Introduction

These guidelines are intended to highlight the basic expectations and requirements of practitioners utilising the Locum Service. The guidelines are relevant to practitioners who undertake locum placements on behalf of the Service as well as practitioners requesting locum relief or a locum subsidy.

The guidelines are also intended to illustrate to practitioners what they can expect from the Locum Service.

Requesting Practitioners

This section will outline the expectations and requirements of practitioners requesting locum relief or a locum subsidy.

Requesting locum relief

Pre-placement

Lodging a request for locum relief

It is vital that requesting practitioners lodge their request for locum relief as far in advance as possible. The Locum Service recommends that requests should be lodged at least four months in advance. Adequate advance notice increases the potential for requests to be fulfilled as it provides an opportunity for practical arrangements to be organized, such as travel to the practice and allocation of provider numbers for the locum. Inadequate advance notice increases the chance that other pre-existing requests are filled first. Understandably, some requests cannot be anticipated and in emergency situations the Service will prioritise urgent requests.

Requesting practitioners should ensure that they provide sufficiently detailed information about their request as well as services offered by their practice when lodging a request for locum relief. Practitioners should ensure that all applicable fields of the Request for Locum Relief Form on the Health Workforce Queensland website are completed and further details provided where appropriate. It is important to ensure that practice information is correct and comprehensive as it is forwarded to potential locums and used to match locums with requests.

While there are no restrictions on requesting long periods for locum relief, practitioners should be aware that placements tend to run for around 2 weeks on average. The Service is committed to providing locum relief to as many rural practitioners as possible. Consequently, requests that run for long periods of time are unlikely to be filled in full given the number of competing requests.

Negotiating with a potential locum practitioner

When a locum practitioner becomes available for a request, a copy of the locum’s curriculum vitae (CV) will be forwarded to the requesting practitioner (or their nominated contact person) by the
Locum Coordinator. Practitioners should peruse the CV to ensure that the locum has sufficient experience and skills to participate in the services offered by the practice.

The Locum Coordinator will facilitate negotiations by putting the requesting practitioner and locum in contact and providing other support where appropriate. Fee negotiation remains the responsibility of requesting practitioners and locums. Fees may be an hourly, sessional or flat weekly rate or a proportion of billings or potentially a combination of these approaches. Ideally, they should be informed by the demands placed upon the locum, such as patient load and on-call demands, as well as the characteristics of the practice environment.

Meeting requirements: orientation, accommodation and vehicle use

It is a mandatory requirement that requesting practitioners provide the locum with an appropriate patient handover, orientation, accommodation and use of a vehicle. The Locum Coordinator will ensure that these arrangements are being organized before confirming that the placement will go ahead. This support is vital in assisting the locum to provide effective relief in a practitioner’s absence. Effective support contributes to creating a positive experience for the locum, underpinning the locum’s willingness to return and undertake future placements.

The requesting practitioner should inform the Locum Coordinator and locum practitioner as soon as possible if any of these requirements cannot be met. Advance warning will allow for alternate arrangements to be negotiated and potentially preclude an unsatisfactory experience for the locum practitioner.

The Locum Service provides the General Information Form and the Quick Reference Form to assist requesting practitioners in providing orientation. These forms cover practice processes and key contacts and information. Requesting practitioners should ensure that these forms are completed and that a patient handover is provided (as necessary). Further orientation should be provided by another practitioner at the practice or practice staff member on the first day of placement.

Additionally, the requesting practitioner should ensure that someone is available to meet the locum upon arrival. Meeting the locum on arrival may allow the locum to be briefly introduced to practice staff and an unfamiliar township. This can also demonstrate the practice’s commitment to ensuring the locum is well supported during their placement.

Requesting practitioners are required to provide accommodation for locums. It is important that the accommodation meets some basic standards. Poor accommodation can quickly contribute to a locum’s unwillingness to return for future placements. The supplied accommodation should be clean, adequately furnished with facilities for cooking and doing laundry. Ideally, the accommodation should be self-contained to afford an appropriate level of privacy. Shared quarters or a private room is not suitable.

Basic items, such as clean linen, toilet paper and cleaning products, should also be provided with the accommodation. Consider what would be needed by the locum to keep the accommodation clean and tidy on a day-to-day basis.

In situations where a locum stays in the practitioner’s own home, both parties need to explicitly clarify the extent of domestic responsibilities.

Requesting practitioners are also required to supply locums with a car to facilitate travel to and from the practice as well as other visits. The car should be in a clean and mechanically sound condition and of a relatively recent make.

It is the responsibility of the requesting practitioner to ensure that the car is appropriately registered and insured for the locum’s use. The requesting practitioner shall be respectively liable for all
actions, claims and demands with regards to the vehicle and each party shall indemnify the locum or Health Workforce Queensland against any liability arising out of such actions, claims or demands.

Once the Locum Coordinator is sure that these arrangements are underway, a letter of confirmation will be forwarded to the requesting practitioner.

Please note that the contract for services arising out of the provision of Locum Services shall be as between the requesting practitioner and the locum and those parties shall be respectively liable for all actions, claims and demands both as between each other and with third parties arising out of such contract for service and each party shall indemnify Health Workforce Queensland against any liability arising our of such actions, claims and demands.

The Locum Coordinator will forward the approved provider number to the requesting practitioner’s nominated contact person as soon as it is available.

Cancellations

Requests for locum relief that have yet to be filled may be cancelled at any time. Please be sure to notify the Locum Coordinator of any requests which are no longer current.

In the event that the requesting practitioner cancels a placement after the confirmation letter has been sent by the Locum Coordinator, the requesting practitioner agrees to reimburse Health Workforce Queensland any expenses incurred for the placement, such as travel arrangements and administration costs. It is the responsibility of the requesting practitioner to negotiate directly with the locum regarding any compensation that may be payable to the locum.

Post-placement

Requesting practices are encouraged to complete and return a locum evaluation form. These evaluations seek feedback about the locum’s capacities and professional conduct from another practitioner at the practice and a practice staff member. Please note that while practices are identified on the evaluation forms, all identifying markers are removed in reporting findings.

Copies of the forms are forwarded with the placement confirmation letter by the Locum Coordinator and additional copies are available on request. The Locum Coordinator will follow up on unreturned evaluations.

Requesting a locum subsidy

Subsidies are available to practitioners who obtain locum coverage through the Service as well as practitioners who source locums from other providers. The Locum Policy sets out the eligibility criteria and entitlements.

Practices seeking a locum subsidy are required to submit a Claim and EFT Form with proof of purchase within one month of the locum completing their placement. Please ensure that both forms are filled in completely. The Locum Coordinator will forward both forms with the placement confirmation letter. The Claim and EFT Form is also available on the Health Workforce Queensland website.
Checklist for Requesting Practitioners

Requesting locum relief

Pre-placement

☐ Complete and submit locum request form well in advance of required leave period
☐ Notify Locum Coordinator if the requested locum relief is no longer required
☐ Peruse forwarded CV of available locum
☐ Negotiate fees with potential locum
☐ Conduct a patient handover (as required)
☐ Organize orientation:
  ☐ Complete General Information Form about practice services
  ☐ Complete Quick Reference Form about key practice contacts and information
  ☐ Organize orientation and introductions for the first day of placement
☐ Organize accommodation which includes:
  ☐ Kitchen facilities
  ☐ Laundry facilities
☐ Organize car for locum
☐ Organize for locum to be greeted upon arrival

Post-placement checklist

☐ Practitioner and practice staff evaluation forms completed and returned to Health Workforce Queensland within 1 month of the locum placement

Requesting a locum subsidy

☐ Lodge a claim for a locum subsidy. The following must be returned to Health Workforce Queensland within 1 month of the locum completing their placement:
  ☐ Subsidy Claim Form
  ☐ EFT Form
  ☐ Proof of payment to locum
Locum Practitioner

Locum practitioners who undertake placements facilitated by the Health Workforce Queensland Locum Service are also subject to a number of expectations and requirements.

Pre-placement

Providing locum relief on behalf of Health Workforce Queensland

Locum practitioners seeking to undertake placements on behalf of the Locum Service are required to complete the General Practitioner Application Form on the Health Workforce Queensland website. The application form seeks details about qualification and current skills. Please ensure that the form is fully completed and further details provided where appropriate. Potential locums are also required to forward a complete and up to date copy of their CV. The Locum Coordinator will respond to all applications and communicate the potential placements available where appropriate. Locums are required to supply verification of current medical indemnity insurance prior to beginning selecting a placement and negotiating terms with a requesting practitioner.

Identifying potential placements

Locums are expected to discuss any preferences they have concerning placement location or type to facilitate matching locum practitioners with requests for locum relief. Locums should also communicate if there any procedures or services they are unwilling to carry out while on placement. Please be sure to communicate any other special requirements or issues that may impact on providing effective relief, organising accommodation or the use of a private vehicle.

Once these preferences have been established the Locum Coordinator will forward a list of potential placement options. Placement information is supplied by the requesting practitioner. Locum practitioners are expected to consider the placement options forwarded by the Locum Coordinator. The Locum Coordinator will provide additional information upon request. Please notify the Locum Coordinator as soon as possible of any placement options of interest.

Negotiating with a requesting practitioner

The Locum Coordinator will facilitate negotiations by putting the requesting practitioner and locum in contact and providing other support where appropriate. Fee negotiation remains the responsibility of locums and requesting practitioners. Fees may be an hourly, sessional or flat weekly rate or a proportion of billings or potentially a combination of these approaches. Ideally, they should be informed by the demands placed upon locums as well as the characteristics of the practice environment.

Once fees have been agreed upon and Locum Coordinator ensures that the requesting practitioner is organising appropriate orientation, accommodation and vehicle use, a letter of confirmation will be forwarded to the locum practitioner. Following this, the Locum Coordinator will begin to arrange travel to the placement and a location specific provider number. Locums are expected to be available to provide further information or feedback about the arrangements as required during this time.

Locum practitioners are expected to familiarise themselves with the practice information provided by the requesting practice as well as participate in the provided orientation. This includes but may not be limited to the General Information Form about practice services and the Quick Reference Form about key practice contacts and information.

Please note that the contract for services arising out of the provision of Locum Services shall be as between the requesting practitioner and the locum and those parties shall be respectively liable for
all actions, claims and demands both as between each other and with third parties arising out of such contract for service and each party shall indemnify Health Workforce Queensland against any liability arising out of such actions, claims and demands.

The Locum Coordinator will forward the approved provider number for the placement as soon as it is available.

Cancellations

Prior to finalising negotiations, locums may withdraw from undertaking placements on behalf of the Locum Service by notifying the Locum Coordinator.

In the event that the locum cancels a placement after the confirmation letter has been sent by the Locum Coordinator, the locum agrees to reimburse Health Workforce Queensland any expenses incurred for the placement, such as travel arrangements and administration costs. It is the responsibility of the locum to negotiate directly with the requesting practitioner regarding any compensation that may be payable to the requesting practitioner.

Post-placement checklist

Locum practitioners are expected to provide a patient handover (as needed) prior to departure. If the requesting practitioner is not available prior to the Locum practitioner’s departure, the Locum practitioner is expected to leave contact details so that the requesting practitioner can follow up at a suitable time.

Locum practitioners are expected to leave the accommodation and vehicle supplied by the practice in a clean and tidy state after they have completed their placement. Please make sure to refill the vehicle if provided with a full tank of fuel. Importantly, the practice must be informed as soon as possible if the vehicle has been damaged in any way. It is very important that the provided facilities are treated with respect given that practices go to some lengths to ensure that locum practitioners are appropriately catered for. Treating these facilities with respect will contribute to the practice’s willingness to host placements in future.

Locum practitioners are encouraged to complete and return a placement evaluation form. These evaluations ask for feedback about the placement experience, such as the use of skills and knowledge and support provided by the practice. The Locum Coordinator will forward an evaluation form with the placement confirmation and follow up on unreturned forms.

Locum practitioners are expected to be available to discuss their next placement options as well as other issues such as travel arrangements with the Locum Coordinator.
Checklist for Locum Practitioners

Pre-placement checklist
☐ Forward CV to Locum Coordinator and complete a Locum Application Form online at Health Workforce Queensland’s website
☐ Forward verification of your current medical indemnity insurance to the Locum Coordinator
☐ Review placement options and request further information on potential placements
☐ Liaise directly with practice to negotiate fees and conditions
☐ Ensure availability to provide further information or feedback about travel arrangements and provider numbers immediately prior to placement

Post-placement checklist
☐ Conduct a patient handover (as required)
☐ Supplied accommodation and vehicle have been left in a clean and tidy state
  ☐ Car has been refuelled (if applicable)
☐ Completed evaluation form has been returned to Health Workforce Queensland within 1 month of completing the placement
☐ Ensure availability to supply further information or feedback prior to the next placement
Locum Service

This section will outline the support provided to both requesting practitioners and locums in facilitating locum placements. It will also outline the support that can be expected by practitioners requesting a locum subsidy.

Requests for locum relief

Pre-placement

Requesting Practitioner

The Locum Coordinator processes requests for locum relief by ensuring that practitioners meet the eligibility criteria and sufficient information has been supplied about the practice to facilitate matching. The practice will be notified if the practitioner is ineligible or if the information supplied is insufficient.

In the event of an unanticipated request for locum relief, such as an emergency situation, the Service will endeavour to prioritise the request. Where the Service is unable to fulfil a request, practitioners will be referred to alternative providers.

The Locum Coordinator will notify requesting practitioners when a locum is available to cover their request and forward the locum’s CV for perusal. The Locum Coordinator will provide further details about the locum if requested. While requesting practitioners and locums are responsible for negotiating fees, the Locum Coordinator will facilitate negotiations by putting the requesting practitioner and locum in contact and providing other support where appropriate.

Once negotiations have been finalised, the Locum Coordinator will liaise with the requesting practitioner to ensure that suitable accommodation, vehicle, patient handover and orientation is being organized. Once these arrangements are underway, the Locum Coordinator will then forward the following to the requesting practitioner:

- Placement confirmation letter
- Practitioner and practice staff member evaluation forms
- General Information Form
- Quick Reference Form
- Claim and EFT Form

The Locum Coordinator will forward a copy of the locum’s provider number to the requesting practitioner’s nominated contact person as soon as it is available.

Every effort will be made to ensure that requesting practitioners are kept up to date with the progress of their request. Additionally, the Locum Service is committed to responding in a timely and effective fashion to all enquiries.

Locum Practitioner

The Locums Coordinator is responsible for processing applications to undertake locum placements on behalf of Health Workforce Queensland. The Locums Coordinator will notify applicants about their suitability for undertaking placements.

In addition to arranging travel to and from placements and provider number applications, interstate and international medical graduates (IMGs) will be offered additional support to practise in Queensland. International medical graduates will be offered assistance with their visa application and obtaining registration with the Medical Board of Queensland as well as orientation to the
Australian healthcare system. Interstate practitioners will be offered assistance with obtaining registration with the Medical Board of Queensland.

The Locums Coordinator will ensure that locum practitioners have provided verification of current medical indemnity insurance.

The Locums Coordinator will seek information about any placement preferences or procedures that locum practitioners may be unwilling to undertake while providing locum relief. This will assist with providing relevant placement options.

Based on these preferences, potential placement options will be forwarded to locum practitioners. Further information about the placements is available on request.

The Locums Coordinator will provide assistance to locum practitioners and requesting practitioners in the negotiation process by facilitating contact and providing other support where appropriate. However, locums and requesting practitioners are responsible for fee negotiation.

Once negotiations have been finalised and the Locums Coordinator ensures that the appropriate preparations are underway by the requesting practitioner, a placement confirmation letter and a placement evaluation form will be forwarded.

The Locums Coordinator will also advise the local Division of General Practice about the locum placement.

Following confirmation, the Locums Coordinator will liaise with locum practitioners to organize travel arrangements to the placement location. Provider number applications will also be submitted to Medicare Australia. The Locums Coordinator will forward the approved provider number as soon as it is available.

The Locums Coordinator will contact locum practitioners at the beginning of their placement to ensure that appropriate support has been provided.

Every effort will be made to ensure that locum practitioners are kept up to date with the progress of their arrangements. Additionally, the Locum Service is committed to responding in a timely and effective fashion to all enquiries.

Post-placement checklist

*Requesting Practice*

The Locums Coordinator will follow up on uncompleted evaluation forms.

*Locum Practitioner*

As the placement concludes, the Locums Coordinator initiates the placement process again, forwarding the next range of placement options. The Locums Coordinator will also follow up on uncompleted evaluation forms.

*Requesting a locum subsidy*

The Locums Coordinator processes subsidy claims by ensuring the requesting practitioner is eligible, has sufficient claimable days left and has completed the *Claim and EFT Form* and appended proof of purchase. Requesting practitioners who have submitted a completed claim with proof of purchase within one month of the locum completing their placement will receive the subsidy within 14 days of lodgement.
Checklist for Locum Service

Pre-placement

**Requesting Practitioner**

☐ Process requests for locum relief

☐ Forward locum practitioners’ CV

☐ Facilitate fee negotiation

☐ Ensure accommodation, vehicle, handover and orientation are organized by practice

☐ Forward confirmation letter with locum evaluation forms

☐ Advise local Division of General Practice of placement

☐ Forward provider number to nominated contact person

**Locum Practitioner**

☐ Process applications from potential locum Practitioners (including proof of current medical indemnity)

☐ Discuss placement preferences

☐ Forward a list of potential placements

☐ Facilitate fee negotiation

☐ Forward confirmation letter with placement evaluation form

☐ Organize provider number and travel

☐ Forward approved provider number

☐ Contact locum on first day of placement to check progress

Post-placement checklist

**Requesting Practice**

☐ Process subsidy claims

☐ Follow up uncompleted evaluation forms

**Locum Practitioner**

☐ Initiate process for next placement

☐ Follow up uncompleted evaluation forms