

TRAINEE INTERNS' NEWSLETTER



September 2020

Dear Colleagues,

We hope you're well. This newsletter will focus on additional duties and cross cover outside of ordinary hours, but first, a bit of an update on the recruitment process. For those of you who have recently signed up with the RDA, we suggest you review our previous TI newsletters which we have sent out during the course of this year. You can locate these newsletters [here](#), in the handy Trainee Intern resource section.

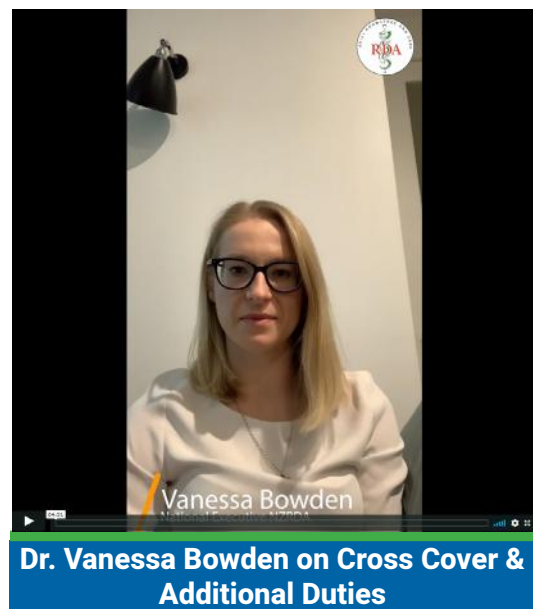
ACE Update

ACE has advised that you will be emailed 21 September advising you which DHB you have been allocated to with formal offers going out 28 September 2020. These offers will include providing you with the option of starting November 2020 or January 2021; you cannot be asked for this information prior to being made a formal offer. We did have one DHB that asked TIs this question but once we contacted them they stopped and gave an assurance that the answers were not used in the appointment process. If you are asked politely decline to answer and [contact us](#).

If you would like further information on what the two start dates may mean for you we suggest you take a look at this newsletter.

Cross Cover and Additional Duties

You will find information about these two topics below. We also have a video on the topic, made by Dr Vanessa Bowden, an experienced member of the National Executive team. Click on the video below can watch. You can also view this video and other informative videos on what your day to day life will be like as an RMO [here](#). You can also access other helpful "soon to be practicing doctors" resources [here](#).



Dr. Vanessa Bowden on Cross Cover & Additional Duties

What is cross cover?

Cross cover is where an RMO covers the duties of another RMO who is absent between 0800- and 1700-hours Monday to Friday. In other words, if you are at work and another RMO is away and you pick up their work as well as your own this is cross cover. Note: it is still cross cover if you are carrying out some (as opposed to all) of the duties of another RMO in addition to your own and the clause says ANY RMO – so it includes house officers cross covering registrars etc!

This seems straightforward but there are few factors to keep in mind:

1. You cannot be forced or inadvertently left to carry out cross cover. You should be approached and asked whether you are willing to take on the extra work. At all times you have the right to refuse to perform cross cover i.e. do the work of 2 doctors! You can do this by advising your supervisor or RMO unit or service manager.
2. Before taking on the work you should think seriously about it. When you agree to take on extra work in addition to your own you are accepting the medico-legal implications associated with providing cross cover. It is important to note that fatigue is not an acceptable excuse to the HDC – and trust us the \$150 payment isn't worth it! It is therefore the view of the NZRDA that you should not agree to cross cover for your first two runs.

You will be paid \$150 day/shift in recognition of the increased workload and added responsibilities. If cover is provided by more than one RMO the payment is shared amongst those who provided the cover.

What about cross-cover outside of ordinary hours?

Cross cover outside ordinary hours is prohibited under the MECA. This is when one of the RMOs rostered on outside the ordinary hours (ordinary hours explained below) is absent and another already rostered to work (duty or call) is asked to cover both duties.

The MECA provides that:

"where an RMO is absent from a roster for any reason outside ordinary hours Monday through Friday, the employer must provide cover from an at least equivalent replacement suitably qualified medical practitioner."

This means absences from the roster for evenings, nights, public holidays and weekends must be filled in a like for like manner by someone not already rostered to work. For example, a registrar on duty must be replaced by a registrar or SMO (not a House Officer) and they must be on duty – not at home and can be called if.....

Why? Because RMO staffing outside the ordinary hours is at minimum levels. Inside ordinary hours cross cover is only allowed if the RMO feels clinically competent to cover the duties of another, when significant numbers of other staff are available to assist. Outside ordinary hours, we are already on minimum staffing, so asking an RMO to do more is unacceptable. If one person is absent, a locum or reliever must be supplied. It's up to the DHB to have a contingency plan in place to manage situations involving no cover.

Most importantly, performing cross cover has medico-legal consequences – you are responsible if something goes wrong (not the DHB). If you do not feel safe to perform the duties you must decline, regardless of what money is on offer.

If you find yourself in a position where there is pressure to cross cover outside ordinary hours, say NO (given it is not safe in addition to the fact it is a contractual breach). We have an 0800 after hours number ([0800 803 993](tel:0800803993)) you can ring if you are in need of some urgent advice. There is also [a flow chart on our website](#) that provides information and templates that you can use to report any instances of cross cover outside ordinary hours.

Additional Duties

Additional duties are paid when you are asked to work to cover absences from the roster in excess of the levels provided in your run description, in other words you are picking up a shift that you were not rostered to work. This occurs when the RMO unit puts out communication asking for cover for a shift that has been unfilled. If this happens the first thing you should do is consider whether you are safe to pick up extra work; if not do not agree to cover the gap. Always prioritise your health and safety when considering whether to accept these duties, and you should never cover duties that are outside of your scope of practice so in your first year the situations where you can pick up extra work may be limited. It also pays to clarify whether the shift is additional duty if it is not clear from the communication.

If you are approached and asked to swap a shift this should also be paid at additional duties rates as the new shift is in addition to what you had previously been rostered. If you are prepared to agree to the swap request make sure you first get it confirmed that you will be paid additional duties rather than work the shift and then try and claim additional duties.

If you do work these duties you will be paid at the minimum rate of \$55.00 per hour for House Surgeons if the shift is between 0800 and 2200, after that the rate goes up to \$70.00 per hour. Remember these rates are minimums

and you can negotiate for a higher amount.

Always remember Additional duties are **voluntary** and paid **in addition** to normal salary.

Again we would recommend caution in picking up additional duties for your first couple of runs given you will already be on a steep learning curve.

Membership

This is a friendly reminder that whilst membership is free as a Trainee Intern you will need to start paying fees (\$40 per month) when you are working as a House Officer. Don't worry, we will send you a reminder closer to the time (we allow time for you to get this organised). If you have any questions about RDA membership please do not hesitate to [visit our website](#) or [email us](#) – we are happy to help wherever we can!

Contact Us



The next NZRDA trainee interns' newsletter will be published in September.

If you have any specific issues you would like us to cover in our upcoming newsletters or have some interesting information you would like us to include please [email us](#) to let us know! We love feedback and will do our best to accommodate your wishes.



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