



anf position  
statement

# australian nursing federation

## casual employment in nursing and midwifery

Casual employment is defined as employment which is on a casual basis for a short period and where the employee is not classified as permanent full-time or permanent part-time. Employment may be terminated by either party without the requirement of prior notice.

Casual employment has financial and industrial implications, such as:

- casual loadings not fully compensating for loss of conditions such as paid annual leave, sick leave and long service leave;
- loss of career opportunities;
- lack of job security;
- reduced access to continuing education provided in the workplace;
- limited ability to secure finance to insecure employment; and
- a negative effect on retirement benefits eg. superannuation.

It is the position of the Australian Nursing Federation that:

1. Casual employment of nurses and midwives must be used for genuinely temporary or emergency situations.
2. The use of casual nursing or midwifery employees must not undermine:
  - the continuity of quality nursing or midwifery care;
  - the knowledge and skill base of nurses and midwives providing nursing and midwifery care to patients;
  - the time available for patient care by permanent staff orientating or assisting casual employees;
  - the employer's duty to provide an environment in which nurses and midwives can deliver safe nursing and midwifery care; or
  - permanent employment opportunities.
3. The number of nurses and midwives employed on a casual basis must be limited to the level required to meet unexpected circumstances which cannot be met by the level of permanent nursing or midwifery staff eg. sick leave or 'specialling' a patient.

4. Working conditions should provide career advancement for nurses and midwives and incentives to assist them to remain in permanent employment, supported by human resource management policies regarding flexibility of rosters and leave, job-sharing and permanent part-time employment.
5. 'Banks' or 'pools' of nurses and midwives whose qualifications and competence are known, and who are familiar with the policies and environment of the health service should be developed and used as the initial response to unexpected shortages.
6. Casual employees must receive an orientation to the workplace prior to the commencement of clinical responsibilities.

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