vacancies are classified in line with the School Services Officers (Government Schools) Award Work Level Definitions and Position Information.

Early Childhood Worker (ECW) vacancies are classified in line with the Early Childhood Worker Award Work Level Definitions with guidance from the Position Information document.

Government Services Employee (GSE) vacancies are classified in line with the South Australian Government Services Award Work Level Definitions and the Activity Schedules.

Store-person vacancies are classified in line with the Government Stores Employees Interim Award Work Level Definitions and Activity Schedules.

The classification levels are approved by the Assistant Director, Workforce Management.

Principals and preschool directors have delegated authority to reclassify SSOs and ECWs from level 1 to level 2.

Selection process

For weekly paid staff all selection panels must follow the [merit selection procedure \(PDF 666KB\)](#).

For all other ancillary staff, selection panels must follow (with the exception of reference to section 45(3) of the *Public Sector Act 2009*) the:

- Commissioner for Public Sector Employment Determination 1: Merit, Engagement, Assignment of Duties and Transfer of Non-Executive Employees Selection
- [merit selection procedure \(PDF 666KB\)](#).

Panels for ECW, SSO and GSE vacancies of more than 12 months should comprise:

- chairperson – Preschool Director /Principal or nominee
- non-teaching staff representative elected by non-teaching staff at the site
- teaching staff representative elected by teaching staff at the site
- guidance on additional panel members is contained in the [merit selection procedure \(PDF 666KB\)](#).

Selection panels for any short term vacancy of up to and including 12 months should include:

- chairperson – Preschool Director, Principal or nominee
- staff representative elected by staff at the site. For short term ancillary staff vacancies it's appropriate to have an ancillary staff representative on the panel wherever possible.

Additional hours

As specified in the South Australian School and Preschool Education Staff Enterprise Agreement 2024 ('Enterprise Agreement') (Clause 2.2):

'Additional Hours for SSOs and ECWs

Vacancies of 15 hours or less per week must be offered to permanent part time staff within the school/preschool, in the first instance.

If the hours cannot be allocated within the school, they are offered to permanent part time staff in nearby schools for allocation on the basis of merit, using a modified selection process (eg expression of interest). A nearby school/preschool is defined as one in the same local partnership and/or within a reasonable travelling distance.'

The Additional Hours Register (AHR) provides details of existing permanent part-time ancillary staff who are seeking additional temporary hours. Refer to 'Appendix C: additional hours register (AHR)' in the [procedure](#)

[\(PDF 815KB\)](#) for details. Each school is responsible for their own AHR.

Permanent vacancies

As outlined at clause 2.2 of the Enterprise Agreement, permanent vacancies of 15 hours or less (additional hours) must be offered to permanent part time staff within the school /preschool, in the first instance. If the hours cannot be allocated within the school, they are offered to permanent part time staff in nearby schools/preschools.

The allocation of additional hours is merit based, using a modified selection process, such as expression of interest. Refer to 'Diagram 2: filling permanent vacancies of 15 hours or less per week (additional hours)' in the [procedure \(PDF 815KB\)](#) for a flowchart of the process.

Permanent ancillary staff vacancies greater than 15 hours, will be filled by 'must place' employees in the ancillary placement register (APR) in the first instance. This is only if:

- they are a suitable match for the position
- the appointment is within reasonable distance from their place of residence or the placement conditions of the ancillary staff employee.

This will be managed centrally by People and Culture. Refer to 'Diagram 1: filling permanent vacancies greater than 15 hours' in the [procedure \(PDF 815KB\)](#) for a flowchart of the process.

If still unfilled, a conversion to permanency process can be undertaken, subject to specific criteria.

Employees who do not hold right of return to a school or preschool and have no guarantee of placement will then be considered.

If no appointment is made from the above process then ancillary staff vacancies are required to be filled through a merit based process and advertised online through Edujobs and other media in accordance with the standards established by the Executive Director People and Culture and (with the exception of Weekly Paid Staff) the Commissioner for Public Sector Employment. The use of other media will only occur with the approval of the Executive Director, People and Culture (or delegate). Advertised vacancies are open to all persons seeking employment. Applications for advertised vacancies are lodged online and are managed by a selection panel, in line with the process outlined in the [recruitment and selection of ancillary staff in schools and preschools procedure \(PDF 815KB\)](#) and the [merit selection procedure \(PDF 666KB\)](#).

Permanent employees that wish to request a transfer from one location to another within their substantive employment type will be considered for vacancies that remain unfilled after advertisement.

Conversion to permanency

Principals, in consultation with their PAC, or preschool directors can make a recommendation to the Assistant Director, Workforce Management to convert a temporary ancillary employee to permanent employment. This is subject to specific criteria outlined in the procedure. This is subject to specific criteria outlined in the procedure. This includes the incumbent being appointed in the temporary position through a

merit based selection panel process¹ and has occupied the position for a period of at least 2 years.

Refer to 'Diagram 1: filling permanent vacancies greater than 15 hours' in the [procedure \(PDF 815KB\)](#).

Temporary vacancies

For temporary vacancies 12 months or greater and greater than 15 hours, if an appointment is not made from the Ancillary Placement Register, it is recommended that the position be filled through a merit based process and advertised. Refer to 'Diagram 3: filling temporary vacancies 12 months or greater and greater than 15 hours' in the [procedure \(PDF 815KB\)](#).

For temporary vacancies greater than 12 months and 15 hours or less (Additional Hours), the hours must be offered to permanent part time staff within the school/preschool, in the first instance. It is recommended that the vacancy should be advertised if it remains unfilled. Refer to 'Diagram 4: filling temporary vacancies greater than 12 months and 15 hours or less (Additional Hours)' in the [procedure \(PDF 815KB\)](#).

For temporary vacancies less than 12 months and greater than 15 hours, if an appointment is not made from the Ancillary Placement Register based on merit principles, it is recommended that the position be filled through a merit based process and advertised. However, the position may also be filled by a current permanent employee at the site or through the Employable Ancillary Register (EAR) based on merit. Refer to 'Diagram 5: filling temporary vacancies less than 12 months and greater than 15 hours) in the [procedure \(PDF 815KB\)](#).

For temporary vacancies 12 months or less and 15 hours or less (Additional Hours), the hours must be offered to permanent part time staff within the school/preschool, in the first instance. If the hours cannot be allocated within the school/preschool, they are offered to permanent part time staff in nearby schools/preschools using the Additional Hours Register (AHR). If the hours cannot be allocated then hours can be offered to temporary part time staff in the school/preschool. The allocation of additional hours is based on merit. Refer to 'Diagram 6: filling temporary vacancies of 12 months or less and 15 hours per week' in the [procedure \(PDF 815KB\)](#).

If the position still remains unfilled it can then be filled by either:

- EAR, or
- advertised

For temporary vacancies of four (4) weeks or less for any hours (Relief vacancies), the hours can be filled through the AHR, established relief list or EAR.

Relief vacancies are only available for backfilling behind short term leave to ensure duty of care, continuation of learning programs and/or operational needs.

¹ Variation for vacancies for the commencement of the 2014 school year and beyond: For existing employees the merit based selection criteria will be waived, but the employee must have been employed during 2012 and 2013.

Position tenure review panel

A joint department, Australian Education Union (AEU)/Public Service Association (PSA) position tenure review panel considers concerns raised relating to the tenure of positions. For example, when a temporary position is described that appears to meet the criteria for a permanent position.

Either the department, the AEU or the PSA can initiate a meeting of the panel and would operate on an exception basis rather than review all temporary positions.

The panel would conduct an annual review of the terms of reference and any recommendations. If changes are agreed by the department and the AEU/PSA they would be implemented.

Refer to 'Appendix E: position tenure review panel' in the [procedure \(PDF 815KB\)](#):

- '1. Vacancies of 15 hpw may be considered for 'must place' employees in the Ancillary Placement Register in the first instance, therefore the recommendation from the Additional Hours Register or other recommendations may not be approved for these vacancies.
3. Representation will be dependent upon the union membership of the employee.'

Right of Return

All permanent ancillary employees will be appointed to permanent positions, where possible, in schools or preschools. All permanent ancillary staff employees appointed to schools or preschools will retain right of return to that school or preschool following periods of leave or following appointment to a temporary position within the department).

Employees that do not hold a right of return to a school or preschool and have no guarantee of placement retain this status. This group of employees are considered for ongoing and /permanent positions only after the 'must place' employees have been appointed through the ancillary placement register (APR).

Ancillary employees who are eligible to be included in the APR are:

- alternative placement
- permanent employees who do not hold right of return to a school or preschool and have a guarantee of placement
- permanent employees identified for required placement
- permanent employees who do not hold right of return to a school or preschool and have no guarantee of placement
- requested transfers.

All ancillary employees in the APR are considered for permanent and temporary vacancies when they are a suitable match. The appointment of ancillary employees from the APR to schools or preschools will be managed centrally by People and Culture.

Ancillary staff employees requiring alternative appointments

The Assistant Director, Workforce Management, may approve alternative placements in special circumstances, such as for genuine compassionate reasons.

Special compassionate placement requests will normally be associated with a medical condition relating to the ancillary staff member or their immediate family, and be supported by appropriate documentation.

If a request has not been approved through normal processes, and it is deemed to be of urgent or high priority, it may be referred by the President of the AEU, General Secretary of the PSA or the appropriate delegate for consideration and determination.

Modes of employment (SSO and ECW only)

GSE refer to SA Government Services Award, clause 3.1.

Full time employment

A full time employee is one engaged to work 37.5 hours per week over a calendar year.

Part time employment

A part time employee is one engaged and paid to work less than 37.5 hours per week and/or 41 weeks or less per year.

Permanent employment

A permanent employee is engaged when the position is greater than 15 hours per week* and does not have an end date. *Current permanent staff employed at 15 hours per week will maintain their permanent status.

Temporary employment

As specified in the South Australian School and Preschool Education Staff Enterprise Agreement 2024 (Clause 2.1.5):

‘Temporary employment

- (a) A temporary employee is one engaged for a specified term of up to 2 calendar years except in the following circumstances:
 - (i) a person may be engaged as a temporary employee for duties required for the carrying out of a specific program, project or provision of specialist student support of a duration that may exceed 2 years as long as the term is concomitant with the defined program, project or specialist support) but not so that the term of the engagement extends beyond the duration of the project, program or specialist support;
 - (ii) a person may be engaged as a temporary employee for a specified term of greater than 2 years for duties required to be performed because of the absence of another employee or while selection processes are conducted in respect of the duties and the engagement may be extended but not so that the term of the engagement extends beyond the absence of the employee or the completion of the selection processes;
 - (iii) a person may be engaged as a temporary employee for a specified term of greater than 2 years if the employer is satisfied that the engagement is to be funded wholly or substantially

- by grants or payments from a government other than the State Government or from a private or community body;
- (iv) a person may be engaged as a temporary employee for a specified term of greater than 2 years if the employer is satisfied that the position will become unsustainable due to genuine operational reasons such as enrolment decline, amalgamation or closure at a site but not so that the term of the engagement extends beyond the period of enrolment decline, amalgamation or closure.
 - (v) a person may be engaged as a temporary employee for a specified term not exceeding 2 years for duties that are otherwise of a temporary nature and the engagement may be extended but not so that the term of the engagement extends beyond a total of 2 years.'

Casual

As specified in the South Australian School and Preschool Education Staff Enterprise Agreement 2024 (Clause 2.1.6):

'Casual employment

(a) A casual employee is one engaged and paid as such provided that:

- (i) The employment will continue for not more than 4 weeks; or
- (ii) The employee will have hours that are irregular; or
- (iii) The employment does not exceed 15 hours in a week.'

Please note for GSE:

As specified in the South Australian Government Services Award Clause 3.1 Contract of Employment 3.1.3.1:

'A casual employee is one who is engaged to work on short term and/or variable employment arrangements. Such an employee does not have continuity of employment.'

Roles and responsibilities

The department

The department will formally consult with the Australian Education Union (AEU) SA Branch and Public Service Association (PSA) in relation to any proposed changes to this policy, save for changes in respect to SSO placement as provided for at clause 6.9.1 of the enterprise agreement. Changes in relation to SSO placement may occur from time to time as agreed between the department, the AEU and PSA.

School Principal

Identify and describe a new vacancy in consultation with the PAC.

Make a recommendation to the Assistant Director, Workforce Management for conversion to permanency.

Approve leave up to and including 12 months.

Delegated authority to reclassify SSO's from level 1 to level 2.

Preschool Director

Identify and describe a new vacancy with reference to the site's workforce profile.

Make a recommendation to the Assistant Director, Workforce Management for conversion to permanency.

Approve leave up to and including 12 months.

Delegated authority to reclassify ECWs from level 1 to level 2.

Assistant Director, Workforce Management

Approve special arrangements to fill vacancies or appoint an employee.

Approve conversion to permanency.

Approve classification levels of ancillary vacancies.

Approve alternative placement requests.

Undertake analysis of data and review of ancillary staff in schools and preschools policy and the associated procedure.

HR Business Partners, Workforce Management

Appoint permanent employees from the ancillary placement register.

Assess classification levels and make a recommendation to the Assistant Director, Workforce Management.

Definitions

AEU

Australian Education Union (SA Branch)

AHR

Additional hours register

APR

Ancillary placement register

Edujobs

Jobs board for advertising vacancy positions and submitting applications – [Edujobs](#).

EAR

Employable ancillary register

ECW

Early Childhood Worker

GSE

Government Services Employee

HPW

Hours per week

PAC

Personnel Advisory Committee

PSA

Public Sector Association of SA Inc

SSO

School Services Officer

Supporting information

[Personnel advisory committee \(PAC\)](#) (staff login required)

Related awards and agreements

[Early Childhood Worker Award \(PDF 536KB\)](#)

[Schools Services Officer \(Government Schools\) Award \(PDF 667KB\)](#)

[South Australian Government Services Award \(PDF 1.2MB\)](#)

[South Australian School and Preschool Education Staff Enterprise Agreement 2024 \(6.7MB\)](#)

Related legislation

[Education and Children's Services Act 2019 \(SA\)](#)

[Education and Children's Services Regulations 2020 \(SA\)](#)

[Public Sector Act 2009 \(SA\)](#)

[Public Sector Regulations 2010 \(SA\)](#)

Related policies

[Merit selection procedure \(PDF 666KB\)](#)

[Recruitment and selection of ancillary staff in schools and preschools procedure \(PDF 815KB\)](#)

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