



Issue 50: 31 October 2018

## SA PHARMACY UPDATE

# Proposed Transition to Allied Health Assistant Classification Stream

### Progress of SA Pharmacy Consultation with Staff and Unions

Consultation on the proposed *SA Pharmacy - Transition to Allied Health Assistant Classification Stream* commenced on 14 September 2018, to provide an opportunity for staff to provide input and feedback on the proposal. The formal consultation period closed on 29 September 2018.

A total of seventeen (17) written responses were received from staff and the PSA.

A [summary](#) of the consultation is now available. [Templates](#) and [role descriptions](#) have been finalised and are now available on the SA pharmacy intranet.

The input and involvement of staff throughout the consultation process is highly valued and appreciated.

A transition process will now commence. Staff considered in-scope will receive transition letters via email over the coming days. If you do not receive a letter or have question about this process, contact your line manager or Director of Pharmacy.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard Marotti".

**RICHARD MAROTTI**  
Director of SA Pharmacy



SA Pharmacy  
Transition to Allied  
Health Assistant  
Classification Stream  
– SA Pharmacy  
Consultation  
Summary

*Building a sustainable,  
responsive and contemporary  
pharmacy workforce*

*SA Pharmacy Workforce  
Roadmap 2017-2022*



Government  
of South Australia

SA Health

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## Executive Summary

SA Pharmacy's most valuable asset is its workforce. Our workforce is pivotal to achieving the *2017-2019 SA Pharmacy Strategic Plan* and the recently released *Workforce Roadmap 2017-2022* which was developed to meet the identified needs and priorities of staff, promoting a flourishing workforce that aligns with our strategic outcomes.

Staff feedback which informed the development of *the Workforce Roadmap*, was a desire for clear, robust pathways for career development for our pharmacy assistant workforce. A new classification stream which supports SA Pharmacy's vision has been introduced in the *South Australian Modern Public Sector Enterprise Agreement: Salaried 2017, Appendix 10*.

Through negotiation, SA Pharmacy via the Department of Treasury and Finance worked with Unions to develop position descriptors and work level definitions in line with the intent of the *Appendix 10*, and in alignment with our unique hospital pharmacy work processes. These changes mean that the majority of our Assistant workforce and our ASO classified workforce (Purchasing Officers) will transition to the AHA classification, providing greater opportunity for career advancement.

SA Pharmacy undertook broader consultation with staff and unions to ensure a robust process was undertaken to progress this classification transition.

SA Pharmacy will now finalise the assessment of transition classifications and transition all in scope OPS and ASO staff to the AHA classification stream.

## Consultation Process

Consultation on the proposed SA Pharmacy - *Transition to Allied Health Assistant Classification Stream Consultation* commenced on 14 September 2018, to provide an opportunity for staff to provide input and feedback on the proposal. The formal consultation period closed on 29 September 2018.

SA Pharmacy delegates undertook staff presentations across all 16 SA Pharmacy locations over 11-14 September 2018. The PSA were also in attendance.

Information was sent to the peak union bodies relevant to this consultation process and invitations to meet to discuss were made.

A staff communique was issued by SA Pharmacy on 14 September 2018 advising that the consultation process was officially open, and that the proposal and a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) was available on the SA Pharmacy Intranet along with the generic role descriptions, reclassification forms and proposed position titles.

A total of seventeen (17) written responses were received from staff and the PSA.

## Update to the SA Pharmacy, Transition to Allied Health Assistant Classification Stream

Consultation feedback identified that the Service Coordinator (AHA4) essential minimum requirements, educational/vocational qualifications was incorrectly identified as including Certificate IV in hospital and health service pharmacy when this is not considered a relevant qualification at this level. The Service Coordinator (AHA4) Generic Role Description qualifications will be amended accordingly.

## Summary of Consultation Feedback

From the responses received there has been positive feedback on the concept and proposed transition of in scope staff to the Allied Health Assistant classification stream which includes:

- > Supporting the overall transition
- > Recognition that the stream acknowledges the contribution of this workforce to service provision
- > Supporting career progression opportunities provided by transition
- > Supporting rotations and the flow on effects for career advancement
- > A vision of long term benefit flowing from upskilling the workforce
- > Supporting financial and other support for upskilling the workforce
- > Supporting the use of the title assistant and technician as careers progress

A summary of the further feedback themes are provided below:

## Role Titles

Feedback received during the consultation phase was regarding the recognition of the AHA1 role as a training position, support for the use of the title technician and lifelong learning model that the incremental titles implements. There was mixed feedback on the use of the word senior in the AHA2 and AHA4 titles.

In consideration of all feedback SA Pharmacy will retain the consulted titles.

## Qualifications

### Relevant Qualifications

Feedback received during the consultation phase was regarding the inclusion of additional relevant qualifications (namely certificate IV in Teaching and Assessment) and clarification of proposed existing relevant qualifications (namely a Bachelor Pharmacy obtained overseas), identifying the lack of suitable qualifications available specifically for manufacturing and seeking to understand the criteria for assessment of relevant qualifications. Questions regarding how to attain recognised prior learning and the process for application to have qualifications assessed for relevance were raised.

It is proposed that the panel review certificate IV in Teaching and Assessment for inclusion or not in the list of relevant qualifications. SA Pharmacy deems an overseas pharmacy degree with eligibility to seek registration in Australia following an intern training and assessment year as a relevant qualification to attain AHA2/3 classification. SA Pharmacy will continue to seek relevant qualifications for manufacturing. The tools used to assess qualifications as relevant or not for inclusion to date have been the work level definitions, role descriptions, knowledge and experience of the qualifications and expert opinion.

### Study Support

Feedback received during the consultation phase pertained to how course fees will be applied for and paid, the maximum number of staff who will be supported and support for study time during normal business hours along with a question regarding reimbursement if a person were to leave SA Pharmacy during the study period.

The HR-048 Study Support Application may be used to apply for study support. The Study Support Guideline published on the Department for Health and Wellbeing intranet outlines that course fees may be reimbursed upon successful completion of a section of study enabling reimbursement to occur at the end of every semester or at the end of a course. This means staff will

need to pay up front for course fees and be reimbursed upon successful completion of a section of study. The Guideline also outlines the proportion of reimbursement if a staff member were to leave SA Pharmacy.

Additionally the Guideline identifies the maximum in-work time that may be made available to staff and the core principles of approval for study support.

A key factor in provision of paid in-work time will be the requirement to maintain service provision. SA Pharmacy has no restriction on the number of staff wanting to undertake a relevant qualification. Noting that some relevant qualifications will not be financially supported to attain unless there is a clear service delivery imperative.

## **Education Providers**

Feedback received during the consultation phase was the desire for higher qualification study to commence soon and questions regarding choice of education providers were raised. SA Pharmacy is working with an education provider with the aim of optimising support from the provider in meeting our staff needs. Our aim is to have a preferred provider noting there may be circumstances where employees choosing to undertake training through another provider will have funding approved subject to management agreement.

## **Recognised Prior Learning (RPL)**

Feedback received during the consultation phase was regarding the process for attaining RPL for a qualification.

Further information on this process is available through education providers. Essentially the process will involve a collation of a portfolio of evidence, of the skills, knowledge and attributes you have developed undertaking duties you currently perform in day to day operations, through life experiences or other training. As we progress along the journey SA Pharmacy intends to support staff to link together to discuss and share their experiences.

## **Advanced Practice Competencies**

### **Advanced Practice Standardisation**

Feedback received during the consultation phase was standardising advanced practice competency assessment across all sites and assessors having significant experience in the area of practice being assessed.

SA Pharmacy is achieving consistency and the highest assessor skills in existing projects through several avenues:

- > building a collaboration of supervisors across SA Pharmacy
- > supervisors visiting across sites to review competency
- > use of standardised training tools and professional practice reviews
- > providing training in giving and receiving feedback
- > expanding our numbers of SHPAclinCAT trained staff
- >

These strategies will continue.

### **Prioritising Staff for Training**

Feedback received during the consultation phase was how staff will be prioritised for training, if there are training entry criteria and the requirement to have staff as supernumerary in production to enable training.

SA Pharmacy has not set limits on the number of staff who can receive funding to support study nor on entry into on the job advanced practice training.

Along with the new classification stream there has not been additional staffing approved to enable supernumerary training positions, so it will be necessary for SA Pharmacy to innovate to optimally support the development of the AHA workforce. Experiences to date with the delegation of problem solving on scripts has demonstrated that those assistants who are proactive and personally seek out opportunities and identify their own personal goals around professional practice review discussions at the beginning of each day achieve competency sooner and within the normal work day. In the dispensary/distribution area, advanced practice entry into the stream will occur after the elemental training and competency is achieved (formerly known as OPS1-OPS2 competency based progression). Similarly elementary competencies required of an AHA2 may be identified in the other areas of advanced practice.

SA Pharmacy is committed to the development of staff and discussions between staff and their supervisors regarding training can happen at any time but at a minimum should happen at PRD discussions.

### **Clarifying the Difference between AHA2 and AHA3**

Feedback received during the consultation phase was clarifying the difference between AHA2 and AHA3 classification.

SA Pharmacy has worked with the Department for Health and Wellbeing, the Department for Treasury and Finance and the Unions to agree to the relevant work level definitions and from that has been able to develop role descriptions. The work expected of an AHA2 is similar to that expected of a OPS2 currently. The work expected of an AHA3 is at a higher level and will include increased responsibility, increased autonomy and increased expertise than that required of the current OPS2 workforce. To achieve this SA Pharmacy intends to develop advanced practice training packages and competency assessments that once achieved can be used as an evidence package of working at a higher level and suitability for reclassification with the required qualifications.

### **Advanced Practice Requirements for OPS3 Staff**

Feedback received during the consultation phase was clarifying the requirement for AHA3 staff to have advanced practice competencies at the point of transition.

At transition OPS3 staff transitioning to AHA3 are assumed to hold the necessary skills, knowledge and attributes as they have already been appointed at the level of OPS3. Transition pay point to pay point may occur at transition without the necessary qualifications.

### **Recognition of Existing Advanced Practice OPS1/2**

Feedback received during the consultation phase was indicating some OPS1/2 staff had existing advanced practice skills, knowledge and attributes and should transition to a higher classification. A further feedback suggestion was that staff with extensive years of experience transition to the AHA3 level and the proposed advanced practice training tools and competency assessments be completed after appointment at the higher level.

OPS1/2 staff who have existing advanced practice skills, knowledge and attributes, possess a relevant qualification and desiring to transition to AHA3 may apply for a classification review at any time and if prior to 28 November 2018, the preservation date of 31 July 2018 will apply if the re-classification application is approved. The Enterprise Agreement dictates that staff are to transition pay rate to pay rate unless relevant qualifications are held and the role is performed to the work level definitions and role description of the higher classification. This means for a re-classification application to be approved staff must demonstrate they are working to the majority (approx. 80%) of the higher classification role description and have the necessary relevant qualifications.

## **Recognition of Existing Advanced Practice after 31 October 2018**

Feedback received during the consultation phase was indicating the requirement for consistency in practices between recruitment and reclassification to higher levels past transition when we move to business as usual.

Past transition, in business as usual, applicants applying for an AHA3 position must demonstrate advanced skills and knowledge in two areas of pharmacy practice. This may be through a portfolio of evidence and/or a recruitment process. To be appointed to (via a recruitment process) or advanced through reclassification to AHA3 a relevant qualification is also required.

At all times staff will have the opportunity to apply for a personal reclassification.

## **Advanced Practice Areas Expansion**

Feedback received during the consultation phase was the recommendation that advanced practice competency areas be extended to include Investigational Drugs, PBS Claims and Cashier.

SA Pharmacy will explore the opportunity to extend the advanced practice areas to include all areas of pharmacy practice.

## **Enterprise Agreement Requirements**

*The South Australian Modern Public Sector Enterprise Agreement: Salaried 2017, Appendix 10* (the Enterprise Agreement) is an agreement between the Government and the Unions and SA Pharmacy must work within the confines of the agreement. Past the signing of the Enterprise Agreement the Office of Allied Health worked with the Department of Treasury and Finance and Unions to determine the transition process. SA Pharmacy have been able to influence this process to open the opportunity for the greater majority of SA Pharmacy's assistant workforce and selected staff working in the ASO classification stream to transition and have also been granted an extension of the date staff have to apply for RPL or to lodge a Employee-Initiated Re-classification to management, maintaining the preservation date of 31 July 2018.

## **AHA1 to AHA2**

Feedback received during the consultation phase was that training a new staff member in all areas takes more than 6 months and that staff may after 6-months and with satisfactory performance move to AHA2 without qualification, yielding inequality.

The Enterprise Agreement essentially articulates the AHA1 classification as a 6 month training position whereby staff will attain basic knowledge and skills. SA Pharmacy proposes that the referee report which was previously used to gain entry into the OPS1 to OPS2 competency progression training be used as a benchmark of the expected level of knowledge and skills in order to transition to the AHA2-01 level at or after 6 months (where a person does not already possess a relevant certificate III or above). SA Pharmacy intends that attaining an AHA2 position does not signal the end of learning but rather is the entry point, for those who want it, to a career journey through robust training and competency evaluation. As indicated in the Enterprise Agreement staff may attain an AHA2 level after 6 months without relevant qualifications.

## **Reclassification of OPS2 staff to AHA3 without Relevant Qualifications**

Feedback received during the consultation phrase indicated a desire for OPS2 staff to transition to a higher pay rate (ie AHA3) based on years of experience, maintaining the preservation date of 31 July 2018 if they begin studies by 31 March 2019 and fully supporting staff with paid time and covering costs of training.

The requirements of the Enterprise Agreement transition are that staff transition pay rate to pay rate unless they possess a relevant qualification, and to be classified at a higher level staff must be able to demonstrate they are performing at the higher level and meet the work level definitions in their day to day role. SA Pharmacy is committed to supporting staff development and has attained funding approval for 75% for new study costs and 100% for RPL costs. SA Pharmacy is required to maintain

service provision as we advance our workforce and thus are unlikely to be able to fully support achievement of qualifications during paid hours.

### **OPS3 Service Coordinators Transitioning to AHA3**

Feedback received during the consultation phase was on the closer alignment of the current OPS3 Service Coordinator roles with the AHA4 role descriptions than the AHA3 role descriptions and the recommendation that:

- > transition occur to the higher classification without qualification or
- > attainment of relevant qualification be fully supported financially and undertaken in paid time due to the role requiring the qualification.

SA Pharmacy acknowledges that the role description of an AHA4 better aligns with the roles we would ideally like our Service Coordinators to undertake. With a relevant qualification and demonstration of undertaking 80% or more of the role, transition to the higher classification may occur. SA Pharmacy has confirmed with the Office of Allied Health and the Department of Treasury and Finance that transition must be pay rate to pay rate without a relevant qualification. At any time an employee may submit an Employee-Initiated Re-classification to management. Feedback additionally questioned if two certificate IV relevant qualifications were required for OPS3 Service Coordinators wanting to progress to AHA4 and the concern that OPS3 staff at transition may have no relevant qualifications.

Only one relevant qualification at the certificate IV or above level is required to progress to AHA4. The transition agreement between the Office of Allied Health, Department of Treasury and Finance and Unions is such that no staff will transition to a lower pay rate and thus existing OPS3 staff will transition pay rate to pay rate regardless of possession of a relevant qualification or not. Feedback additionally questioned the expectation that an AHA3 at transition maintain the role of Service Coordinator. SA Pharmacy will support OPS3 Service Coordinators to attain a relevant qualification and meet the requirements of the AHA4 role description.

## **General**

### **Transition Assessment**

Feedback received during the consultation phase was to seek an understanding of the transition classification assessment.

Local Health Network Directors of Pharmacy Services will assess roles according to the in-scope definitions that have been negotiated and agreed with unions. If a role is determined in-scope then an assessment of possession of relevant qualifications and competencies based on the work level definitions and role descriptions will be undertaken. The draft forms consulted on will now be finalised as tools to use.

### **Reporting Lines**

Feedback received during the consultation phase was a concern that it may eventuate that an AHA3 reports to a AHA3.

This is a possibility and is similar to our pharmacist model whereby our AHP3 Team Leaders have AHP3 (and sometimes AHP4) staff reporting to them for operational supervision. Generally clinical supervision is undertaken by higher classifications but may be undertaken by peers.

### **Additional Duties Allowance**

Feedback received during the consultation phase was an opportunity for higher duties while our current Service Coordinators are on leave.

In this interim period as we build the qualifications of our workforce there may be a circumstance where a portion of a vacant role may be undertaken and paid as additional duties allowance to an employee who does not hold the relevant qualification. Higher duties would only be appropriate if a person has the relevant qualification. In due course SA Pharmacy anticipates there will be many more staff with qualifications who will be able to undertake 100% of higher duties of a higher level role.

## Changes to Employment Contracts

Feedback received during the consultation phase was a concern that contracts would change for in-scope staff transitioning to the AHA stream.

The transition does not change your current employment contracts.

## Finalisation of Supporting Forms

Feedback received during the consultation phase was a desire for access to finalised forms. SA Pharmacy intends to finalise the forms provided during the consultation period and make them available on 31 October 2018.

## Next Steps

For all in-scope OPS and ASO staff Directors of Pharmacy will undertake a transition assessment and provide the assessment in writing via email on:

- > 31 October 2018

Staff may lodge an Employee-Initiated Re-classification to management should they disagree with the transition classification level:

- > By 28 November 2018 (maintaining the preservation date)

Staff transitioned at pay point planning on attaining relevant qualifications by 31 March 2019 and currently meeting AHA work level definitions/role description requirements of higher classification may also lodge an Employee-Initiated AHA Re-classification application

- > By 28 November 2018 (transition to the higher classification with back pay to 31 July 2018)

A panel will be set up to review the inclusion or not of the certificate IV in teaching and assessment and forms will be finalised for use by staff to apply for reclassification and for study applications. SA Pharmacy will continue to negotiate with a preferred provider for higher qualifications. Development of advanced practice training and competency tools will be undertaken.

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## For more information

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