
1.0 Awards & Entitlements

Policy

WGPN complies with all its legal obligations towards its employees. These include:

- provision of rates of pay, leave and other entitlements as set out in the relevant Award or workplace agreement;
- a safe and healthy workplace;
- equal opportunity and freedom from discrimination and harassment
- protection of employee and patient privacy; and
- maintenance of appropriate staff records.

Additionally, this practice follows established procedures and policies for employment and management of staff, including:

- clear communication of expectations and standards, using position descriptions and job specifications as well as staff codes for conduct and presentation.
- recruitment procedures which are fair, thorough and facilitate selection of the best candidate.
- a formal induction procedure for all staff, to familiarise them with important practice procedures relating to patient care, occupational health and safety, emergencies, confidentiality and conduct.
- regular feedback and opportunities for development through performance review.

Research from both general practice and other industries supports the importance of attention to human resources. For example, the alignment of role, competence and (where required) licensing was identified by the authors of a study of high performing clinical teams as a common element.

Procedure

Under the *Fair Work Act 2009*, medical practices are bound by Workplace Agreements or Federal Awards which set out minimum employee entitlements. If medical practices are not bound by a workplace agreement, then they must abide by the relevant awards.

From 1 January 2010, the 10 National Employment standards (NES) became law and replaced the Australian Fair Pay and Conditions Standards. All modern Awards, Enterprise Agreements, contracts of employment, ITEA's and old Workplace Agreements must provide for these 10 NES as minimum conditions.

The NES applies to all employees covered by the national workplace relations system, however only certain entitlements apply to casual employees.

Under the NES, employees have certain minimum conditions. Together with pay rates in modern awards (which also generally take effect from 1 January 2010) and minimum wage

orders, the NES makes up the safety net that cannot be altered to the disadvantage of the employee.

In addition to the NES, generally an employee's terms and conditions of employment come from a modern award, agreement, award and agreement based transitional instruments, minimum wage orders, transitional minimum wage instruments, state or federal laws.

The NES are set out in the *Fair Work Act 2009* and comprise 10 minimum standards of employment. In summary, the NES involve the following minimum entitlements:

- **Maximum weekly hours of work** – 38 hours per week, plus reasonable additional hours.
- **Requests for flexible working arrangements** – allows parents or carers of a child under school age or of a child under 18 with a disability, to request a change in working arrangements to assist with the child's care.
- **Notice of termination and redundancy pay** – up to 4 weeks notice of termination (5 weeks if the employee is over 45 and has at least 2 years of continuous service) and up to 16 weeks redundancy pay, both based on length of service.
- **Provision of a Fair Work Information Statement** – From 1 January 2010, all employers covered by the national workplace relations system have an obligation to give each new employee a Fair Work Information Statement (the Statement) before, or as soon as possible after, the employee starts employment. It contains information about the NES, modern awards, agreement-making, the right to freedom of association, termination of employment, individual flexibility arrangements, rights of entry, transfer of business, and the respective roles of Fair Work Australia and the Fair Work Ombudsman

Workplace Agreements

Employers and employees may enter an agreement to override or vary award provisions to provide greater flexibility in respect of entitlements and conditions of employment, e.g. working hours, salary packaging or work-life balance initiatives.

Individual Flexibility Agreements

The Employer and the employee may enter into an Individual flexibility Agreement which is based on the employee's Award. The Award lists the conditions which may be varied and any variation agreed must ensure that the minimum Award conditions are met and for the employer is Better Off Overall; (the BOOT).

RACGP 4th edition Standards 4.1.1.

2.0 Staff Induction

Policy

WGPN has a system for assisting new members of the practice team to learn their role.

This includes new GPs (including registrars and locums) and other new staff.

WGPN has an induction program for all new General Practitioners and practice staff which includes ongoing monitoring of progress in their new role. To ensure staff and patient safety, new members of the general practice team must be able to demonstrate knowledge of the key procedures and key operating systems relevant to their role within the practice by the end of the induction period.

In some cases it may be appropriate to have a program where other contractors using rooms in the facility are also provided an overview of relevant practice systems.

Staff are also expected to familiarise themselves with procedures and use it as a resource in the course of their employment.

All new staff must complete a full induction program including OH&S as detailed on the Staff Induction Checklist as part of their orientation.

In-house training is provided to staff members responsible for inducting new employees to ensure they understand the requirements of the induction process and the importance of an effective induction program in relation to job performance, legal liability and OHS. This is recorded on their training records to show they are authorised to induct new employees.

It is essential that new staff understand the day-to-day operations of the practice including the occupational health and safety issues relevant to their role, the practice code of conduct, infection control policies and the processes by which the privacy of patient health information.

It is useful for new staff to have an understanding of the local health and cultural environment in which the practice operates. For example, if the practice is located in an area with a high level of problems caused by illicit drug use, it is useful for new staff to understand the practice's policy concerning management of Schedule 8 medicine prescribing.

Furthermore, staff and GPs in particular need to be aware of key public health regulations (such as reporting requirements for communicable diseases or mandatory reporting of child abuse) that will affect how they work. General practitioners need to be made aware of local health and community services including pathology, hospital and other services they are likely to refer to in the course of normal consulting.

The Staff Induction Checklist provides the general knowledge essential for any position within a medical practice. Job specific orientation and induction will also need to be undertaken and documented.

As each stage of the induction program is completed the new staff member and their induction supervisor sign the Staff Induction Checklist and the completed document is filed in the employee's Staff Record file. This written record of induction is important to protect the practice against legal liability and injury claims in the future.

New staff members are not permitted to work independently until competency in specific areas of induction such as infection control, confidentiality and OHS have been demonstrated and signed-off.