

Prevocational Accreditation Committee Position Statement

Rotating Shift terms

The Prevocational Accreditation Committee (PAC) assesses all prevocational training term descriptions submitted for accreditation. Once prevocational training terms are accredited, training providers must ensure the ongoing safety of both patients and prevocational trainees by providing appropriate levels of supervision, workload, hours and clinical practice suitable to the skills of the prevocational trainees performing them.

This position statement was developed to address the current trend of changing roster patterns in terms that were traditionally comprised of day shifts only to incorporating periods where the trainees are rostered to evenings. This position statement does not apply to terms such as ED, ICU, Paediatrics, MAU and Relief terms.

The PAC endorse the below position for prevocational terms that incorporate rotating shifts.

This is intended to provide clarity and guidance surrounding the expectations of the rostering of prevocational trainees to maintain the educational quality of prevocational training terms whilst balancing the service requirements of hospitals to provide out of hours care for patients.

The PAC recommends that trainees complete no more than two rotating shift terms in a clinical year. In specific circumstance it may be appropriate for a PGY2 (at their request) to complete an additional term. When this occurs, it should be in consultation with the Assessment Review Panel.

For the purpose of this document the term “ordinary hours” generally refers to a shift that commences no earlier than 7am or finishes no later than 6pm.

When reviewing term of this nature for accreditation the PAC will focus on the following key considerations:

- Continuity of supervision for the trainee.
- Continuity of patient care.
- Access to education for trainees.

The PAC recommends that during a ten-week term (with an average of 40 rostered hours per week, 400 hours per term) that PGY1 trainees can work no more than two weeks out of ordinary hours during the term, and PGY2 trainees no more than 4 weeks out of ordinary hours during the term. As such:

- PGY1 trainees should spend a minimum of 320 hours rostered to working within ordinary hours, and a maximum of 80 hours rostered outside ordinary hours and their regular supervision.
- PGY2 trainees should spend a minimum of 240 hours rostered to working within, and maximum of 160 hours rostered to work outside ordinary hours and their regular supervision.

If trainees are rostered outside of ordinary hours for a greater amount of time than outlined above then the term will be considered as a “service term”.

Furthermore, trainees should not work in more than two separate teams in the ordinary hours component of the term.

For terms with rotating shift rosters term descriptions need to clearly articulate:

- Workload within ordinary hours and when on evening, night or after-hours shifts.
- Information about who is responsible for workload in ordinary hours whilst the trainee is working outside ordinary hours.
- Supervision arrangements for ordinary hours and for evening, night and after-hours shifts.
- Escalation processes for the management of deteriorating patients, particularly when the trainee is working outside ordinary hours.
- How and when trainees will access education if working outside ordinary hours prevents them from attending education (including how trainees can access sessions they have missed).
- The process for monitoring attendance at education sessions.
- The process for monitoring and evaluation of workload and supervision in all aspects of the term.

Additionally, a detailed roster for the term is required to be submitted with the term description. This should clearly demonstrate:

- When trainees will be working outside of ordinary hours and team structures.
- How individual trainees move through the ten weeks of the term.
- Coverage for ordinary hours when trainees are working outside of ordinary hours.

NOTE: the above information is relevant to accredited prevocational training terms and does not include general hospital overtime. Where trainees will be expected to also participate in general hospital overtime this should be clearly detailed in the term description and roster including number of shifts and hours the trainee will be expected to work.

This document will be reviewed in August 2026.