



# PROTOCOL

## PROTOCOL - PART TIME WORK

### TIME WORK

**THE PURPOSE OF THIS PROTOCOL IS TO RAISE THOSE ISSUES THAT NEED TO BE CONSIDERED BY EMPLOYERS AND OPERATORS WHEN CONSIDERING PART TIME WORK**

#### KEY ELEMENTS

- Flexibility to accommodate other responsibilities or interests
- Good communication and planning
- Employer support and good management
- Co-operation and support from manager/supervisor, colleagues and clients

#### 1. PEOPLE

- Provide flexibility to those operators with family or other interests or life pursuits outside of work
- Ability to prioritise, communicate and meet expectations of the employer, clients and colleagues
- Effective management of workload

#### 2. ORGANISATIONAL/EMPLOYER SUPPORT

- Commitment to making it work
- Agreed hours of work
- Part time arrangements should be available to be negotiated across the organisation
- Ensure retention of benefits and remuneration (pro rata)

- Agreement as to how an operators budget is structured
- Adjust the work load and budget to meet the part time criteria
- Maintain the status of part time operators within the organisation making sure that they are being offered/exposed to quality work, continued professional development and business development opportunities
- Agreement as to how extra hours worked are to be treated with respect to payment or time in lieu
- Ensure meetings are held on a day and time when the operator is present
- Transparency with clients and colleagues regarding work arrangement of operator
- Proper management of the arrangement including work loads and duties/responsibilities of the role
- Make time for communication with and management of those with a part time work arrangement and those working with them
- Recognition by the employer that the operator may be just as loyal and committed as other operators and has not necessarily given up on her/his career ambitions

### 3. HOW TO

The employer and the operator must have a clear understanding of expectations:

- Both parties need to be flexible with the arrangement
- The agreement should be formalised and form part of the employment contract/partnership agreement
- Support and communication with administrative staff and other colleagues is essential, including colleagues being aware of the need to cover for the part time operator if required, on days that the operator is not present in the office
- Regularly review the arrangement
- Monitor/manage workload to ensure that it can be adequately completed within the part time framework
- Provide tools to support the part time arrangement such as:
  - access to emails and calendar of part time operator by a support person in the office when the part time operator is not in the office
  - use of "out of office" reply on emails to communicate availability of operator
  - operator being available to talk when not in the office – employer providing a mobile phone/blackberry
  - operator being available to work when necessary when not in the office – remote access
  - good file management – file notes typed and filed on paper files/electronic filing up to date so that files are easily picked up by colleagues when necessary

### 4. ADVANTAGES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

- Flexible hours
- Increased productivity
- Increased sense of staff loyalty

- Work/Life Balance – ability to balance other responsibilities or interests
- Retain experienced and skilled professionals (reduce turn over costs)
- Increase the morale of the operator who is able to meet other obligations or follow other interests outside of work
- Promotes a culture of loyalty within an organisation

### 5. CHALLENGES OF FLEXIBLE WORKING HOURS

- Delay in communication and productivity – this can be overcome by managing client expectations and by the operator undertaking limited work on days off
- Inability to meet the expectations of some projects – consideration should be given to what projects are appropriate for part-time work and what support should be given – team work may be essential
- Seen as not interested in career development and not committed to a career – this perception is not necessarily accurate. Education of relevant staff is important
- Miss out on some benefits of full time workers – managers should make conscious efforts to include part-timers
- Difficulty in maintaining professional development (Still required to maintain the same level of CPD points as a full time lawyer) – any in-house CPD activities should be scheduled for when part-time operators are present - part-time operators should be encouraged to attend such CPD events as their schedule allows