



Teacher Transfer Guidelines

1. Purpose

These guidelines are to assist teachers, principals and regional HR teams in relation to the department's teacher transfer system.

2. Application

These teacher transfer guidelines apply to the following staff:

- teaching staff employed under the Teachers' Award State in Stream 1 Bands 1, 2 and 3 (including Senior, Experienced Senior, Highly Accomplished and Lead Teachers)
- education officers (Special Duties) (EOSD)
- instrumental music teachers and instructors
- community and assistant teachers.

These guidelines do not apply to:

- classified officers who are relocated in line with the Classified Teacher Relocation processes
- permanent teachers seeking to change their employment fraction and remain in their current location
- teachers who have been appointed to a holding location as a result of a transfer application, but are awaiting confirmation of a permanent appointment to a specific location.

3. Objectives

The objectives of the teacher transfer process are to:

- ensure all schools have a robust workforce and are sufficiently resourced to deliver high quality education
- ensure appropriately qualified teachers in all schools throughout Queensland
- ensure transfer decisions are equitable and transparent
- encourage teachers to contribute to our rural, remote and Indigenous communities
- recognise rural and remote service by supporting teachers to return to a preferred location
- deliver the best possible outcomes for teachers and schools
- increase the potential for successful transfers that take into consideration an individual teacher's personal circumstances, professional capabilities and career interests.

4. Definitions

For the purposes of these guidelines, the following definitions apply:

Transfer: teacher movements that occur through the transfer process, including:

- **Requested transfer:** teacher requests a transfer to another location, subject to meeting eligibility criteria.
- **Required transfer:** transfer initiated by the department and not by the teacher's request.

- **Compassionate transfer:** teacher may request a transfer to another location on compassionate grounds. A compassionate transfer may be due to exceptional hardship or pressing personal circumstances.
- **Mid-year transfer:** teacher movements that occur from the beginning of semester 2 from AMP locations.
- **Expression of preference:** teacher requests a transfer to another location within the same geographic area.

Placements, including teachers returning from leave and other mandatory teacher movements, occur independently from the transfer process, and may include teachers who are:

- returning from a period of short term leave (ie less than 12 months)
- returning from a period of family responsibility leave¹
- returning to their substantive location after relieving in another location or role
- returning from secondment (eg Education Officer (Special Duties, Education Adviser)) or in-service course
- seeking a change in employment fraction in their current location
- affected by domestic and family violence and seeking placement at another location
- requiring placement following the closure of a school or reduction in the school's establishment, and
- relinquishing a classified officer position.

Please note that only teachers transferring from AMP locations to a preferred location, or because they are affected by domestic or family violence, are recorded as placements. All other transfer types are to be recorded in the HR system as transfers.

Teachers subject to a placement process may also request a transfer, or be required to transfer, subject to the teacher transfer provisions.

5. Delegations

Delegated authority holders are set out in the [Human Resource Delegation Manual](#).

6. Teacher workforce mobility

The department's commitment to a range of practices that support a [mobile teaching workforce](#) is set out the [Teacher Workforce Mobility](#) policy. School leaders are required to encourage the mobility of teachers across the system and actively participate in practices to facilitate this, such as teacher transfers, [relieving placements](#) and internal appointments.

To sustain a capable, high quality teaching community that is committed to lifelong learning and ongoing professional development, teachers are expected to take ownership of their own professional development by expanding their capabilities and pursuing potential career opportunities. This includes working across rural, remote and complex sites throughout their career and maintaining professional currency, employability (including at least two subject areas for secondary teachers) and expected performance standards.

To support these outcomes, school leaders are expected to:

- proactively promote the benefits of rural and remote experience to teachers and encourage teachers to undertake a wide range of teaching experiences across rural, remote and complex locations for professional development purposes

¹ Teachers returning from family responsibility leave are to be placed in a school location equivalent to their pre-leave location.

- discuss individual professional development opportunities with teachers regularly, including potential rural and remote service, or other arrangements that could potentially benefit the teacher and department (eg relieving placements, service in high demand locations) if there are genuine reasons that prevent them undertaking rural and remote service
- ensure transparency about the performance and capability of teachers when facilitating transfers, relieving placements, and other workforce decisions
- provide constructive feedback to individual teachers about their performance and potential development needs through performance review processes and ongoing career discussions
- balance school autonomy with a commitment to the organisation by participating in the guaranteed transfer process and other activities that support a mobile teaching workforce.

7. Applying for a transfer

Teachers are required to complete an online application through the [MyHR Recruitment solution](#) when:

- requesting a transfer from their current location
- requesting a transfer from their current location and a change in employment fraction
- returning from a period of leave of more than 12 months and want to request a transfer from their base school location
- requesting a transfer for compassionate reasons, subject to confirmation by the regional HR team
- required to transfer due to departmental operational requirements.

Transfer requests for compassionate reasons (pressing personal circumstances or exceptional hardship), or due to domestic and family violence, are made to the regional HR team through the principal as the relevant circumstances arise. Compassionate transfers (exceptional hardship), or placements due to domestic and family violence, are considered on a case by case basis and not as part of the annual transfer cycle.

The online application process is detailed in Appendix A.

8. Reasonable travel time

A transfer (requested, compassionate or required) to a designated base location of up to 50 minutes driving time from a teacher's place of residence is considered reasonable. Time is calculated according to the nearest trafficable route, but should take into account factors such as road and traffic conditions. Electronic trip planners such as www.googlemaps.com.au or www.mydrive.tomtom.com may be used as a guide to determine approximate driving time.

9. Requested transfers

Teachers may request a transfer from their current location, subject to meeting minimum service requirements and the following eligibility criteria.

Transfers are subject to the availability of suitable vacancies in relation to both teaching areas and geographic preferences and the relative priority order of teacher transfer requests is determined by taking into account transfer points. While transfer applications are not guaranteed, every effort is made to ensure that high point applicants are given the best possible opportunity to transfer to one of their preferred locations.

9.1 Eligibility criteria

To be eligible to apply for a transfer, teachers are required to:

- be employed on a permanent basis (either full time or part time)
- have completed the specified minimum service period in one school:
 - 2 years minimum service period for remote (transfer rating 7) schools
 - 3 years minimum service for all other schools (transfer rating 1 – 6).

Notwithstanding the above, teachers may apply for a transfer before completing the specified minimum service period in a school if the transfer is:

- to a location with a higher transfer rating
- between transfer rating 4 to 7
- on compassionate grounds or due to domestic and family violence
- operationally required by the department.

A teacher will not be transferred outside of their current school if:

- the staff member is on probation
- the staff member is subject to a formal performance management process (MUP) or has a case before the Board of Review, unless the transfer has been recommended as part of the Board of Review process
- the staff member is participating in a workplace rehabilitation program, sick leave or graduated return to work program (where medical clearance is yet to be provided)
- a formal investigation into the staff member's conduct is in progress (including known outcomes or actions), or
- disciplinary action is in progress, unless the transfer is recommended as part of the disciplinary action.

The relevant regional HR teams will consider reasonable requests to lodge an application after the due date where the outcomes of the performance management process or investigation have been confirmed, or rehabilitation program completed, but the staff member was not eligible to apply within the specified time frame due to the performance management, rehabilitation or investigation process.

With the exception of mid-year transfers from AMP locations, transfers take effect from the commencement of the following school year.

For the purposes of this section:

- minimum service includes temporary employment at the same school immediately prior to being made permanent at that location
- locations that contain multiple campuses or special education programs count as the same school/location
- regional discretion may be used in extenuating or complex circumstances.

9.2 Transfer rating system and transfer points

Transfer points provide the basis for determining the relative priority order of transfer requests. Teachers accrue transfer points based on the school's transfer rating and their period of service in that location. Part-time teachers accrue transfer points at the same rate as full time teachers and are considered within the same point cohort.

Points accrue on an accelerated basis in rating 3 – 7 locations. Therefore, teachers who elect to work for longer periods in these schools increase their prospects of securing a transfer to a preferred location when they choose to return, while schools benefit from the greater stability and stronger community integration.

Transfer ratings are also used to determine eligibility for incentives and benefits offered under the [Rural and Remote Incentive Scheme](#) and availability of departmental accommodation.

Regional HR teams calculate and validate transfer points for each applicant. For more detail about transfer ratings and transfer point calculations, please refer to the [Transfer Ratings Guidelines](#).

9.3 Guaranteed transfers – rural and remote (TR4 – TR7) locations

The primary purpose of the guaranteed transfer is to support staffing requirements in rural and remote locations. Working in these locations offers teachers many rewarding career and personal development opportunities, including:

- living, working and travelling across Queensland
- a variety of professional and/or leadership experiences, and
- access to a wide range of professional development activities to help shape their career.

Transfers are typically tied to a calendar year to minimise disruption to schools. However, to meet urgent staffing requirements of a particular school, an alternative commencement date may be negotiated between the relevant parties in exceptional circumstances. Teachers in an Alcohol Management Plan (AMP) location may request a mid-year transfer following completion of the minimum service period for that location.

9.3.1 Guaranteed Transfer – teachers transferring from rural and remote locations (TR4 – TR7)

A guaranteed transfer process will be conducted for eligible teachers who have completed their minimum service period and wish to transfer from schools in rural and remote locations (transfer ratings 4-7).

It is recognised that many teachers will be seeking a guaranteed transfer to return to a preferred location after completing rural and remote service and this is an important consideration when managing transfer requests.

Eligibility criteria

The following teachers are eligible to participate in the guaranteed transfer pilot:

- teachers in schools with transfer ratings 6 and 7
- teachers in schools with transfer ratings 4 and 5 with 20 or more accumulated transfer points.

Guarantee conditions

To maximise the opportunity of a guaranteed transfer to a nominated preferred location, teachers are encouraged to consider all their options and select the best possible range of suitable geographic preferences.

If the minimum conditions outlined below are not met, there will be a risk that the department cannot guarantee a transfer to a teacher's preferred [geographic area](#):

- teachers must nominate at least three preferred [geographic areas](#), unless transferring from an Alcohol Management Plan (AMP) community
- teachers transferring from an Alcohol Management Plan (AMP) community are required to nominate two preferred [geographic areas](#)
- secondary teachers must be capable of teaching at least two subject areas, neither of which are to be phased out.

The Guaranteed Transfer Pilot will be reviewed on an annual basis.

9.4 Expression of preferences (EOP)

EOP (within the same geographic area) applications can be submitted once the minimum service period has been completed. An employee's accumulated transfer points are treated in the same manner as requested transfers.

Where exceptional circumstances exist, an EOP may be considered prior to the minimum service period being completed.

9.5 Rural and remote transfers

Permanent teachers within transfer rating 1 and 2 locations who have completed their minimum service requirement are encouraged to participate in the rural and remote encouragement program.

9.6 Relieving placements

Relieving placements refer to specific arrangements negotiated between individual teachers and principals.

Please refer to [Relieving Placements Guidelines](#) for further information.

9.7 AMP (Alcohol Management Plan) locations

9.7.1 Alcohol Management Plans

Alcohol management plans (AMPs) are in place in many of the remote Indigenous communities in Queensland. Teachers in these schools must be aware of the plan and the [alcohol restrictions](#) that apply to that community, their obligations in regard to those restrictions, and penalties associated with not complying with those restrictions.

Further information is available on the [Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Partnerships \(DATSIP\)](#) website.

9.7.2 *Transfers from an AMP Location*

Teachers are eligible to apply for transfer out of an AMP location upon completion of the minimum service period for that location (2 or 3 years depending on the location). Every effort is made to ensure eligible applicants are transferred to one of their preferred locations (subject to at least 2 preferences in different geographic areas being nominated).

In recognition of service in AMP communities, teachers transferred out after completing the minimum service period retain accrued transfer points, even if transferred to their first preference location, and are recorded as placements.

9.7.3 *Mid-year transfers – AMP locations*

Teachers may apply for a mid-year transfer out of an AMP location, subject to having completed the minimum service period for that location.

Every effort will be made to find mid-year applicants a permanent position. Although final placement may not occur until the annual transfer process, applicants will be transferred to one of their nominated geographic areas during the mid-year transfer process.

9.8 Cross sector transfers

Teachers may request a transfer across teaching sectors. Applicants must provide sufficient supporting documentation to demonstrate that they have the appropriate qualifications, experience or capability to teach in the sector into which the transfer is requested. This includes written verification from an appropriate school principal or administrator of the applicant's capability to teach in the requested sector.

10. Required transfers

Teachers employed by the department may be required to teach at any location in the state. The department may require a teacher to transfer in the following circumstances:

- to meet the staffing needs of schools throughout the state
- to create a vacancy in a geographic area for a teacher with a high number of transfer points who is requesting a transfer to that location
- to provide a teacher with a range of teaching experiences and professional development opportunities
- when it is considered unreasonable for a particular teacher to serve longer in a particular location.

When considering the possibility of a required transfer, senior human resource consultants will:

- ensure that the proposed transfer is reasonable
- consider the teacher's full employment history with the department, including but not limited to service in rural and remote locations.

There is no mandatory maximum period of service at one particular location.

Teachers are expected to comply with a departmentally required transfer unless they can establish that reasonable grounds exist for the transfer not to occur. Objections may be made in accordance with section 134 of the [Public Service Act 2008](#).

Teachers required to change residence (eg to another city/town) as a result of a required transfer are entitled to relocation expenses as provided for under [Directive 11/11 – Transfer and Appointment Expenses](#) and the department's [Relocation Entitlements](#).

11. Compassionate transfers

Teachers may seek a transfer for compassionate reasons (exceptional hardship or pressing personal circumstances) without meeting the minimum service requirements of their base location. Applications for a compassionate transfer are made to the regional HR team through the principal as the relevant circumstances arise. The application remains active unless the circumstances leading to the application change.

Relevant documentation must be provided in support of the application. Sensitive information is treated confidentially and is not disclosed to parties who are not involved in administering the transfer request. Further documentation is to be submitted as circumstances change.

11.1 Exceptional hardship

Teachers may apply for a compassionate transfer because of exceptional hardship in respect to themselves or a member of their immediate family. Exceptional hardship includes:

- serious medical circumstances and/or disabilities of a teacher and/or a member of their immediate family
- demonstrated hostile environment arising from factors such as potential religious, racial or sexual persecution or harassment.

Supporting specialist medical evidence is essential for requests on exceptional hardship grounds and medical evidence from a general medical practitioner is not considered sufficient. Examples of relevant supporting documentation include written specialist evidence regarding a medical condition that requires a teacher to live in a particular location or documented specialist medical evidence that the existing locations environmental conditions are a catalyst for a chronic medical condition.

The department reserves the right to contact a specialist medical practitioner directly, subject to the teacher's agreement.

Exceptional hardship requests are assessed on a case by case basis outside of the annual transfer process. Transfer points are not taken in account.

Applications are submitted through the regional HR team for consideration by the central Compassionate Transfer Review Panel. If the Compassionate Transfer Review Panel determines that exceptional hardship has been established, the transfer request is negotiated and put into effect as soon as practical.

Transfer expenses are not provided to a transfer applicant in these circumstances.

11.2 Pressing personal circumstances

Teachers may apply for a compassionate transfer because of pressing personal circumstances, including:

- separation from partner
- lengthy travel arrangements arising from a departmental transfer over an extended period

- medical conditions that do not meet the definition of exceptional hardship
- partner's relocation for employment purposes.

Supporting specialist medical evidence is essential for requests due to pressing personal circumstances and medical evidence from a general medical practitioner is not considered sufficient. Examples of relevant supporting documentation include written specialist evidence regarding a medical condition that requires a teacher to live in a particular location or other official documentation supporting the request, such as partner's employment documentation or custody arrangements.

Applications are assessed by the regional HR team. Where pressing personal circumstances have been established, the teacher may lodge a transfer application as part of the department's transfer process without meeting the minimum service requirement. The request is considered in the context of the transfer cycle along with other transfer applications. Transfer points are taken into consideration. If the teacher has met the minimum service period, the transfer is treated as a requested transfer.

A teacher may request that the Compassionate Transfer Review Panel review the decision reached by the regional HR office.

Transfer expenses will only be granted if the teacher has completed the minimum service period required at their current base location prior to transferring.

12. Employees affected by domestic and family violence

A teacher affected by domestic or family violence may request a temporary or permanent placement for reasons related to domestic and family violence. These requests are considered immediately and sensitively and are handled on a case by case basis by the relevant region outside the general transfer cycle. There is no requirement for these requests to be submitted as a transfer via the MyHR Recruitment solution.

Requests are to be made to the regional HR team through the principal as the circumstances arise. To ensure the most appropriate placement is identified, teachers must advise their regional HR team of their preferred location(s), fraction and teaching subject areas. There is no requirement for employees to provide documentation, such as Domestic Violence Orders, Statutory Declarations or other formal documentation, in support of a request related to domestic and family violence. However, if employees hold such documents and wish to make them available to the department to support their circumstances, these documents can be provided for noting and will be returned to the employee. All sensitive information will be treated with the strictest confidence.

Where required, the department supports the payment of relocation expenses. Further details on Relocations Expenses are set out below.

For the purposes of these guidelines, the definitions of domestic and family violence set out in the [Supporting Staff affected by Domestic and Family Violence Policy](#) apply. Further information on the support available for affected staff members is available on the department's Domestic and Family Violence website.

13. Remote Area Incentives Scheme (RAIS)

Teachers working in schools with transfer ratings 4 – 7 have access to a range of incentives under the Remote Area Incentives Scheme (RAIS), which recognises the unique opportunities and challenges associated with working in rural and remote communities.

For more information about eligibility and incentives available under the scheme, please refer to the [RAIS Website](#).

14. Relocation expenses

Transferring teachers may be eligible for relocation expenses detailed in the [Relocations Entitlement \(Appointments and Transfers\)](#) guidelines.

Relocation expenses may be payable for requested and required transfers. They are not paid for compassionate transfers, unless a teacher has been transferred due to pressing personal circumstances and completed the minimum required service period at their base location prior to the transfer.

The receiving regional HR team determines eligibility for standard relocation expenses and negotiates travel and removal expenses. Any requests for the department to pay expenses in addition to those set out in the [Relocations Entitlement \(Appointments and Transfers\)](#) guidelines are referred to the Talent Unit, Human Resources for approval.

15. Partners employed by the department

Where both partners in a relationship are employed by the department, the department will endeavour to transfer both employed partners to available vacancies. However, transfer of both partners is not guaranteed. The following principles apply:

- every effort will be made to ensure that the partner of a high point applicant who receives a transfer also receives a transfer to the same geographic area, subject to their meeting the eligibility requirements.
- the partner of a high point applicant who is not eligible to apply for a transfer because they have not completed the minimum service period, may apply for a compassionate transfer (pressing personal circumstances). The application is evaluated on the basis of points and, as such, a transfer is not guaranteed.
- when a classroom teacher with a classified teaching partner applies for a transfer, potential receiving regions are to ensure both can be placed before the partner is accepted as a classroom teacher. The classified partner is not guaranteed a relocation if the teaching partner is transferred. A relieve at level (RAL) arrangement may be a way of supporting a couple where a transfer/relocation is granted for one person, but the other is not eligible to apply.
- if a teacher's partner is seeking relocation as a classified officer, or is promoted to a classified position in another centre, the teacher completes a transfer application which will be considered in relation to the outcomes of the relocation or promotion process. Every effort will be made to place the teaching partner into a vacancy, either through transfer, compassionate transfer (pressing personal circumstances) or on a relieving placement arrangement pending the next transfer cycle. It is acknowledged that this may need to vary where the relocation occurs to a rural and remote location with limited potential vacancies.

Standard provisions apply to teachers whose partner is not employed by the department.

16. Transfer reviews and appeals

Teachers are to discuss concerns with a transfer decision with their base school principal in the first instance.

If the matter cannot be resolved following these discussions, the teacher may submit a written request for review to their base school principal when:

- a request to transfer has not been granted or
- the department requires a teacher to transfer, but the teacher believes that there are reasonable grounds to preclude the transfer².

The following formal review process applies to requested and required transfer decisions and must be taken in line with the [published timelines](#). The teacher may choose to be represented by an officer of the QTU or member of a professional association, or involve a support person of their choice during the process.

16.1 Local action

During the first step in the review process, the base school principal will attempt to resolve the matter at the local level in consultation with their regional HR consultant. The teacher's written request for a review must include sufficient information to enable their concerns to be resolved, including any action that the teacher would like to be taken.

A meeting or teleconference will be held with the teacher, a member of school administration and regional HR consultant to discuss the teacher's concerns. The teacher may invite a representative of the QTU, professional association or other support person to attend.

The teacher is to be advised in writing of the outcomes of the discussions, including the action taken to manage the concerns and information considered, reasons for the decision, any further action to be taken, and the next steps in the review process.

16.2 Internal review – Regional review panel

If the teacher's concerns are not resolved at the local level, the teacher may request that the decision be reviewed by the Teacher Transfer Review Panel.

On receipt of a request for review, the region will convene a review panel comprised of at least 2 members, excluding the original decision maker. Requests for review will not be considered if lodged outside of the published review and appeal timeframes. The panel is required to consider the grounds of review and all supporting documentation against the Teacher Transfer guidelines in a thorough, fair and impartial manner and with regard to protecting teachers' privacy. The panel may make a recommendation to:

- confirm the decision not to grant a transfer request (requested transfer)
- confirm the decision requiring a transfer to a particular location (required transfer)
- set aside the original decision and substitute another (requested or required transfer).

The teacher will receive written notification of the review decision, including the reasons for the decision, information considered and the next steps in the review process.

Please note that the original decision remains in effect during the appeals process, unless it is a geographic relocation requiring a change of residence (ie transfer expenses are involved).

² Objections against a required transfer are made in accordance with section 134 of the [Public Service Act 2008](#).

16.2.1 Review upheld

Requested transfer: If the original decision is set aside and it is determined that a requested transfer should occur, regional HR teams will work together to identify a school into which the teacher will be transferred. Consideration is given to a suitable vacancy arising within any of the geographic areas/regions nominated in the original application, or deemed to be within reasonable distance from those nominated. Notwithstanding the commitment to find a suitable vacancy, the teacher will remain in their current position and location until a suitable transfer can be effected.

Required transfer: If the original decision is set aside and it is determined that a required transfer should not occur because reasonable grounds exist, the teacher will remain at their current school, or if necessary, be accommodated at another school in the same geographic area. This does not exclude the possibility of a subsequent transfer to another location.

16.3 External review – Queensland Industrial Relations Commission

A teacher may lodge an appeal against the outcomes of the internal review process with the Queensland Industrial Relations Commission.

Further information regarding reviews or appeals please refer to the [Public Service Commission Directive 03/17 - Appeals](#) and [Public Service Appeal Guide](#) or contact your [regional HR team](#).

17. Request to defer required transfer

A teacher may submit a request to the relevant regional HR team to defer a required transfer if there are reasonable circumstances precluding the transfer in the immediate or short term. If granted, the deferment is provided for an agreed, predetermined period of time. Deferment of a transfer does not exclude the possibility of a transfer to another location.

Further information is available from [regional HR teams](#).

Key Contact

Further information is available from [regional HR teams](#).

Other Resources

For further information please refer to the [Teacher Transfers](#) page on OnePortal or contact your [regional HR team](#). Useful reference documents include:

[MyHR Recruitment Help Guides](#) for teachers, principals, HR consultants and finance staff

[Relocation Entitlements](#)

[Relocation Entitlements Overview \(Transfers\)](#)

[Teacher Transfer Ratings](#)

[Alcohol Management Plans](#)

[Remote Area Incentive Scheme](#)

[Teacher Transfers Information Sheet - Principals](#)

[Teacher Transfers Information Sheet – Teachers](#)

[Teacher Transfers Information Sheet – Human Resources](#)

[Public Service Appeal Guide](#)

Legislative or other authority

[Public Service Act 2008](#)

[Minister for Education and Industrial Relations Directive 11/11 – Transfer and Appointment Expenses](#)

[Public Service Commission Directive 03/17 - Appeals](#)

[Department of Education and Training State School Teachers Certified Agreement 2016](#)

Procedure Ownership

Talent Unit, Human Resources

Revision and Approval History

Revision date	Version	Author	Description of changes
April 2017	1	Nicole Green	Publication
November 2019	2	Diane Neinert	Update to align to current process

Approvals

Name	Delegation	TRIM / EMB Number	Date
Duncan McKellar	Executive Director HRS	19/637085	

Appendix A - Teacher Transfer Online Application Process

