

Example_Letter of engagement template for hiring new employees – casual. (Fair Work Ombudsman. www.fairwork.gov.au)

A letter of engagement is a useful document to use when hiring new employees.

The letter informs new employees about the terms and conditions of their employment with your business, including:

- start date
- position
- hours of work, and
- pay and other entitlements.

Suggested steps for preparing a letter of engagement

If at any time you need more information or assistance, call the Fair Work Infoline on 13 13 94 or visit www.fairwork.gov.au.

Step 1: Create your letter of engagement

Check what minimum entitlements apply to the position so you can fill in the relevant sections in the letter, including:

- pay
- hours of work
- shift penalties and loadings
- leave entitlements, and
- notice of termination of employment.

Minimum entitlements can come from a range of sources including industrial instruments (e.g. an award or an enterprise agreement) and legislation, such as the *Fair Work Act 2009*.

This letter of engagement template has been colour coded to assist you to complete it accurately. You simply need to replace the red < > writing with what applies to your employee and situation. The letter is broken into numbered clauses. Some of the clauses are optional because they might not apply to your employee and can simply be deleted. Explanatory information is shown in blue italics to assist you and should be deleted once you have finished the letter.

Step 2: Consider whether you need legal advice

You don't have to seek legal advice when you're hiring new staff, but for some jobs and in some industries it's a good idea to ask for professional help. For example, certain jobs and industries might have specific requirements to do with restricting future trade or confidentiality clauses; this template does not provide the legal details you might need in these instances. It may be necessary or appropriate to have an employee sign a detailed written contract of employment as well as a letter of engagement. Even in more straightforward roles, you may want specific professional advice to assure yourself that you have covered all the important issues that relate to your business and the position you are filling.

Step 3: Meet with the new employee and provide the letter of engagement

Meeting face to face with your new employee to provide the letter and talk about the contents is a good opportunity for:

- you to explain the terms and conditions of their employment
- the employee to ask questions, and
- you to describe your expectations for the job.

Step 4: Give your new employee time to consider the letter of engagement

You should give the person enough time to consider the contents of the letter of engagement and seek their own advice (if they want it) before they accept the offer. When providing the letter you should give a date by when you'd like the person to let you know whether the offer is accepted.

Also, it is good practice to give the employee your contact details in case they have more questions.

Step 5: Keep a copy of the signed letter of engagement and provide the employee with a copy

Once you have received the signed letter of engagement from the employee, return a copy to them, and keep the original. This ensures you both have a record of what has been agreed.