

Job Share Guide

Managers

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FLEXIBLE WORKING

A quick reference guide to the factsheets available for Managers. Most are common to employees, managers and HR, while others are provided in order to support employees and HR/recruiters.

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What is job share and how does it work?

This factsheet will help you to explain what job share is to your team, and some of the ways it is typically structured.

Job share is a full-time role that has been divided into multiple job roles. It's typically undertaken by two or more employees, who are paid and earn leave entitlements on a pro rata basis for the part of the role each employee completes¹. It's a type of flexible working more commonly seen in organisations with established flex work cultures.

From the employer's perspective, it's a full-time role that's shared, with all the advantages of continuous coverage that comes with that. From the employee's perspective, it's a part-time role that gives them genuine time off, knowing someone else has it under control the times that they're not there.

Job share roles can be designed in a number of different ways, depending on the needs of the role and the business, and the needs and capabilities of the individuals.

The two most common models are the islands model (where the job is effectively split) and the twin model (where both employees complete the same tasks but work different days). The model used can evolve as the needs and requirements of the role do.

Standard agency processes for employing job sharers apply, as do recruitment and selection procedures. Job share can be used for any employment arrangement, whether ongoing, temporary, casual or term/contractor.

What makes a good job share pair?

Not everyone is cut out for job share; it requires specific attributes to do it well. The basic traits needed for job share are:

- **Trust**
Be able to trust another individual to do the work when it's not 'their day'.
- **Commitment**
Be committed to the arrangement, to their role, and to making it work.
- **Team player**
Be able to work as a team, appreciating the whole as more valuable than the parts, and avoid competition with each other or a clash of egos.
- **Organised**
Have great attention to detail and be able to provide clear notes and advice on the work in progress to each other (handover).
- **Respect**
Even if they disagree with their partner's decision, they can present a united front, to avoid destabilising the team around them and undermining their joint authority.

In addition to these basic traits, successful job share pairs typically have complementary skill sets and share similar values. These main attributes, combined with planning and preparation, will increase the productivity of the role.

The logistics of each arrangement can vary, but typically partners work 2.5–3 days each.

¹ WGEA, 'Employee Flexibility Toolkit', 2014

What is job share and how does it work?



Twin model

'Classic'



Islands model

'Job split'



Hybrid model

'Combination'

What it is

Involves 2 (or more) employees sharing a role and its workload completing the same tasks but working on different days. They are jointly responsible for all duties and act as a team to complete them. It is essentially 1 full-time role completed by 2 (or more) interchangeable partners on a part-time basis.

Involves 2 (or more) employees sharing a role, but not its workload. Duties are split up between the employees, allowing them to cover different areas of the role. Job sharers have little reliance on each other. It is essentially 2 part-time roles.

The hybrid model is a mix of both the twin and islands model, where 2 (or more) employees share a role with some shared responsibility and some divided responsibility. Role is divided to play to each other's strengths.

What's shared

- One job description
- Single set of accountabilities, responsibilities and performance objectives
- Same level of expertise & capabilities
- Shared client/stakeholder
- Ownership and team management

- Performance objectives and accountabilities differ
- One role description divided into two, although candidates still assessed against all the same capabilities, knowledge and experience

- One role description
- Single set of performance objectives
- Complementary expertise & capabilities
- Shared capabilities

What's divided up

- Time – Hours / Day(s) / Week(s) / Month(s)
- Geography / time-zone

- Different expertise and experience
- Responsibilities
- Activity/Project/Work-stream/Accountability

- Complementary capabilities & expertise, with accountabilities divided along relative capability/expertise lines
- Possibly divided client or team ownership

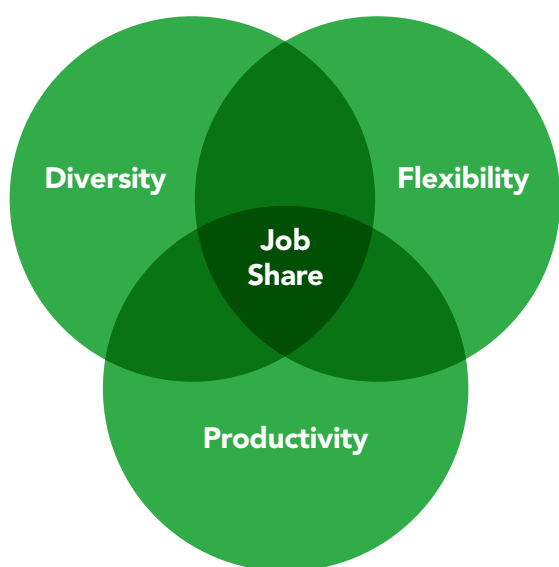
Common variations

A vertical pair occurs where one partner is currently a higher grade and one partner is a lower grade (divided seniority). It can be used for succession planning and development, and the senior partner can perform a mentor/manager function. Vertical pairs work best in the Twin model, where there are dedicated cross-over periods for the pair to meet together and with team members and check-in on progress.

The Unicorn is a hybrid job share where there is a single set of accountabilities but there is some shared and some divided responsibility based on complementary skill set. While Unicorn pairs can work across the three models of job share, they're best suited to 'islands' or 'hybrid' models of job share because of the divided responsibilities and expertise of the partners.

Why NSW government supports it

This factsheet can help you to explain why having job share in your team can help you to address some common employment challenges in diversity, flexibility and productivity.



a) Diversity

- Job share can help your organisation to achieve its diversity goals. Using it can attract talented but under-represented candidates currently unable to find part-time leadership roles, or other roles due to the travel time required or personal commitments.
- If your agency is operating in a competitive labour market, sourcing strategies that include job share can help your agency to attract applications from demographic groups currently applying at significantly lower rates — it expands your potential talent pool.
- It can also form a valuable part of your organisation's retention strategy, as job share can pave a career path for employees who currently cannot progress because their caring responsibilities, medical conditions, or community commitments make part-time their only option. This in turn can enrich your agency's talent pipeline.

b) Flexibility

- Job share can provide true flexibility to both job sharers without compromising business outcomes. It can ensure total coverage in a full-time role.
- This in turn provides flexibility for job sharers in senior or demanding roles that could not otherwise be achieved in reduced hours. It makes these roles sustainable.
- It can provide an excellent pathway to offer flexibility to employees returning from extended leave – whether parental or illness, without compromising the coverage in the role.

c) Productivity

- Job sharers are more productive, with optimal matches increasing productivity by up to 30% in some research³.
- Job share can be used to retain older workers as they transition to retirement, one of the most commonly cited reasons for requesting a job share arrangement. When vertically matched with a younger worker, job share can be used for succession planning, and role re-structure used to build skills in both employees.
- Managers of job share typically report the work produced is of consistently higher quality, thanks to complementary skills, experience and problem-solving.

³ See BHP case study on PSC flexible working website for more details on the productivity, safety and production accuracy forecasting data achieved through flexible rostering, including job sharing roster lines in mining workforces. Also Job Share Project Research UK 2011 303 respondents.

What do I do if I receive a job share request?

As a manager, there are two main ways a job share typically crystallises and could need your support:

- 1** New employment, for example, two job sharers jointly apply for a role currently structured as 1 FTE. Alternately, you may pro-actively elect to make a role job share when preparing to fill it.
- 2** Modified current employment: for example, a current job share partnership dissolves, a part-time employee wants to manage growing workload/commitments, or a full-time employee wants to scale back their commitments or return from long-term leave, and work part-time.

You may also want to use job share to fill a long-term (aged) vacancy that is for a niche skill set or for any other number of reasons has become hard to fill.

New employment: what do I do if I receive a joint application requesting a job share?

While current HR recruitment systems do not typically support two linked applications, you may receive a joint application, or two individual applications that reference each other as a joint application. Treat these as you would a single application, that is; apply the same recruitment and merit selection process.

In the case of job share applicants, each person is assessed individually against the role's requirements. If both job share applicants meet the requirements, you then determine the best person, or in the case of the job share applicants, people, suited to the role. (Note: This may vary in non-public service agencies that are not required to comply with Part 3 of the Government Sector Employment (General) Rules (GSE Rules)).

The selection process should be the same as it is for any other applicants; that is, you should avoid additional or unique questions for the job sharers that would not be otherwise asked of a single applicant.

A canny applicant will know to reference job share in any behavioural interview questions, if this assessment is used; after all, they will have direct experience of collaboration, and possibly influencing and negotiating as they navigate situations of potential conflict.

Under the GSE rules for the public service, there is no requirement for job share candidates to finish 'first and second'; they either meet the capability standards for the role, or they do not. There is no prohibition from offering the role to two people as a job share as you are offering two applicants a part-time role each. Your payroll system may require creating two part-time roles/position identifiers for the purposes of paying benefits; it depends on the system.

Requests for job share can only be refused by managers if they can demonstrate on operational grounds how the role cannot be shared because of its inherent business requirements, or the model proposed requires 1.2 FTE and this cannot be resourced. We advise the Manager Once Removed (i.e. their boss) also reviews and authorises the refusal, which should be in writing.

See See Factsheet 6 for determining inherent requirements.

What do I do if I receive a job share request?

You may have an employee who wants to return to work part-time after extended leave (illness or parental), or an employee who may be planning retirement or study and generally wants to scale back commitments. Here is what you can do to support them.

Modified employment: how do we handle backfill, part-time or return to work?

Meet with the employee to discuss how a job share arrangement might work, how it could meet business requirements (including stakeholder or team management), what the proposed working arrangements could be, any costs possibly incurred (additional laptop or desk and salary, if a twin model) and any health and safety implications, where relevant. Use Factsheet 10 to guide the discussion.

Work with the employee to analyse the current role's core responsibilities to first determine if they remain relevant, then establish if job share can be made easier through the way responsibilities are allocated. For example, are they best shared entirely (twin model where all responsibilities shared between two employees) or split (island model where responsibilities are split between partners) or a mix of both. Use Factsheet 5 for more details. Use the [PSC's guidance for role analysis](#) for support.

If more than 1 FTE is needed (e.g. a twin model), then consider the budget impacts of allowing a hand over process time between partners. When responsibilities are entirely shared, a minimum of 0.5 day hand over time each week is optimal.

If budget and role implications can be satisfied, then:

- If you support the request: Verbally notify the employee and allow them to proceed in finding a partner internally through the job share matching tool if they don't already have a potential partner through their own connections. They will still need to be assessed to see if they meet the capability requirements of the role.
- If the request can't be supported: speak with your Human Resources business partner to align prior to refusing any request. Consider alternative arrangements that meet both business and the employee's personal requirements.

We also recommend the Manager Once Removed (i.e. the Manager's boss) reviews and authorises any refusal, which should be in writing. It needs to explain how the inherent role requirements (Fact Sheet 6) , or budget constraints for 1.2 FTE, cannot support the request.

What do I do if I receive a job share request?

If it is an existing job share role where one of the pair is moving on, then you will need to advertise the role as per your normal process. Consider targeting the advertisement to part-time employees, or using recruiters that specialise in part-time or flexible employment. Use the PSC job share platform to advertise it as well.

You should also discuss it with the remaining half of the pair; they may wish to use the PSC job share platform and their networks to help find a suitable partner, or even vary their own arrangements to return to full-time.

But while making the partnership work is primarily their responsibility, the employment process is the responsibility of the agency. Refer a potential job share pair to the [PSC's Employees Guide to Job Share](#) for advice on what to consider if they are new to job share. You will also need them to consider what alternative solutions are available if a new partner cannot be sourced (e.g. a return to the role full time, re-design the role to be part-time, or a move to a different part-time role).

When a job share proposal is unlikely to be successful

A job share is unlikely to succeed if:

- **A minimum of 0.5 day hand over is needed**, and budget doesn't allow for over 1 FTE
- Analysis (see Factsheet 5) shows **too many key responsibilities** can only be performed by one person.
- The output required relies too heavily on one individual's tacit knowledge/style and **can't be continued** by another person.

It is also possible that one of the pair (or the employee proposing the arrangement) cannot demonstrate the individual values or characteristics necessary to succeed; for example, their challenges with being a team player, their ability to let go and trust others, and their time and task management skills. Ideally these would have been documented in a performance discussion, if they are an existing employee.

In this case, you will need to discuss this with the employee, as these concerns are valid. The employee could be encouraged to take the job share test in the PSC job share platform to better understand why job share may not be the best option for them.

However, client-facing roles and managing teams, or the fact that it has not been done before are not reasons to deny a job share arrangement: see the case studies for Industry, DPI and DPC to see how these common dilemmas have been successfully addressed.

In any event, ensure the employee is provided a written refusal, and you discuss this with them in the context of seeking an alternative flexible working arrangement (for example, part-time with role re-design to remove components, compressed hours, flexible start and finish times or working from different/remote locations). Use their role description's key accountabilities to explain how the work or the current funding could support the arrangement proposed.

What are some misgivings about job share?

There are a number of misgivings about job share that result in requests being refused or people less keen to consider the arrangement. Almost all can either be resolved or avoided entirely with some planning. In this factsheet, we've collected some of the most commonly expressed and provided suggested solutions.

Challenges	How to resolve them
It costs extra because it needs 1.2 FTE	1.2 FTE isn't always a necessity, although is a good idea in a twin arrangement, especially at executive level. However, it is well known that the increase of productivity (double the brain and stamina, double the connections) generally far outweighs the additional 0.2 cost, and a holistic view of agency labour spend often reveals annual underspend due to attrition. Gemini3 research found a typical productivity boost of 30% ³ .
Our clients only want to deal with one person	Contrary to this common perception, job share can be highly effective in client-facing roles, because it can potentially allow 5-day coverage, holiday coverage and gives access to two resources instead of one. It just needs to be communicated well to clients. See the DPC case study as an example of managing complex stakeholders successfully.
This role requires travel	Job share can help soften the burden of travel by splitting it between two employees. Some roles can even be shared by employees in two different locations. This can cut travel costs and create strong local relationships in both locations.
Our stakeholder interaction is complex	Relationships and interactions with key stakeholders need to be mapped out carefully at the beginning of a job share arrangement via a workplan. Job sharers could meet most important stakeholders together, and split others depending on working days. See the DPC case study as an example of managing complex stakeholders successfully.
Decision making around here is fast-paced	Trust is one of the most important attributes of a successful job share pair, and whoever is in that day, makes the decision. It is also critical that the other partner support the decision made, even if they may have done it differently, and handle discussions privately. See the Industry case study as an example of how job sharers can successfully trust each other's decisions.
This role requires overtime	Overtime is common in senior job share roles. Monitoring the amount of overtime, and allocating even tasks/days needs to be managed by the partners. Noting how the work ebbs and flows, especially on certain days, can help.
This role has direct reports	<p>Direct reports can be handled by evenly splitting by numbers if there is a high number, splitting by task, or handled together, divided by days in office.</p> <p>Performance reviews can be handled individually or together partners can take turns. HR systems will need consideration, as payroll systems may need dividing as well. See the DPI case study as an example of managing a team as a job share partnership.</p>
Pay and entitlements	Pay and employee entitlements are calculated on a pro rata basis, and subject to the relevant awards.

Determining whether a role is suitable for job share

This factsheet provides a framework for determining whether a NSW government sector role may be suitable for job share. It is a useful discussion guide for employees and managers exploring job share, to alert them to the decisions necessary.

Role analysis can be instigated in two ways: as part of a role analysis process before a vacant or new role is filled, or where a role is identified as potential job share (i.e. an employee request or employee decision). In the first instance, use the [PSC's guidance on how to structure an approach](#). This form of role analysis is an opportunity to consider reshaping the role to open it up to a new pool of candidates.

If a job share arrangement is created for an existing role, then the following steps apply:

- Analysing each of the key accountabilities for a role is the most important step in deciding if a role is suitable for job share and, if so, what type of job share arrangement would be best for the role.
- Both job share employees must be assessed as meeting the requirements for the role.
- Although both job share employees may be able to competently perform the role, each has strengths, and using these strengths to design the job share will help it to work.

Importantly, note that the changing nature of work and technology mean that the examples relevant today may not hold, and there are always exceptions. Each role will need to be examined based on the arrangement proposed, the top five key responsibilities of the role, and whether they can be shared or split.



Determining whether a role is suitable for job share

Structure the job share based on the role analysis

If you are unable to undertake a full role analysis, then use [tool provided on the PSC website](#) and the worked examples provided over the page to determine the optimal job share model for the role. If the analysis score it produces is less than 1.4, the role is probably unsuitable for splitting or sharing. This is because the transfer of knowledge is too great, and it would not be efficiently performed as a result.

If the analysis score is between 1.5-2.4, the role is ideally split, but a twin model can also be considered.

Reallocate responsibilities with score of 1

If role has a responsibility with a 1 score, consider if it can be removed/reallocated from the role. It is possible to allocate it to one person only, but note the risk of creating imbalance in the job share partnership.

Split responsibilities with score of 2

Balance carefully responsibilities with score of 2. Ask the pair and manager to propose a fair and efficient split. Both partners will still need to be across responsibility and ensure continuity on their working days.

Share all responsibilities with score of 3

All these responsibilities should be shared and pass from one partner to the other during hand over days. It is important partners are compatible and can perform these responsibilities together.

If the analysis score is more than 2.5, the role is ideally shared as a twin model. If any of the key responsibilities have a low score within the overall score, you could recommend the manager re-consider them.



Consider twins if:

- Role is better performed in team.
- Role needs five-day coverage.
- Responsibilities have high interaction with other team members.
- Responsibilities are interrelated. Therefore, performance evaluation should be done as one.



Consider islands if:

- Role can be performed autonomously.
- Role doesn't need five-day coverage, but could be handled as individual part-time with some crossover/consistency required.
- Most responsibilities can be performed discretely.
- Performance evaluation is more efficient separately.

Determining whether a role is suitable for job share

See the following worked examples. Note these examples do not mean any roles like these must be structure the same way; it depends very much on the context and nature of the work.

Worked example 1: Senior resource analyst

Top five key responsibilities, listed in order of importance		Indicates the % of total annual work time typically spent on this area	Based on the definitions above, choose if 1. Responsibility can't be split or shared 2. Preferably split 3. Preferably shared
KRA		A % of work Sum should add to 100%	B Rate (1 to 3)
1	Manage resource assessment and modelling projects undertaken in-house and delivered through external providers	40%	3
2	Testing integrated modelling software	25%	2
3	Use modelling to interrogate policy options and analyse outcomes to formulate clear advice on a range of issues	20%	3
4	Assist in maintaining and strengthening role as custodian of models	5%	3
5	Provide technical advice to inform the entitlement framework and policy	10%	3
Result for Senior Resource Analyst			2.75*
Less than 1.4: role should not be split or shared			
Between 1.5-2.4: role is preferably split			
More than 2.5: role is preferably shared			

**Calculation consists of the percentage of work in column A multiplied by the rate in column B for example 40%X3=1.2 for row #1. Result for each row are then summed to give the overall results for the role taking into account each job function time and rate.*

Determining whether a role is suitable for job share

Worked example 2: Executive assistant

Top five key responsibilities, listed in order of importance		Indicates the % of total annual work time typically spent on this area	Based on the definitions above, choose if 1. Responsibility can't be split or shared 2. Preferably split 3. Preferably shared
KRA		A % of work Sum should add to 100%	B Rate (1 to 3)
1	Provide a range of support functions to the Regional Director including, diary management, meeting co-ordination, management of correspondence, etc.	50%	2
2	Prepare correspondence, briefing and notes	30%	2
3	Lead projects and investigations, and research issues on behalf of the Regional Team	10%	2
4	Identify and respond to opportunities to improve the efficiency of systems	5%	2
5	Build and maintain strong, collaborative relationships with executives and staff	5%	3
Result for Executive Assistant			2.05
Less than 1.4: role should not be split or shared			
Between 1.5-2.4: role is preferably split			
More than 2.5: role is preferably shared			

Determining whether a role is suitable for job share

Allocate appropriate budget for the role

Job share, particularly a twin or hybrid model, may sometimes require additional budget beyond 1 FTE. Ask the advice of your HR business partner if you need assistance to prepare a proposal.



Islands

1 FTE with an additional hour or two for handover. The role should be clearly split between the partners but some handover time for details to be exchanged, and joint meetings with the line manager is still recommended.



Hybrid

1.1 to 1.2 FTE is recommended when partners are sharing some of the tasks. Half a day would be the minimum to allow them to share all details necessary and have joint meetings with line manager, reports or key stakeholders.



Twin

1.2 FTE to allow a full day cross over between the partners. This full day is highly important when completely sharing the role. It allows an efficient hand over time, joint meetings with teams but more importantly to take joint decisions. The productivity increase seen in job share wouldn't be possible without this handover time.



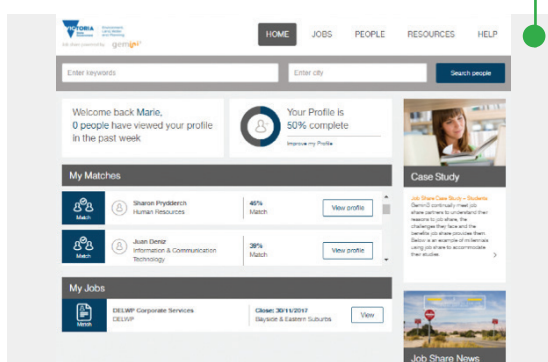
Using the NSW Government job share platform

The primary goal of the matching platform is to allow employees interested in job share to connect with each other and find a job share partner. It is not intended, and could not be used, as a substitute for a merit-based recruitment process. The following is for managers' information only; they have no formal role in the platform.

However, recruiters can advertise roles on there, and choose which roles are placed on it (whether 'opt out', i.e. all roles unless you as a manager specify otherwise, or 'opt in', on a case by case basis). Candidates can then click any link included to leave the platform and go through to your agency's usual recruitment system and process. The platform also includes useful articles, case studies and resources in support.

The job share test contained within the platform is based on Gemini3 research of successful job share pairs. Through in-depth interviews and psychometric tests, the algorithm is based on the fundamental attributes of successful and effective job share pairs as a benchmark.

To use the platform, employees must first create a profile, do the test and then be matched with potential partners. This process is briefly explained from the end user perspective next.



Using the NSW Government job share platform

A Employee creates a profile

The platform is web-based and hosted externally (with all agency data security benchmarks successfully met), not on your agency's server.

Employees go to psc.gemini3.com.au. The first step is to create a profile by answering all the basic questions (name, job family, location, etc), and then undertake the job share test.

The test asks employees about their working styles, capabilities, values and hobbies to match them with their ideal partner. Values in particular are key to job sharing compatibility. The test takes about 15 minutes to complete.

The test results form part of their profile. It can be used when applying for a job share role in support of the application, although GSE rules regarding comparative and suitability assessments mean that it could not be part of any formal assessment process. The test results could also be useful to share with line managers for existing employees seeking to start a job share partnership.

Note the capabilities are mapped to the NSW Public Sector Core Capability Framework 2013 but are not intended to replace the capability assessment used in recruitment. They are included to help each employee to find a complementary partner, and are not mapped to their current roles.

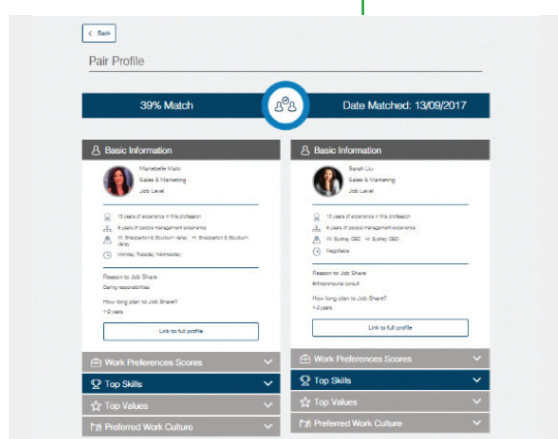
Using the NSW Government job share platform

B Find a partner

The platform will automatically provide potential matches to the employee based on their profile, indicating if the match would be vertical or not. They can then get in touch with the potential partners to access their full profile and see their matched test results. The pair profile can be downloaded as a PDF and shared with their line manager, or even attached to their job application in support.

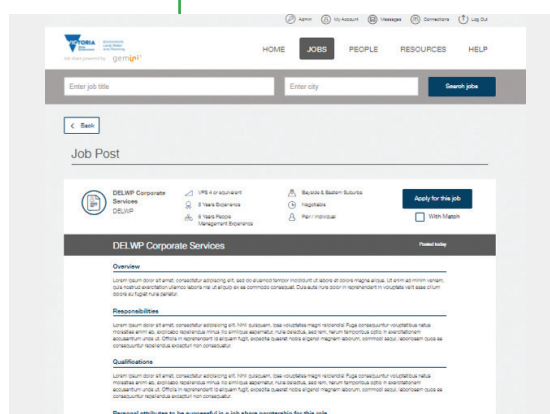
However, the match suggested still needs due diligence. Potential partners should message each other via the platform and organise a meeting to share their pair profile, discuss any job share arrangement and learn a lot more about each other prior to applying for a role.

Employees will also be notified every time a new person in their job family and location have registered for the site.



C Apply for a role

If a relevant role has been advertised by their agency on the platform, employees can click on "Apply for the role", and it will take them outside the portal to the I Work for NSW recruitment system and process.



Under current legislative and systems constraints⁴, applicants need to submit two individual applications, understanding that they are applying individually and must each meet the capabilities of the role.

In other words, job share partners must submit two SEPARATE applications, but note in their cover letter and application that they are applying with X person (their partner) for a job share. They should ensure their CVs are aligned, and each application can each address the inherent requirements of the role.

Their application should note that if successful, both applicants want to be offered the roles as a job share (or two part time roles), and their test results can be included in their application as supporting documentation.

We recommend agencies proactively advertise roles on the platform if the line manager thinks the role is suitable, as early PSC data indicates faster times to hire and strong candidate quality.

⁴ For some agencies, pre-screening question requirements also mean that candidates must have both sets of relevant data captured.

How to interpret the results of a job share test

While interpreting the results cannot form part of the formal recruitment process, we have provided the information below so managers can support employees with the process.

There are two sections of the pair profile to review. The 'Basic Information' allows potential pairs to understand if their professional profile, location and days available align.

The second section helps employees to understand if they could work well together and have the right combination of skills to perform and be productive in the role.

The screenshot displays a 'Pair Profile' interface. At the top, a dark blue bar shows '51% Match' on the left, a circular icon with two people in the center, and 'Date Matched: 18/09/2017' on the right. Below this, two side-by-side profile cards are shown. The left card is for Mariebelle Malo, a Corporate Services VPS 4 or equivalent with 5 years of experience, located in Melbourne CBD, and negotiable. The right card is for Juan Deniz, a DELWP employee with 20 years of experience, located in Melbourne CBD, and available Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Both cards include a 'Reason to Job Share' (Entrepreneurial pursuit for Mariebelle, Lifestyle choice for Juan) and a 'How long plan to Job Share?' (1-2 years for both). Each card has a 'Link to full profile' button at the bottom.

The 'Working style' refer to the attributes found in successful job share partners: team work, planning and processes, working under pressure and bias for action. The higher the score, the better.

They provide insight into how each other could address certain situations and prepare for the typical questions you as a line manager may have about job share accordingly. In the example following, both employees have between an average and high score on the all sections, which means they have a high probability of establishing a successful working relationship. In this case, they may need to address with each other their average scores for working in a team, as teamwork and collaboration is typically included in any recruitment assessment.

How to interpret the results of a job share test

The top capability skills set will give you an idea of their strengths and the potential to leverage from each other.

The example following shows a great combination of one partner being analytical and the other more creative. Note that they're not meant to be mapped to the capabilities required for the proposed role, just to help find a suitable pair with complementary skill sets.



The top values need to be similar and they shouldn't have any opposing values (e.g. a value rated as top for one person and bottom for the other). In this example, employees have similar values, which will form the foundation of a strong partnership.

Finally, the work culture is for reference only as it doesn't influence the pairing criteria but is interesting to discuss with partners.

Supporting job sharers through their decision making

This factsheet will help you to explore some of the considerations for job share. You can use it to encourage potential sharers to think through how it might work, the implications of the arrangement and whether they're likely to be successful at job share. It also provides some typical scenarios you can discuss with a job share pair to explore their perspectives. These can also be used as part of the onboarding process.

These questions are designed to inform job share arrangements rather than being part of the assessment process, unless the role is specifically designed for job share applicants only.

Sample discussion questions

Logistics

- Why is job share a good solution for you?
- What days do you prefer working? Are you flexible?
- How long would you like to job share?
- Would you consider progressing your career in job share roles?

Background

- Have you job shared before?
- What do you know about job share?
- Tell me about a time when you were part of a team working together to deliver an outcome.
- Tell me about a time when you have been acknowledged or rewarded as a team rather than individually.
- Tell me about a time when you have had to trust others to deliver an outcome for which you are accountable.

Preparation

- What do you know about job share arrangements?
- What do you think are the challenges of job share?
Tell me about a time you have dealt with similar challenges.
- How do you see the hand over process working?
- What are your expectations of your potential partner?
- What strengths will you bring to this partnership?
How have you demonstrated these strengths in prior roles?

How to formalise a job share arrangement

Typical scenarios

Below are some scenarios that can be used to explore how ready for job share an individual may be.

1. Your job share partner is sick and he/she was to deliver a presentation to a client today. What would you do?

- a. Re-arrange your day so you can present to the client.
- b. Suggest rescheduling, as your partner is the strongest in presenting.
- c. Suggest rescheduling, as it is complicated to change days at the last minute.

Ideally, we want candidate to answer (a) and support the other partner when possible and be committed to team outcomes. Re-schedule is possible, although ideally client service would be smoothly maintained.

2. As part of the role, there are two direct reports. What would you suggest to your job share partner on how you manage the team?

- a. Both of you should take a dual lead in managing the team, including performance management, coaching and training.
- b. Your partner is new to people management so you suggest he/she take the lead role in people management, with you supporting and coaching them.
- c. You are more experienced and naturally strong in people management so you take the lead.

Ideally, we want candidate to answer (b) so one partner gains experience from the other. This is one of the strengths of job share, the ability to learn from each other.

3. It's your handover day and your partner is not very organised. You realised he/she are missing crucial details to continue to work. What is your reaction?

- a. Ask him/her how you can work better together.
- b. Suggest you both prepare a handover process sheet to share, taking time to explain the productivity benefits of this approach.
- c. Ask more questions to get the missing information. During your days of work you can work it out with the team.

Ideally, we want candidate to answer (b) so both in the pair becomes efficient and organised.

How to formalise a job share arrangement

Here are some of the elements to consider when preparing a job share employment offer. The recommendations provided are based on interviews with HR and job partners, although your own agency may need to include its own specific processes.

Terms	Definitions
Definition	Job share is a formal arrangement where two employees are sharing responsibilities of a full-time role. The partners also share remuneration, benefits and holidays on a pro rata basis of the FTE.
Duration of employment	Where relevant, job share contracts are treated as two individual ongoing part time or temporary fixed term contracts.
Probation time	The usual probation periods apply, although if all parties are new to the arrangement, you may want to informally suggest more frequent checkpoints while it is established, based on clear objectives and goals.
Back-fill plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the job share arrangement has a defined duration, clarify the backfill obligations are met under the current employment legislation. • If the job share is only a temporary arrangement, clarify whether each partner's employment is ongoing or temporary as well, and what this will mean once the term of the arrangement expires.
Job share schedule	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define the days or work and hours in the employment contract for each individual, as you would for casual or part time contract. • The work days should be defined in any contract. Example of job share agreements include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ half or split week - each person works 2.5 to 3 days per week ◦ half or split days - one person works mornings and the other afternoons ◦ alternate week - each person works for 1 week, then takes a week off ◦ unequal ratio splits - one employee works more time than the other (e.g. 3 days per week and 2 days per week). • Job share (not split) arrangements should allow a minimum of 1hr weekly overlap to account for hand over between the partners. • Ensure the arrangements comply with the applicable award or enterprise agreement.
Place of work	Job share can still be performed from different locations. Define the location, especially if it differs for each partner.

How to onboard a job share arrangement

This factsheet can help you to support managers to onboard job share partners.

The first step is for the job sharers to set aside time to get to know each other before formally starting the arrangement. Too many pairs wait until challenges arise to see their individual reactions and discuss it. Here are some tips you can provide to new job share partners who haven't worked together before.

1. Discuss potential challenges early

Use these discussion starters to understand the likely reactions of each partner in a challenging situation:

- Your partner gets all the praise for the work you have prepared.
- Your partner has made a decision during your day you disagree with.
- Your partner is looking to move up the corporate ladder but you are not looking for a promotion.
- Your client prefers to deal with one person rather than the other.
- Your reports complain they have to repeat the same thing twice.

2. Share any other psychometric tests results

It can be useful to share the Gemini3 test or any psychometric tests used during recruitment or development to better understand each other's personality. They can help to understand each other's strengths and weaknesses, and consider how certain tasks could be best suited to one or the other.

3. Use coaching and mentoring

Meeting with experienced job share partners can help to understand challenges first hand. It is very beneficial especially when the other pair is from the same company and can provide advice on how to communicate and work better within your agency environment. If you don't know any job share pairs you can connect them with in your agency, contact the PSC to be connected with successful job share partners outside the agency.

How to onboard a job share arrangement

The second part of the on-boarding process is about understanding the relationship between the role, the team and other key stakeholders.

In the case of job share, it is important to communicate early and consistently how the arrangement works. Use this or a similar job share plan to clarify arrangement details, and communicate with the team and key stakeholders.

Job share plan

Share this template with job sharers so they can consider the important details of any arrangement. Sections 1 to 9 can be used as a summary to share with key stakeholders (teams, clients, as appropriate) to ensure these act as protocols for working with them.

Planning and writing down the job share arrangement and structure will align partners and help communication with other stakeholders. The PSC is developing a 'wizard' tool to digitise this process.

#	Elements	Description	Job Share Partner 1	Job Share Partner 2
1	Job share pair purpose	Describe your common purpose in your role. For example, "Provide an outstanding service to our client".		
2	Duration and time commitment	If the role is not permanent, write the details of the arrangement. For example, 2-year contract including 6 month trial.		
3	Job share model and impact for key responsibility areas	Twins – share same KPIs Island – separate KPIs Use Factsheet 5 to help choose the ideal model for the role, and outline who will 'own' each responsibility area, or if shared.		
4	Working days	Detail each partner's working days. For example, each work 3 days with cross-over on Wednesday.		

How to onboard a job share arrangement

#	Elements	Description	Job Share Partner 1	Job Share Partner 2
5	Hand over process	<p>Detail the agreed hand over process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notes to be taken and shared through common X program • Update shared in work in progress (WIP) document • 1hr WIP face to face meeting on Wednesday morning 9am • 30min WIP on the phone Monday morning 		
6	Task lead	Clarify if one of the partners will lead specific projects.		
7	Stakeholders	<p>Detail the key stakeholders who will be working with both partners and if any would be working more or less with one.</p> <p>Internal: Sales director, marketing director</p> <p>External: Main client contact</p>		
8	Communication & key meetings	<p>Detail your communication tools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of a single email and phone number internally and externally. • Sales meeting to be attended by X, Marketing briefing by X. 		
9	Reporting lines	<p>Align on reporting lines and performance reviews.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assistant to have WIP with both partners but performance review to be conducted by one partner. 		
10	Supporting technical resources	<p>List important technical resources used</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardware: 2 computers, 2 phones • Software: share cloud • Note if any costs will incurred if there is a crossover time necessitating two laptops, phones, desks, etc. 		

How to onboard a job share arrangement

#	Elements	Description	Job Share Partner 1	Job Share Partner 2
11	Job share KPIs	<p>Agree how you will monitor the performance of the arrangement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular discussion with manager on performance against KPIs • Use 360 survey results showing internal and external key stakeholder high level of satisfaction with job share performance. 		
12	Performance management and job share arrangement review processes	<p>These are done as per normal agency process. For job sharers, they can be done together or separately. Ideally define your preference at the beginning of the relationship. It's a good idea to check-in and review how the job share arrangement is working. Regular check-ins with colleagues, direct reports and manager can be built into regular performance management review meetings and 1 on 1s.</p> <p>Performance to be reviewed (individually/ together) twice per year with line manager.</p>		
13	Development plan	<p>List resources and training provided by HR.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • training: leadership course specific to X, digital course specific to X • mentoring: both partners to be mentored by X 		
14	Extra curriculum	<p>Add any extra curriculum taken by one or both partners</p> <p>Both participate in social club</p>		
15	Backfill/exit plan	<p>Clarify exit plan and backfill obligations are met under the current employment legislation.</p>		

How to onboard a job share arrangement

Planning an effective handover

A job share handover process includes how and when tasks will be passed from one partner to the other. Clarifying the process from the start helps partners to be prepared and efficient but also provides reassurance to the team. Reinforce the importance of this approach, and the need to periodically review it to ensure continues to fit its context (for line manager, team and work underway).

The handover process is important, as partners should be seen as one and their work should be as seamless as possible. The productivity of the arrangement also lies in making sure the work is not doubled up but shared based on each other's strengths.

Not all processes are the same but similar principles tend to apply, especially at the beginning of the relationship. Long-term job share partners often change their processes over time and become extremely efficient. Below is a sample of tools that can be used.

1. Create a Work in Progress (WIP) structure

A structured WIP document is essential to create an efficient hand over. Below is an example of a job share WIP containing the most important information.

	Campaign X	Campaign Z
Tasks	Brief agency	Create post analysis
Priority	High	Low
Completion time	May 15	June 3
Status	In Progress	Not started
Responsibility	Partner 1	Both

2. Align on pre-work

To create an efficient face-to-face hand over, both partners should come prepared, having read the notes and the WIP documents. Their time is best spent then asking questions on specific details and joining forces to solve more challenging issues. It is also recommended that they prepare a meeting agenda with recurring items and specific projects to be discussed.

Example of a job share hand over agenda:

- Notes and actions from last week
- Recurring business updates
- New projects and priorities
- People news
- Check-in on each other and feedback on job share.

How to onboard a job share arrangement

3. Use technology to its advantage

Encourage the use of a single email address for both partners to avoid duplication. This will facilitate communication with team members and avoid having to go through hundreds of emails when returning to work.

A common note taking platform such as OneNote can also be useful. This again minimises the number of emails, creates a structure and helps find notes for future reference, particularly for catching up on key decisions.

There are also multiple WIP platforms such as Trello that can create clear tasks with timelines and responsibilities. This could replace the excel WIP document and provide a snapshot of what everyone is doing without having to ask them. It can also be shared across the team.

It is also important that job sharers use a communication tool to help share documents and short discussions. Tools like Slack can help organise and find communication for future reference. See below a list of possible technology applications.

	Applications	Description
Note taking	One Note	Organising thoughts, to-do lists, and projects. www.onenote.com
	Evernote	Taking notes, clipping web pages and recording audio. www.evernote.com
	Google keep	Ideal for collecting images, drafting documents, and creating checklists. keep.google.com
Project management	Trello	Visual boards with project cards given to team members. trello.com
	Asana	Create lists of tasks and subtasks that can be used for project management, goal-setting, brainstorming and meeting agendas. www.asana.com
	Team Ahoy	Simple and visual project management tool. www.teamahoy.com
Document sharing	Dropbox	Independent cloud storage application. Available across devices (mobile, tablet, computer). www.dropbox.com
	OneDrive	Cloud storage application own by Microsoft. Available across devices (mobile, tablet, computer). www.onedrive.com
	Google Drive	Cloud storage application own by Google. Available across devices (mobile, tablet, computer). www.google.com
Communication	Microsoft Teams	Instant messaging and collaboration system with ability to share documents, images and emails. It is an all in one application.
	Slack	Slack can be used if you don't have Microsoft Teams. It offers similar features. www.slack.com
	What's App	Informal communication application for quick text and images exchange. Useful for non-office based team. www.whatsapp.com
	Yammer	Ability to create private channels and share documents.

How to onboard a job share arrangement

4. Manage duplication

Reinforce that hand-over time should be used efficiently to make sure each partner has the right level of detail on every project. They should avoid going to meetings together unless absolutely necessary. Partners should trust each other and communicate all important messages. Being seen together might also be perceived as potential duplication in their arrangement.

Where duplication happens, partners should address it privately. It is the responsibility of the partners to organise themselves and structure their work for efficiency and minimise duplication.

5. Communication during day off

Job share partners should agree on potential communication during days off. Most job share pairs communicate during their day off to align on important and urgent issues, and can agree in advance on the ideal type of communication (call, text, email) and timing.

6. Communicate working protocols and day-to-day parameters

It is useful for the job sharers, particularly if working in a team or leading one, have an initial conversation with that team about how it will work, the protocols for ensuring both are across what they need to be, and what they will need to make it work. Further details in useful ways to do this are included in the job sharers' guide.



How to evaluate the success of a job share arrangement

All job share arrangements can be reviewed as part of a normal probationary process where new, and as part of a normal performance process if they are existing employees. Where a twin model is used, performance goals should be identical, although the development goals can be customised. Island models can have goals relevant to the scope of each person's work. It is critical that you differentiate between performance as job sharers, and performance in general. Job sharers require additional effort in communication and planning, and this can be noted in the feedback provided.

Like all employment arrangements, performance and development goals, and who owns what, should be agreed early on. This is also a good opportunity to identify any additional training requirements needed by the broader team (e.g. if administrative support will need new software skills for Trello or OneNote).

Think creatively about performance and productivity, instead of traditional ways of measuring performance.

Traditional productivity measures are based on: output of work/ hours of input. Encourage them to consider alternative measure, such as:

- Value of a person's work = benefits to others x quality x efficiency;
- Benefits to others: contributing to your business area, your team, your manager, a colleague, clients/customers;
- Quality: degree of accuracy, insight, novelty, and reliability of work output; and
- Efficiency: time taken, resources used (note: this is a significant opportunity associated with flexible work).⁵

Evaluation of the job share arrangement

Use the planning template provided to partners at the beginning of the arrangement and confirm the arrangement still meets their objectives and the objectives of the business. Here are some examples of individual and business job share objectives.

Examples of individual objectives:

- Working flexibly (3 days/flexible hours)
- Access to senior part-time role
- Learning new skills from partners

Examples of business objectives:

- Leave coverage
- Increase productivity
- Training of another employee
- Employer branding

⁵ Framework based on: Hansen, M. T. (2018). *Great at work: How top performers do less, work better and achieve more*. London: Simon & Schuster.

How to support the exit of a job share arrangement

Job share partners should have a clear understanding of length of any contract and potential exit strategy in the event of their circumstances changing, and this should be understood from the start. The exit strategy should have been thought out and described in the job share planning section. Refer to Factsheet 9 on formalising the job share arrangement for more details.

What if the job share relationship doesn't work?

All job share arrangements can benefit from a trial period that mirrors the probation period, with suggested checkpoints woven into standard catch-ups or 1:1s. This should provide enough time and opportunity for a line manager to determine if the job share relationship is working as planned.

Where challenges arise, it is up to partners to manage any conflict in the first instance, by talking and working together to resolve it. If it continues not to function effectively, and becomes a performance issue, then your agency's usual performance issues apply, whether for one (if not performing effectively) or both (if the conflict is mutual).

In the case of poor performance from one partner, the job share arrangement should be evaluated to understand the cause of the poor performance. If the cause comes from the relationship between the partners, encourage the partners and hiring manager to understand and resolve the specific issues. If unsuccessful, the arrangement can be reconsidered. If the cause is from a lack of skills, then a development plan should be created in consideration with the other partner. For public service employees, the provisions under the GSE Act and Rules dealing with unsatisfactory performance must be taken into account. It is important that all parties act quickly, as this situation can create tension and potential competition between the pair that can affect the broader team.

How to support the exit of a job share arrangement

Managing poor performance from one partner

Continue with the arrangement, but set individual development goals

It is really important to understand if the pair are getting along well. If they still have a good relationship and are willing to continue, each individual should have their own development goals and their performance should be followed closely.

Redesign the role to become a job split instead of a job share

This is a common choice, where the job gets redesigned to give each individual specific tasks to perform if it is feasible. In a job split, partners still have to work together, but they are no longer accountable for the same work. This option can help to resolve any tension between a pair.

Commence performance management/termination

Exiting the arrangement could mean a change of employment for the remaining partner; they may want the role full-time. The other option is to look for another more suitable partner for the partner meeting expectations.

What if one of the job share partners is moving to another role?

Sometimes, the best-laid plans for job sharers can be derailed if one part of the pair is offered an opportunity elsewhere and needs to leave the agency. The job share platform at least makes it somewhat easier to find another partner if this is sought, and the remaining employee provides at least partial coverage while recruitment takes place, unlike a full-time employee's departure, where often their remaining team needs to cover all of it.

Encourage the remaining employee to explore the following options:

- Seek another person to job share with internally, using the job share platform, then undertake the normal agency recruitment assessment process to determine if they're suitable for the role.
- Advertise the role as job share externally. After the recruitment and selection process, the remaining job sharer can connect with potentially suitable candidates through either the platform or manually, and then work with them and their manager to determine a suitable partner.
- Discuss whether the employee is interested in changing their hours.
- See if the role can be re-designed to be done with available hours, and the remainder allocated elsewhere.