

Supplementary information requested during 27 April 2016 conference

Supplementary information for 1.3 Methodology: research recruitment

The broad mix of characteristics in the research across the employer and employee populations is demonstrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Mix of user-testing participant characteristics

	Employee	Employer
Level of engagement		
Higher engagement with the Pharmacy Industry Award (e.g. looked at award in past 6 months, does own research)	12	23
Infrequent engagement (e.g. looked at the award in the past 12 months, but not in past 6 months)	3	3
Lower engagement (e.g. never looked at the award or not in past 12 months)	16	6
Pay-setting methods¹		
Award used as a guide or base (award-based)	10	32
Paying exact minimum rate specified in the award (award-reliant)	21	20
Operations		
Dispensing and retailing only	28	26
Compounding, dispensing and retailing	3	6
Classifications²		
Pharmacy assistants (levels 1-4)	11	31
Students	4	11
Interns	11	12
Pharmacists	5	30
Junior rate (pharmacy assistants aged under 21 years)	1 ³	16
Tenure in community pharmacy industry⁴		
Less than one year	6	1
1-2 year	6	1
2-5 years	7	3
5+ years	12	16
Employee age		
Younger than 21 years	5	

¹ Categories not mutually exclusive for the employer group.

² Categories not mutually exclusive for the employer group.

³ One confirmed Pharmacy Assistant paid junior rates of the 5 participants aged under 21 years.

⁴ Tenure of business ownership for employer group. Tenure information not collected for Pharmacy managers.

21-30 years	18	
Over 30 years of age	8	
Employer role		
Community pharmacy owner / operator		21
Pharmacy managers with employee relations responsibilities (determining how pay and conditions are set)		11

English proficiency

All employers and employees who participated in the user-testing had good English speaking and reading proficiency. This was necessary (but not mandatory) to participate in the user-testing because there was no capacity to translate the stimulus materials into other languages.

Some participants noted that many employers and employees within the community pharmacy industry had lower levels of written English proficiency and that translating the award would be advantageous. However, feedback from employers and employees with low levels of written English proficiency are not directly represented in the user-testing findings.

Supplementary information for 1.3 Methodology: conduct of interviews

As the user-testing was conducted as market research by researchers who do not have legal qualifications, the user-testing exercise is not based on objective measures of levels or accuracy of understanding among participants. Rather, findings about participants' understanding of provisions are based on reviewing the current award and the re-draft and providing opinions about them.

The research design generated feedback from users about their 'understanding and/or comprehension' in terms of how confident participants felt identifying the relevant information and interpreting their obligations/entitlements based on the current award and the re-draft version. Participants had the opportunity to review both versions prior to forming an opinion about whether they understood the provisions and which version was easier to understand. Views were often expressed in terms of 'preferences' for the current award or the re-draft and explanations were sought about what features of the re-draft they liked and disliked. Participants cited features of the current award that they preferred, where applicable. Suggested improvements to the re-draft version were also sought during the interviews (and also during the focus group discussions). These suggested improvements did not consider if and how they could change the legal effect.

To complement the objective of the plain language pilot of avoiding changes to the legal effect, feedback was collected about interpretation of provisions. These enquiries focused on identifying differences in how the current award and re-draft would operate. Participants came to understand throughout the interviews that the re-drafted version was intended to maintain the legal effect of the current award provisions rather than to operate differently. They were asked to express an opinion about whether the re-draft comprised different obligations/entitlements than the current award based on their understanding of them. Probing questions focused on testing whether participants had interpreted the current award and re-draft differently, with any difference indicating that the re-draft may have inadvertently changed the legal effect. However, comprehension of the award provisions was not measured in terms of testing how provisions should operate, just whether the current award and re-draft would have a different effect.

Supplementary information for chapter 2: Feedback on the plain language draft: Overall reception

The user-testing gathered opinions of employers and employees covered by the Pharmacy Industry Award about whether the (plain language) re-draft was simpler and easier to understand than the current award. Feedback was also sought from participants about whether the effect of the re-draft was any different to the current award.

Opinions about ease of understanding were often expressed by participants in terms of preference for the re-draft or the current award and this language has been reflected in the findings. Many participants had difficulty identifying and explaining what features of the re-draft (or the current award) made the provisions easier to understand beyond the differences in layout.

Although not objectively measured, comprehension of the current award and re-draft provisions based on the levels of confidence expressed and displayed by participants in the user-testing setting appeared to be good. This may have resulted from the opportunity to review two versions of the provisions and that participants were afforded all the time they needed to review the stimulus material in order to form an opinion about whether the provisions were different.

Some provisions were considered to be very intricate and complex across both versions, but given the time and the benefit of two versions, participants believed they could understand their effect. In these instances, the chief benefit of the (plain language) re-draft was removing some of the barriers posed by that intricacy/complexity by improving the layout. For example, participants only needed to read the re-draft provisions once or were able to identify the key pieces of information quickly and easily. By comparison, reading and understanding the current award provisions was a much more intensive and time-consuming process and one they may not attempt or persevere with in a different setting. Participants indicated a preference for the re-draft on this basis even though they expressed similar concerns about the complexity/intricacy of the provisions across both versions.

The chief advantages of the plain language re-draft over the current award observed from the user-testing are improving accessibility and encouraging users to engage with award provisions. Enhancing comprehension/understanding was not precisely measurable from the research design; although most participants expressed a view that the (plain language) re-draft was easier to understand whilst not having a different effect to the current award.

Accessibility improvements appeared to be primarily driven by the modern, digestible layout of the re-draft. Another key benefit, which was reported less frequently than the layout improvements, was greater clarity about the effect of provisions. Participants generally felt more confident that they understood the effect of the award provisions based on the re-draft version. For example, provisions that state “an employer ‘must’...” were preferred by participants because they made the effect of the provision clearer. Participants thought the current award would likely have the same effect, but they were more confident in their interpretation of the re-draft.