

Availability & Unavailability Policy

For Australian Small & Medium Enterprises

Template Version 1.0 | December 2024

Important Notice

This template provides general guidance on availability management. It should be customised to your specific workplace needs and comply with relevant awards and enterprise agreements.

1. Purpose

This policy establishes how employees submit their availability preferences and unavailability requests to [Company Name]. It ensures rostering decisions consider employee preferences while meeting operational requirements.

2. Scope

This policy applies to:

- All employees who are rostered for shifts
- All employment types (permanent, casual, part-time)
- All locations and departments

3. Definitions

3.1 Availability

The times and days an employee is able and willing to work, including regular ongoing availability and temporary changes.

3.2 Unavailability

Specific dates, times or periods when an employee cannot work due to personal commitments, other employment, study or other reasons.

3.3 Preferred Hours

The number of hours and shift patterns an employee prefers to work, within their contracted arrangements.

4. Submitting Availability

4.1 Initial Availability

When commencing employment, employees must:

- Complete an availability form during onboarding
- Indicate all times they are available to work
- Note any regular commitments affecting availability
- Specify preferred hours and shift patterns

4.2 Ongoing Updates

- Availability can be updated at any time
- Changes should be submitted via [system/form/email]
- Updates take effect from the next roster period
- Reasonable notice should be provided for changes

4.3 Minimum Availability

- Employees may be required to provide minimum availability
- Requirements specified in employment contracts
- Availability should align with operational needs

5. Unavailability Requests

5.1 Types of Unavailability

- One-off unavailability (specific dates)
- Recurring unavailability (regular commitments)
- Temporary unavailability (short-term periods)
- Extended unavailability (longer periods)

5.2 Notice Requirements

Unavailability requests should be submitted:

- At least [7/14] days before the roster period
- Earlier for peak periods or known events
- As soon as known for unexpected situations

6. How Availability is Used

When creating rosters, managers will:

- Review submitted availability for all employees
- Allocate shifts within available times where possible
- Balance employee preferences with operational needs
- Consider fairness across the team

7. Approving Unavailability

7.1 Approval Process

- Requests reviewed by rostering manager
- Consideration given to operational impact
- Employee notified of outcome

7.2 Declining Requests

Requests may be declined if:

- Insufficient notice provided
- Critical operational need exists
- Too many employees unavailable

8. Casual and Part-Time Employees

8.1 Casual Employees

- No obligation to accept shifts
- Availability helps with efficient rostering
- Regular availability increases shift opportunities

8.2 Part-Time Employees

- Contracted hours and days apply
- Changes may require contract variation

9. Peak Periods

[Company Name] may designate peak periods or blackout dates:

- Periods when unavailability requests are limited
- Advance notice of blackout dates provided
- Exceptional circumstances considered individually

10. Responsibilities

10.1 Employees

- Provide accurate availability information
- Update availability when circumstances change
- Submit requests with adequate notice

10.2 Managers

- Consider availability when rostering
- Respond to requests in reasonable time
- Apply policy fairly and consistently

11. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or when rostering practices change.

Employee Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I have read and understood [Company Name]'s Availability & Unavailability Policy.

Employee Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____