ADF Total Workforce Model Frequently Asked Questions

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1. What is SERCAT 6 Mature?

Service Category (SERCAT) 6 is being implemented in two stages by the Services, *interim* (from August 2017 – November 2018) and *mature* (from 29 November 2018 onwards). SERCAT 6 is the category where members render a part-time pattern of service in the Permanent Force through a flexible service arrangement. Members in SERCAT 6 are subject to the same service obligations as members serving in SERCAT 7. SERCAT 6 (Mature) extends the available patterns of service and alters some conditions of service from those that currently exist under SERCAT 6 (Interim).

SERCAT 6 is designed to:

- provide the option of flexible service arrangements for individuals who want to remain in the Permanent Force; and
- enable the ADF to manage the strategic and sustainable delivery of capability.

2. What does ‘pattern of service’ mean?

A ‘pattern of service’ is the hours, days, weeks and months the member agrees to attend for duty under their flexible service arrangement.

The SERCAT 6 policy is set out in MILPERSMAN Part 2 Chapter 5. Some of the patterns of service a member may undertake under SERCAT 6 (Mature) include:

a. a days per fortnight pattern, where a member can nominate to work a minimum of one day, and up to a maximum of nine days in a fortnight;

b. a weeks per month pattern, where a member can nominate to work certain weeks in a one month period. A month is defined as a 28-day cycle, for example:
   i. 1 week on, 3 weeks off
   ii. 2 weeks on, 2 weeks off
   iii. 3 weeks on, 1 week off

c. a months per year pattern, where a member can nominate to work certain months in a one year period. A month is defined as a 28-day cycle, for example:
   i. 1 month on, 2 months off
   ii. 2 months on, 4 months off
   iii. 6 months on, 6 months off

d) a combination of any of the above patterns of service.

Each full day a SERCAT 6 member attends for duty, under their pattern of service is represented as 8 hours. If a member’s pattern of service involves them attending for duty for part days (ie. less than 8 hours) the total hours they attend for duty over the fortnight must be divisible by 8.
3. How do I apply for SERCAT 6?

Prior to completing any forms, you should discuss your proposed arrangement with your supervisor to establish if flexible service and your proposed pattern of service is suitable in terms of your current job. Even if your proposed arrangement is not supported by your unit you may still submit an application. Discussions with your Career Manager may also take place at this stage. Both your commander and the CDF delegate within your Service Career Management Agency (CMA) will assess capability and operational impacts when considering requests to transfer to SERCAT 6.

To apply you are required to complete Form AE427 – Service Category (SERCAT) Form. This form initiates the required recommendation/approval mechanisms and generates a Flexible Service Determination (FSD). It is not possible to serve in SERCAT 6 without an approved AE427 Form and subsequent FSD.

The minimum period for a SERCAT 6 arrangement is three months. The maximum period is at the Career Manager’s discretion. The FSD ends when the member is posted. As a member of the permanent force, the CDF delegate may at any time cancel an FSD and transfer the SERCAT 6 member to SERCAT 7.

4. What is the approval process for the AE427?

Your Unit is the recommending authority for SERCAT 6. The CDF delegate within your Service Career Management Agency (CMA) is responsible for making the decision on approving the AE427 form.

5. What if I want to take recreational leave or long service leave?

As a SERCAT 6 member, if you take recreation leave your leave credits are not debited on non-working days. Your non-working days are the days you do not attend for duty under your pattern of service. You will accrue recreation leave, additional recreation leave and long service leave credits on a pro-rated basis in accordance with the days you attend for duty under your pattern of service.

If you are granted long service leave as a SERCAT 6 member, you are considered to be on duty for the period of your long service leave. This applies to both LSL at full-pay & LSL at half-pay.
6. Is there an impact on my eligibility to the Retention Benefit under MSBS?

The accrual of 15 years of continuous effective service for eligibility to the MSBS retention benefit applies to both SERCAT 6 and SERCAT 7 members. Any gap in member contributions to MSBS which exceed 21 days is treated as a break in continuous effective service for eligibility to the retention benefit.

7. What happens to my Superannuation contributions?

**DFRDB** – Flexible service does not affect the benefits provided under DFRDB.

**ADF Super** – Employer and member contributions for ADF Super are based on a member’s ordinary time earnings (ie what is earned each pay period). When a member’s ordinary time earnings are reduced under flexible service, there will be a commensurate reduction in the employer and member contribution.

**MSBS** – Flexible service does not affect the benefits provided under MSBS at this time. There are proposed changes to MSBS which are expected to apply in a few years. Until these proposed changes take effect, SERCAT 6 members will continue to pay contributions based on their full-time salary; with the employer contribution also based on a member’s full-time salary. Members still have the option to vary their rate of contribution between 5 per cent and 10 per cent of their fortnightly salary.

The proposed changes to MSBS would see the contributions paid by a SERCAT 6 member and the employer based on the actual fortnightly salary paid to the member under their flexible service arrangement. This change to contributions is consistent with the superannuation arrangements in ADF Super and across the general community.

The bulk of a member’s MSBS benefit is the employer benefit. The employer benefit is calculated by applying a multiple to a member’s Final Average Salary (FAS). The multiples are 18%, 23%, 28%. These equate to the following periods of service: up to 7 years, 8 to 20 years, over 21 years. The FAS is a member’s average full-time salary over their final 3 years of service. Importantly, FAS for SERCAT 6 members will continue to be calculated on their full-time salary and is not under consideration for change. The proposed change will adjust the employer benefit in proportion to the hours worked under flexible service.

These explanations only outline the situation. Subject matter expert advice should be sought from superannuation schemes prior to undertaking SERCAT 6.
8. How will my salary change under SERCAT 6 Mature?
Salary is currently pro-rated for members on PTLWOP and SERCAT 6 Interim. Salary will continue to be pro-rated for SERCAT 6 Mature. Salary is paid for the days you attend for duty under your pattern of service. The flexible service period, including non-working days, is taken to be eligible service for the purposes of salary increments.

A SERCAT 6 member is paid a percentage of their full-time salary based on the number of workings days approved in their FSD within a 10 day fortnight. So if a member is approved to work a 6 day fortnight they are paid 60% of their full-time salary, or 80% for an 8 working day fortnight.

9. Will I still be entitled to Health and Medical benefits?
As a SERCAT 6 member, you will continue to access full health and medical benefits. If you are hospitalised, you are considered to be on duty for the period of hospitalisation and any medical absence immediately following and associated with the hospitalisation.

10. Will I be entitled to housing assistance?
Your eligibility to Defence provided housing or accommodation assistance is unaffected by flexible service. Depending on your pattern of service in SERCAT 6 your member contribution to Defence for housing may increase by 50 per cent.

The member contribution will increase if you attend for duty for less than 50% of the time you would in SERCAT 7 (eg 130 working days in a year ), or have non-working periods that exceed 28 continuous days. If your spouse is a SERCAT 7 member you would not be required to pay a higher contribution.

SERCAT 6 members remain eligible for the Home Purchase and Sale Expense Allowance (HPSEA) and the Defence Home Ownership Assistance Scheme.

11. Are there any changes to other salary-related allowances of which I need to be aware?
Under SERCAT 6, salary related allowances, including Service Allowance and Higher Duties Allowance, are pro-rated in the same manner as salary. These allowances are paid for the days you attend for duty under your pattern of service.
12. What about non-salary related benefits?
Some non-salary related allowances are pro-rated. These allowances are paid for the days you attend for duty under your pattern of service, for example….

Allowances that are paid on occurrence or as reimbursements for costs incurred are not pro-rated (eg. relocation and travel-related costs).

Members with Dependants (unaccompanied) will be required to pay contributions for food, accommodation and utilities on their non-working days. Their reunion travel and food allowance payments are pro-rated.

13. Can I transfer to SERCAT 6 if under a Return of Service Obligation or agreed period of service (ie. due to IMPS or Div 2 bonus)?
Yes, members with an existing Return of Service Obligation (ROSO) or Initial Minimum Period of Service (IMPS) prior to transferring to SERCAT 6 will acquit their obligation at the pro-rated rate, ie the calculated rate based on the days in the member’s pattern of service.

14. Can I be recalled to duty by my unit?
Yes, SERCAT 6 members have the same service obligations as SERCAT 7 and therefore can be recalled for duty at any-time to serve on a full-time basis to meet unexpected operational or capability demands. If the recalled-to-duty period does not involve a change to the total number of days or hours of duty set out in the member’s FSD, then a variation to the FSD is not required and the situation may be treated with time in lieu.

15. How can I estimate SERCAT 6 pro-rated Salary?
You can estimate your SERCAT 6 salary with each working day in a fortnight (being two sets of Monday to Friday working weeks) representing 10% of your full-time salary. Accordingly, if you request to work 9 days in a fortnight (ie one day off) then you’ll receive 90% of full-time salary (9 x 10%). If you work 5 days in a fortnight it will be 50% of full-time salary (5 x 10%).
16. Can SERCAT 6 personnel be rostered for routine duty outside of their pattern of service?
Yes, SERCAT 6 members have the same service obligations as a SERCAT 7. A SERCAT 6 member would normally be rostered for duty on days that fall in their pattern of service but may be rostered on other days. If they are rostered for duty on a day outside their pattern of service they would be eligible to additional salary or a day off duty in lieu.

17. Can SERCAT 6 non-work days be backfilled by other personnel in a job-share arrangement?
Yes, and this is a key feature of the ADF TWM that enables workplace flexibility for units, so that capability can be delivered by personnel from across the service spectrum. When a member transfers to SERCAT 6, the reduction in working days may be offset through a job-share arrangement with another SERCAT 6 or with a SERCAT 3-5 to cover the days the SERCAT 6 member is not on duty.

18. How can units fund backfill by other personnel?
SERCAT 6 members draw less military employee expense (MEE) than when they are SERCAT 7 because their pay and conditions of service are pro-rated. The reduction in MEE may be available to partially fund a job-sharing arrangement with a SERCAT 3-5. The method to achieve this is at each Service’s discretion.

19. Are SERCAT 6 personnel paid for days they work outside of their pattern of service?
Yes. SERCAT 6 members that are required for duty on non-working days outside their approved pattern of service will be paid their SERCAT 6 daily rate of salary, up to a maximum of 10 days in a pay day fortnight. Alternatively, they can be granted a one-for-one day in lieu. For example, a member with every second Friday off duty (ie working nine days-on and one day-off per fortnight) can be rostered to work on a Saturday and should be paid for that weekend duty (payment at the maximum of 10 days within the fortnight). If they work 11 days ie the Friday & Saturday however, they will be only paid for one day, as members in SERCAT 6 can only be paid for a maximum of 10 days per fortnight, and they may be granted a day off-duty in lieu for the additional day of duty.

If you have additional questions, or questions regarding your individual circumstances, please email

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