

There's nothing casual about teaching



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Temporary teacher engagements

On my visits to schools, and through enquiries fielded by Federation colleagues, conversations with members often focus on the nature of temporary engagements. Here are some of the questions I get asked, and the answers I give to support members in ensuring they are aware of their rights and conditions and are employed correctly.

How do I know if I am employed correctly as either a casual or temporary teacher?

The length of the vacancy determines whether the engagement is a temporary or casual engagement. Engagement as a temporary employee is not a choice for either the school or the employee, it is an Award provision. The Award defines temporary teacher as “a person employed in one engagement full-time for four weeks or more or in one engagement for one to four days per week for two terms or more”.



To attempt to employ a teacher as a casual when the length of the engagement is known to require the employment of a temporary teacher is illegal, as it is in contravention of the Award. If a school attempts to refuse to appoint you as a temporary school teacher, contact Federation immediately.

If the engagement is a combination of positions should I still be employed as a temporary teacher?

Yes. If the combined roles result in the length of the vacancy being full-time for four weeks or more, then in line with the Award, it must be a temporary engagement.

Federation members have raised concerns that the SAP computer payroll system makes it difficult to administratively combine two roles into one temporary engagement. The union has pursued this matter with success when members have raised the concern. If you are being denied a temporary engagement due to SAP, please contact Federation immediately.

A school wants to employ me as a casual because they are unsure of enrolments. Is this acceptable?

Casual days should not be used in place of a temporary engagement in these circumstances, as “this practice creates disadvantage for service and some entitlements”. To do so would also be a breach of the required conditions of employment. If schools are unsure of enrolments, it is recommended that a temporary teacher is engaged for the first four weeks of term. The engagement can thereafter be extended by amending the engagement or submitting a further engagement form if required.

Are the dates on the temporary teacher engagement notice important?

Federation reminds all members that where any vacant teacher position is known to exist for the full calendar year, the temporary teacher must be engaged for the full 2020 school year. Therefore, the date on the Temporary Teacher Engagement Notice must be “from” 28 January, 2020 (or the relevant starting date) and “to” 26 January, 2021. The temporary engagement notice must end on the last day of the school holidays in order for SAP to pay you during the holidays. There is no choice on this matter, including when staff development days are involved.