

Older employees may be interested in working in a job at a lower classification level as a flexible retirement option. This could involve a reduction in management responsibility in order to focus on a special project; becoming responsible for a range of mentoring based activities or a specific “handover” of knowledge and skills based role.

The basis for an employee initiated reduction in classification level could include:

- Appointment to substantially different job at a lower classification following a merit selection process to fill a particular available vacancy at a lower classification.
- Redeployment to a similar or like job at a lower classification level.
- Conversion of the employee’s existing duties and responsibilities where work organisation factors permit. For example, an employee may phase out of certain responsibilities and utilise their knowledge and skills in other ways such as through mentoring and coaching. This option may require a job evaluation to determine the relative worth of the converted job.

The idea of an older employee opting to work at lower classification level may not always be encouraged by the prevailing culture in the workplace. Employers and other staff may be more comfortable with and accepting of older employees making a clean break from employment to retirement. Potential participants may be concerned about the impact on their superannuation benefits and accrued leave entitlements. Co-workers may feel uncomfortable at the thought of working alongside someone who was previously their supervisor. Others may have been anticipating a vacancy that is now being made available to someone who has “already had their turn” at working at that level and so on.

Possible strategies and actions include:

- Job redesign to create *special skill and knowledge transfer* roles for particularly skilled employees who are interested in working at a reduced level of management or supervisory responsibility where the particular skill and knowledge transfer is critical to ensuring future organisational capability.
- Making sure all employees have access to basic information about the superannuation and any leave entitlement implications of working at a lower classification level as part of a flexible retirement strategy.

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