

A guide to part-time employment

It's easy to see the allure of part-time work. Whether you need flexibility for other commitments or you enjoy better [work-life balance](#), part-time work is a secure employment option that comes with plenty of benefits.

Part-time positions are distinct from full-time and casual roles, both in terms of hours worked and entitlements received. Understanding these differences is important for anyone considering part-time hours or currently navigating the part-time job market.

What is part-time employment?

Part time work definition: a type of employment where you have a set number of hours every week, with fewer hours than the standard 35- to 40-hour full-time working week. The exact number of hours worked with [part-time employment](#) varies based on the individual role, and are influenced by the employer, the industry and the job responsibilities.

Some part-time jobs require 20 hours of work per week, while others are only 10–15 hours per week – or even less. Some part-time employees may work shifts or have the flexibility to work whenever it suits them, which is perfect for those looking to supplement a primary income.

Part-time work comes with the same entitlements as full-time work, including holiday pay and sick pay, calculated on a pro-rata basis. This means that the amount of leave accrued is proportionate to the number of hours worked. Some part-time contracts also offer minimum hours, which provides additional security and predictability.

Benefits of part-time employment

The key advantage of [part-time work](#) is the degree of flexibility it offers, whether you're a parent wanting to be at school pick up each day for the kids, a nomad looking for hours that work around your travels, or a student looking for a side gig around their class hours. Part-time jobs can also be a great stepping stone for [career development](#).

Here are some of the main benefits of part-time work.

- **Work-life balance:** one of the most significant benefits of part-time employment is the [work-life balance](#) it offers. Whether you're a parent, a student, or want more time for hobbies and interests, fewer hours spent at work means more time to focus on yourself and what's important to you.
- **Flexible working hours:** a part-time employment contract may offer more flexibility when it comes to choosing working hours, which is beneficial for students, caregivers and those juggling multiple jobs.
- **Lead to full-time employment:** part-time work can act as a stepping stone to full-time employment. It's a great way to gain experience in a particular field, develop skills and [build a professional network](#). With these practical insights, you can work out whether it's the right industry and [career path](#) for you.
- **Access to entitlements:** employment contracts outline part-time minimum hours of work expected, providing a level of job security. These contracts also share other entitlements such as part-time sick leave, which is accrued based on the hours you work.

Part time vs casual employment

Part-time and [casual employment](#) are often lumped under the same umbrella, yet they are very different when it comes to the finer details. A casual employee simply works as needed, without a set number of hours or a predictable work schedule. Casual employees don't have the same job security or benefits as part-time or full-time employees. Whether you work part time, full time or as a casual, there are [key differences](#) you should know.

Key differences between part-time and casual employment

Here's a closer look at the key differences between part time vs casual employment.

Hours of work

- **Part-time:** have a set number of hours they are expected to work each week
- **Casual:** don't have set hours and work as needed

Paid leave and sick leave

- **Part-time:** entitled to the same leave benefits as full-time employees, such as paid sick and [annual leave](#)
- **Casual:** don't receive any paid leave entitlements

Expectations of ongoing work

- **Part-time:** involves an ongoing work arrangement
- **Casual:** can be terminated without notice

Leave entitlement

- **Part-time:** part time leave entitlement means part-timers get the same [types of leave](#), prorated, as full-timers (public holidays, community service leave, parental leave etc.).
- **Casual:** don't have any leave entitlements, but receive a higher pay rate to compensate.

Part time employment rights and protections

As a part-time employee, you're protected by laws and regulations to make sure you're treated fairly in the workplace. Here's an outline of worker rights under Australian labour law.

Regulations and labour laws

Minimum wage

- Part-time workers must be paid at least the minimum hourly rate set by the relevant labour laws.

Working hours and overtime pay

- Part-time working hours are still regulated. If you work beyond your scheduled hours, you may be entitled to overtime pay.

Leave entitlements

- As a part-time employee, you accrue leave entitlements such as annual leave, sick leave and paid public holidays.

Legal responsibilities of employers

Employers have legal responsibilities to ensure that part-time employees are treated fairly. This includes:

- Paying at least the part time minimum wage
- Providing leave entitlements, such as part time public holiday pay
- Ensuring that working hours and overtime pay meet legal standards
- Ensuring they don't discriminate against part-time employees when it comes to training, career advancement opportunities and other employment conditions.

Types of part time jobs

Part-time work is available across practically every industry and job you can think of. Here's a list of jobs that are commonly available for part-time workers, to give you some ideas.

- **Retail sales associate:** work in stores and sell products to customers. The job includes greeting customers, providing product information, processing payments and restocking the shelves for customers to browse.
- **Customer service representative:** take care of customer enquiries and complaints for a business. The job entails responding to customer questions, resolving issues, and providing information about products and services.
- **Administrative assistant:** work in an office handling office tasks such as organising files, answering phones and managing schedules.
- **Food service worker:** work in restaurants, hotels, bars, etc. Responsibilities include preparing food and drinks, serving customers and cleaning up.
- **Tutor or teaching assistant:** support students either in schools, through private tutoring or in after-school programs. The job involves assisting with lesson preparation, helping students, and marking assignments.
- **Delivery driver:** take goods from one location to another, often for food delivery services or courier companies. Their job involves safely transporting items, following delivery instructions, and ensuring timely delivery.

Part-time work is a great option for many Australians, offering benefits like flexibility, better work-life balance and networking opportunities in competitive industries. Being a part-time employee provides the opportunity to earn a secure income and receive all the benefits of a full-time worker – including sick leave and holiday pay – while having more time for other commitments.

FAQs

Is part-time work suitable for my career goals?

Part-time work could be suitable for your [career goals](#) if you're seeking flexibility, looking to explore a new field, or balancing work with other commitments. It allows you to build skills, develop your network and [gain experience](#) while enjoying more work-life balance.

Can part-time work lead to full-time opportunities within the same company?

Yes, part-time work can lead to full-time opportunities within the same company. Many employers try to fill roles internally rather than advertise vacant positions to the public, and may offer part-time employees full-time positions as they become available.

What are some strategies for finding part-time job opportunities?

To find part-time job opportunities, start by searching online job boards, visiting company websites and networking. Social media platforms can also help you connect with industry professionals. When applying for a role, tailor your resumé and cover letter to highlight skills and experiences relevant to the specific role, to increase your chances of success.

What are the challenges or potential downsides of part-time employment?

The challenges or potential downsides of part-time employment include fewer hours and therefore a lower salary, and fewer opportunities for career advancement. Part-time roles often come with part-time holiday pay, which means annual leave is calculated based on the number of hours worked, resulting in lower earnings/fewer

days of leave per annum.