

Job sharing is a voluntary arrangement where one full-time job is shared between part-time employees. Employers can offer a greater variety of employment options and provide flexibility for employees to choose preferred work patterns through job sharing.

Job sharing may also provide employers with opportunities to attract and retain people with scarce skills. A job could be shared on the basis of 2.5 days on and off; one day on, one day off; one week on, one week off or three days one week, two days the next week, or any other suitable combination of days.

Job sharing may be attractive to employees with elder care responsibilities or older workers who wish to phase their retirement. Job sharing may also provide the employer with extra coverage during peak periods and continuity of coverage when one share partner is sick or on other leave.

Conditions of employment are the same as for part-time employees with benefits accrued on a pro-rata basis. Likewise, it may be arranged at the initiative of the employer or the employees concerned.

There are three basic forms of job sharing:

- Shared responsibility where two employees share the responsibilities of one full-time job. The two individuals perform the full range of tasks of a single position together with either member able to pick up where the other one left off. This type of arrangement is most suited to ongoing work, rather than project based work. It will, however, require a high level of communication and coordination and need to be implemented carefully so as not to disrupt customers and co-workers. Well matched partners are critical to the success of this type of arrangement.
- A divided responsibility arrangement occurs when two people share one full-time position and divide its responsibilities clearly between them. They may also provide back-up for each other as needed. This arrangement works well when the work can be easily divided and may be performed by partners who do not know each other well.
- The unrelated responsibility model is where the two job-share partners perform completely different tasks but generally work in the same unit. This arrangement is essentially two part-time jobs. It is most suited to situations where partners do have similar skill levels.

Job sharing strategies can include:

- Implementing a job share register to assist with managing job-share opportunities for interested employees.
- Using job share agreements that include:
 - A plan of action for when either partner leaves the job or the organisation, or wishes to take up full-time employment (e.g. procedure for selecting a new partner or offering the remaining partner the whole position etc).
 - Information about how the workload, responsibilities and accountabilities are shared or otherwise between the partners.
 - Arrangements for the separate performance appraisal of each of the partners.

Source: Department of Employment and Industrial Relations 'A Guide for the Queensland Public Service: Managing an Ageing Workforce'