Health Professionals and Support Services Award 2020 - *Gender-based Undervaluation Review (AM2024/20)*

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

When will the wage increases be implemented?

The increases to Health Professional minimum rates of pay will be phased in over five stages:

- **1 October 2026**
- **30 June 2027**
- **30 June 2028**
- **30 June 2029**
- **30 June 2030**

The first increase will apply from the first full pay period commencing on or after **1 October 2026**.

When do the new classifications and pay rates apply?

The new Health Professional classification structure and minimum rates of pay will apply from the first full pay period commencing on or after **1 October 2026**.

Any pay period that starts before **1 October 2026** will continue to be paid under the current Award provisions for the remainder of that pay period.

Example: *If a weekly pay period runs Monday to Sunday and 1 October 2026 falls on the thursday, the existing classifications and rates will continue until the end of that pay period. The new classifications and rates will apply from the next full pay period.*

Do these changes affect nurses?

Generally, no.

Nurses are typically covered by the Nurses Award 2020, which has its own classification structure and rates of pay. The changes commencing from 1 October 2026 relate to Health Professional employees covered by the Health Professionals and Support Services Award 2020.

Employers should, however, review award coverage to ensure employees are covered by the correct modern award.

How are employees with overseas qualifications classified?

Employees with overseas qualifications may be classified as a Level 1 Health Professional where they meet the requirements to practise in their profession, including any applicable registration, accreditation or professional requirements.

This may include employees holding limited, provisional or other forms of registration recognised by the relevant professional body, National Board or AHPRA.
Professional experience obtained overseas may also be recognised when determining classification and progression, depending on the profession and applicable professional requirements.

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Does "years of experience" mean experience with the current employer?

No.

The Fair Work Commission has confirmed that years of experience means years of experience in the profession, not service with a particular employer. This means relevant professional experience gained with previous employers must be recognised when determining classification and progression.

Is Schedule B an exhaustive list of professions?

No.

The professions listed in Schedule B are intended to assist with classification and are not exhaustive. A profession's inclusion or omission from Schedule B does not determine whether an employee is covered by the Award.

Are the updated rates of pay available?

Yes.

Employers should first use **Schedule B** to identify the employee's relevant AQF qualification level, then refer to the applicable **Transitional Classification Arrangements** table to determine the employee's new classification and minimum rate of pay.

For some **existing employees** who were classified on or before **30 September 2026**, a **retained minimum rate of pay** may apply. Where applicable, the retained minimum rate has been identified in the Transitional Classification Arrangements resource.

Employers should review their Health Professional workforce and ensure employees are correctly classified and paid in accordance with the new classification structure from the first full pay period on or after 1 October 2026.

What is the implementation timeline?

Date	What happens
7 June 2024	Gender-based undervaluation review commenced
24 December 2025	Dental assistant and pathology collector changes confirmed
1 April 2026	New classification structure and Stage 1 increases commence for dental assistants and pathology collectors
26 May 2026	Health Professional changes finalised
1 October 2026	New Health Professional classification structure and initial increase commence
1 January 2027	Further dental assistant and pathology collector changes commence
30 June 2027	Stage 2 increase
30 June 2028	Stage 3 increase

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30 June 2029	Stage 4 increase
30 June 2030	Final staged increase

How do I determine an employee's new classification?

The new classification structure is based on:

- the qualification held and its **AQF** level;
- the employee's years of experience in the profession; and
- the duties and responsibilities they perform.

Employers should assess all three factors when determining an employee's classification.

What should employers do before 1 October 2026?

To prepare for the changes, employers should:

1. Identify all employees covered by the Award.
2. Confirm qualifications, AQF levels and professional experience.
3. Assess classifications under the new structure.
4. Review applicable translation arrangements.
5. Ensure employees are paid at least the applicable new minimum rate of pay
6. Document classification decisions.
7. Budget for future staged wage increases.

What records should be kept?

Employers should keep:

- evidence of qualifications and AQF levels;
- records of professional experience;
- current position descriptions;
- details of duties performed; and
- records explaining how each classification decision was reached.

Maintaining clear records will assist if a classification decision is later reviewed or challenged.

What happens if an employee is incorrectly classified?

Incorrect classification can result in underpayments and potential liability under the Fair Work Act.

A classification decision affects not only minimum rates of pay, but also other award entitlements such as:

- overtime;
- penalty rates; and
- allowances.

Employers should therefore carefully assess qualifications, experience and duties before assigning classifications under the new structure.

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