

Backfilling Temporary Vacancies: Guidance

Agencies are responsible for creating and managing policies and procedures for backfilling temporary vacancies (up to 12 months) and ensuring these comply with [Commissioner's Instruction 50: Backfilling Temporary Vacancies](#) and relevant industrial awards and agreements.

Suitability requirements

Agencies set suitability requirements for backfilling. Suitability requirements for backfilling temporary vacancies do not need to be the same as when appointing to permanent and fixed term vacancies.

Continuing backfilling arrangements in place before 1 July 2026

Backfilling arrangements in place before 1 July 2026 may continue. Agencies should actively manage these arrangements into the future in accordance with Commissioner's Instruction 50 and relevant industrial awards and agreements.

Backfilling at a higher classification level

Agencies can act or second employees to temporary vacancies at higher classification levels than their substantive positions if they are assessed to be suitable for temporary vacancies.

Backfilling temporary vacancies for up to 12 months

Agencies can backfill temporary vacancies for up to 12 months by identifying public sector employees for acting or secondment arrangements or appointing people on fixed term contracts without advertising or using limited search recruitment methods.

Agencies may backfill temporary vacancies either:

- without advertising or using limited search recruitment methods under [Commissioner's Instruction 50: Backfilling Temporary Vacancies](#)
- using advertising or limited search recruitment methods under [Commissioner's Instruction 49: Recruitment, Selection and Appointment to Fixed Term Vacancies](#) which enables extension of the backfill for over 12 months or permanent appointment in the future.

If backfilling without advertising or using limited search recruitment methods, agencies must assess employees and applicants as meeting the suitability requirements set by hiring managers.

See [Recruiting, Selecting and Appointing: Suitability Requirements](#) for details.

Extending temporary backfill for longer than 12 months

If initial backfill for up to 12 months is arranged under Commissioner's Instruction 50 and a need arises to backfill the same temporary vacancies for over 12 months in total, agencies must follow Commissioner's Instruction 49 including considering:

- priority groups of employees and applicants
- if a circumstance allows for limited search recruitment methods to be used and:
 - if so, one or more limited search recruitment methods can be used to backfill (must state "possibility of permanency in the future")
 - if not, advertising on [WA Government Jobs](#) is required (must state "possibility of permanency in the future").

Backfilling temporary vacancies for over 12 months

When backfilling temporary vacancies for over 12 months in total, agencies must follow Commissioner's Instruction 49 including considering:

- priority groups of employees and applicants
- if a circumstance allows for limited search recruitment methods to be used and:
 - if so, one or more limited search recruitment methods may be used to backfill (must state "possibility of permanency in the future")
 - if not, advertising on [WA Government Jobs](#) is required (must state "possibility of permanency in the future").