



Australasian College  
for Emergency Medicine

# Workplace Breastfeeding

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Policy HR707

## 1. Introduction

The Australasian College for Emergency Medicine (ACEM; the College) is committed to creating a supportive environment for all members, trainees and employees at the College, and recognises need to ensure that work and breastfeeding can be combined comfortably and practically to promote ongoing benefits to the baby, mother and workplace.

ACEM strives to provide an environment that enables members and trainees to integrate volunteer activities for the College with life commitments, and for employees to integrate work with life commitments.

## 2. Definitions

**Breastfeeding**

means breastfeeding an infant or expressing breastmilk.

**Breastfeeding Room**

means the room designated by ACEM as the room for breastfeeding or expressing breastmilk.

**College Member**

for the purposes of this policy, includes those defined in the ACEM Membership Regulations as being 'members' of the College, trainees and any external person serving on any College entity.

### ***Trainee***

means trainees enrolled in and undertaking the FACEM Training Program and, for the purposes of this policy, also includes Emergency Medicine Certificate and Emergency Medicine Diploma trainees, and Specialist International Medical Graduates (SIMGs) undertaking College requirements for the purpose of attaining eligibility for election to Fellowship of the College

## 3. Scope

This policy is applicable to all employees whether full-time, part-time, permanent, temporary or casual, and contractors of ACEM who wish to combine breastfeeding and paid work, as well as members, trainees and other volunteers at the College. It also applies to a range of circumstances that include: individuals returning from maternity leave; individuals who may be breastfeeding; individuals who may be re-lactating and pre-adoptive individuals who may wish to establish a milk supply prior to their child's placement.

## 4. Purpose

ACEM recognises the importance of breastfeeding and that the needs of breastfeeding mothers are short-term, and therefore ACEM aims to provide a family-friendly workplace that enables members, trainees and employees to balance breastfeeding and work responsibilities.

ACEM wishes to support women in their desire to maintain breastfeeding for as long as mother and baby need. As individual needs of the mother, carer and baby will vary, ACEM is committed to offering flexible work arrangements to employees that will meet the needs of the mother as well as College operational requirements.

Support from colleagues is crucial in providing a supportive workplace environment for breastfeeding mothers. All members, trainees and employees have a responsibility to treat colleagues who are breastfeeding/expressing milk with respect and dignity.

## 5. Objectives

Through providing a facility for breastfeeding/expressing mothers (the Breastfeeding Room), ACEM aims to:

- assist working mothers in integrating and balancing their work and family commitments;

- increase / maintain engagement with members and trainees;
- increase retention of employees returning from maternity leave;
- improve attraction, recruitment and retention of employees;
- reduce absenteeism rates amongst new parents;
- improve employee productivity and loyalty; and
- promote workplace diversity and health and wellbeing.

## 6. Roles and Responsibilities

It is important that the College, members, trainees and employees show flexibility, and are accommodating and respectful of each other's needs.

Decisions made regarding requests for lactation breaks and flexible work options must be fair, transparent and capable of review.

A Lactation Break Request and Agreement Form between the employee and their supervisor will facilitate and formalise incorporating breastfeeding with work.

### 6.1 ACEM's Responsibility

ACEM will:

- maintain this policy and associated College documents;
- ensure the provision of appropriate facilities for breastfeeding/expressing breast milk in accordance with this policy and associated College documents; and
- seek to ensure all members, trainees and employees are aware of this policy and associated College documents, and understand their responsibilities and rights under this policy.

### 6.2 Human Resources Responsibility

ACEM Human Resources is responsible for the implementation and ongoing facilitation of support for breastfeeding mothers through the following channels:

- ensuring all employees are aware of the policy;
- provision of breastfeeding information materials; and
- act as a conduit between employee and supervisor if the employee is uncomfortable discussing arrangements with their supervisor.

### 6.3 Supervisor Responsibility

The ACEM Executive Leadership Team and Supervisors shall ensure employees are aware of and comply with this policy. This includes:

- ensuring employees understand their rights under the policy;
- ensuring employees understand their responsibility under this policy;
- ensuring pregnant members, trainees and employees are aware of their rights prior to taking maternity leave; and
- supporting breastfeeding requests in line with operational requirements.

If, due to operational requirements, there is a need to delay the taking of a lactation break, efforts should be made to ensure that the employee is able to take the break as soon as possible in order to minimise any risk to health, milk supply or the child's health.

## 6.4 Employee responsibility

Employees wishing to combine work and breastfeeding are responsible for negotiating their conditions as soon as practicable, with their supervisor. Employees shall:

- negotiate lactation breaks with their supervisor prior to the first break being taken, including the duration and timing of lactation breaks. ACEM generally expects that this will occur prior to returning to work from any period of leave;
- notify their supervisor when they depart and return to work; if an agreement to leave the workplace for lactation breaks has been arranged;
- take both the College's and personal needs into account, with a focus on minimising disruption in the workplace, when determining the timing of lactation breaks;
- notify their supervisor if their breastfeeding needs change, and cease, so that any agreement can be amended as required; and
- read and be familiar with the *Breastfeeding/Expressing Room Procedure and Guide for Users*.

Employees wishing to utilise breastfeeding facilities have the responsibility to:

- supply their own expressing equipment and appropriate storage containers for expressed breastmilk;
- clearly label these containers with their name and date before placing them in the designated refrigerator;
- if applicable, ensure that their child is taken directly to the Breastfeeding Room and that the child leaves the workplace at the completion of each lactation break; and
- observe any guidelines for the use of the Breastfeeding Room.

## 7. Support

To enable employees to combine work and breastfeeding, ACEM has put in place the following.

### 7.1 Lactation Breaks for Employees

Lactation breaks are to be made available to employees to breastfeed (leave the office to go to the baby or have the baby brought into the office) or express breastmilk during work hours.

The number of times women need to feed or express milk will be determined by the individual's needs. An employee working a standard 7.5-hour day is entitled to one or more paid lactation breaks equivalent to/not exceeding one (1) hour per day. For employees requiring more than one (1) hour for combined lactation breaks during a standard working day, flexible work or leave arrangements may be implemented to cover the time in excess of that hour.

Part-time employees working four (4) hours or less on any one (1) day are entitled to one (1) or more paid lactation breaks of up to 30 minutes.

The period of paid lactation breaks includes travelling time for employees who take lactation breaks off site. ACEM offers the flexibility of adding these breaks to lunch breaks to allow the employee to travel to breastfeed the child.

### 7.2 Facilities

ACEM has provided suitable facilities (Breastfeeding Room) in which women can express breastmilk or breastfeed their babies if the baby is brought to the College. Any visitors will need to sign in via the visitor's book located at Reception.

The Breastfeeding Room provides:

- a private, hygienic, clean, lockable space;
- electrical power point;

- appropriate seating close to power point;
- a table for breast pump equipment;
- hand washing facilities close by;
- hygienic facilities for washing breast pump equipment close by (not a toilet);
- access to existing refrigerators for storing breastmilk; and
- secure facilities for storage of breast pump and other equipment.

Further details on facility locations and access to these can be found in the *Breastfeeding/Expressing Room Procedures and Guide for Users*.

The primary breastfeeding/expressing room has a shared function as the ACEM Member lounge. A *Shared Use Protocol* has been established to manage those instances when the room is occupied or in use by others when needed by the breastfeeding mother. This protocol is available on the ACEM intranet and specifies who has occupancy priority and the alternative facilities available to the breastfeeding mother if for any reason the designated breastfeeding/expressing room is temporarily unavailable.

In the event that new premises are acquired, consideration will be given to the provision of facilities for breastfeeding mothers as detailed in this policy.

### 7.3 Flexible Work Options for Employees

Breastfeeding employees returning to work can seek flexible work options as outlined in this policy, *Work from Home Policy* and *Rostered Days Off and Flexible Working Hours Policy*. This may include:

- time off for an employee to express breastmilk or to breastfeed the baby in dedicated breastfeeding room or at offsite location;
- flexible start and finish times around core working hours;
- allowing lunch and other breaks to be taken to coincide with feeding times;
- a short period of time off to return home or offsite;
- working from home arrangements;
- staggered return to work and/or gradual increase to full contracted hours;
- permanent part-time work option.

All flexible working arrangements for employees are subject to College business needs.

### 7.4 Other Support

The Australian Breastfeeding Association has trained volunteer breastfeeding counsellors, available on the National Breastfeeding Helpline (t: 1800 686 268), seven (7) days a week, for information and support on combining breastfeeding and paid work, or visit: [www.breastfeeding.asn.au](http://www.breastfeeding.asn.au) for local group contact details in your area.

## 8. Relevant Policies and Legislation

It is unlawful to discriminate, directly or indirectly, against an employee who is breastfeeding. The definition of breastfeeding includes expressing milk. It is against the law to advise an employee not to breastfeed or express in the workplace. Failure to accommodate employees who are breastfeeding through flexible work arrangements or the provision of appropriate breastfeeding facilities at work may constitute a breach of any of the below legislation and may give rise to complaints to the relevant body.

- Equal Opportunity Act 2010 (Vic)
- Sex Discrimination Act 1984
- Fair Work Act 2009

- Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012
- Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000
- NHMRC Australian Dietary Guidelines. Commonwealth of Australia 2013:87-96.
- Employment Relations Act 2000 (New Zealand)
- Human Rights Act 1993 (New Zealand)
- Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 (New Zealand)

## 9. Associated Documents

- Breastfeeding/Expressing Room Procedures and Guide (HR708)
- Breastfeeding Shared Room Use Protocol (HR709)
- Breastfeeding Employees: Checklist for Supervisors (HR710)
- ACEM Lactation Break Request and Agreement Form (HR711)

## 10. Document Review

Timeframe for review: every two (2) years, or earlier if required.

### 10.1 Responsibilities

Document authorisation: ACEM Executive Leadership Team

Document implementation: General Manager, People and Culture

Document maintenance: General Manager, People and Culture

### 10.2 Revision History

Version	Date of Version	Pages revised / Brief Explanation of Revision
v1	May-2019	Approved