Personal Leave Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy informs staff members of their entitlement to Personal Leave and its application at ACU.

Section 2 - Policy Statement

(2) This Policy has been developed in support of the provisions for Personal leave for all staff at ACU. Personal leave is designed to enable staff to take leave needed to deal with a range of personal, health and other circumstances.

Section 3 - Application of Policy

Definitions

(3) 'Immediate family' means a:

a. spouse (as defined by the Fair Work Act 2009 (Cth)), de facto partner, child, child in care, parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling of the staff member; and
b. a child, parent, grandparent, grandchild or sibling of a spouse or de facto partner of the staff member.

(4) 'Elder' means a person who is older or more senior and is a person having authority because of age and experience, for example:

a. an elderly member of a person's extended family; or
b. an elderly neighbour or member of a local community.

(5) 'Short-term' means normally up to 5 days. However, the delegated officer may approve a longer period of absence following consultation with People and Capability and receipt of supporting evidence in accordance with clauses (26) to (39).

Personal Leave Entitlement

Continuing and fixed-term staff

(6) Continuing and fixed-term staff are entitled to Personal Leave on full pay at the rate of twenty (20) working days per annum on commencement, and for each completed year of paid service. Fifteen (15) days of this leave is cumulative, based on leave utilised in the previous year.

(7) A staff member who becomes a grandparent is entitled to take up to ten (10) days personal leave for the purpose of caring for their child or grandchild during the six (6) month period commencing from the date of birth or adoption of the grandchild.

(8) An additional period of a total of up to ten (10) days of Personal Leave within each calendar year (Additional Personal Leave) is available in respect of each of the circumstances described in clause (12)g. to (12)j. of this policy.

Refer to clauses (13) to (15) for further information.

Casual and sessional staff.

(9) Casual and sessional staff are entitled to a period of up to two (2) days of unpaid Carer's Leave for each occasion when a member of the staff member's immediate family or household as defined in clauses (3) to (5) requires care or support during such a period because of:

a. a personal illness, or injury, affecting the family/household member; or
b. an unexpected emergency affecting the family/household member.

(10) A sessional academic staff member who is unable to deliver the face-to-face component of teaching[1] because of illness may claim and will be paid for up to 100% of associated preparation time if their supervisor is satisfied the work was undertaken. Refer to clauses (24) to (39) for notice and evidence requirements. Clauses (11) to (22) of this policy do not apply to casual and sessional staff.

[1]In this clause "face-to-face component of teaching" refers to a lecture, tutorial, musical accompanying with special education service and/or clinical nurse education including when conducted synchronously online.

Pro Rata Entitlement

(11) Part time and fractional staff are entitled to the amount of leave available on a pro-rata basis, relative to that staff member's fraction of employment.

Reasons for Taking Personal Leave

(12) Continuing and fixed-term staff may be granted paid Personal Leave for the following purposes:

a. the staff member is not fit for work because of personal illness or personal injury affecting them;
b. the staff member is not fit for work because they have been diagnosed by a medical practitioner with an infectious disease that is notifiable to the relevant state public health authorities, or because they have side effects from a vaccination that has been endorsed by the World Health Organisation;
c. to provide care or support to a member of the staff member's immediate family, or a member of the staff member's household, who requires care or support because of a personal illness or personal injury or because of an unexpected emergency affecting the immediate family member or household member;
d. to provide short term care of an elder (refer to clauses (3) to (5) for definitions);
e. medical or therapeutic appointments for the staff member or a member of the staff member's immediate family or household;
f. appointments and commitments associated with pre-natal and post-natal responsibilities;
g. where a staff member (or staff member's spouse, de facto partner or second parent) has a miscarriage (refer to clauses (13) to (15) below for information about Additional Personal Leave available for this purpose);
h. where the pregnancy of a staff member (or staff member's spouse, de facto partner or second parent) results in a still birth (refer to clauses (13) to (15) below for information about Additional Personal Leave available for this purpose);
i. where a staff member is going through a gender affirmation process and in order to attend to matters incidental to that process (refer to clauses (13) to (15) below for information about Additional Personal Leave

available for this purpose);

j. attending to cultural and ceremonial matters for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples[2] (refer to clauses (13) to (15) below for information about Additional Personal Leave available for this purpose);
k. to deal with a significant personal or community emergency including an emergency arising due to fire, flood, burglary or other unforeseen event beyond the control of the staff member (up to five (5) days per year);
l. where the carer of a staff member's child is unable to look after the child;
m. caring for a child on a pupil-free day (up to four (4) days per completed year of service). Note: Personal Leave may not be used to substitute for childcare or dependent care arrangements during normal school holiday periods;
n. attendance at the staff member's own graduation, citizenship, and justice of the peace ceremony (up to one (1) day for each ceremony);
o. moving house (up to one (1) day per occasion); or
p. observance of recognised religious/culturally significant days (up to three (3) days per year). The staff member must advise their nominated supervisor of their anticipated absence at the beginning of each calendar year.

[2]Refer to:

- clause 6.2.11 of the ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2022-2025 for further information about arrangements for cultural or ceremonial duties performed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff for or on behalf of the University.
- the following link for further information about support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff - https://www.acu.edu.au/about-acu/careers-at-acu/how-we-support-diversity/Aboriginal-and-Torres-Strait-Islander-staff.

Additional Personal Leave

(13) An additional period of a total of up to ten (10) days of Additional Personal Leave within each calendar year is available in respect of each of the circumstances described in clause (12)g. to (12)j. of this Policy and listed below:

a. where a staff member (or staff member's spouse, de facto partner or second parent) has a miscarriage;
b. where the pregnancy of a staff member (or staff member's spouse, de facto partner or second parent) results in a still birth;
c. where a staff member is going through a gender affirmation process and in order to attend to matters incidental to that process; and/or
d. where the staff member is attending to cultural and ceremonial matters for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

(14) The Additional Personal Leave is in addition to the staff member's accrued Personal Leave and is available to a staff member prior to utilising their accrued Personal Leave entitlements.

(15) A staff member who utilises all of the additional 10 days within each calendar year for any specific circumstance described may request further Personal Leave for that circumstance from their accrued Personal Leave. A staff member may request the Additional Personal Leave for each relevant circumstance.

Other Forms of Leave

Other Forms of Paid Leave and Leave Without Pay

(16) Where all Personal Leave entitlements have been exhausted, staff may apply for available accrued Annual Leave or Long Service Leave, or may apply for Leave Without Pay for personal reasons. The responsibility for a request to use available Annual or Long Service Leave rests with the individual staff member. If no such request is received, the staff member will be placed on Leave Without Pay when Personal Leave credits are exhausted.

Extraordinary Leave

(17) Where a staff member has exhausted all paid leave entitlements, and because of extraordinary circumstances, requires further paid leave, the University may grant an amount of paid Extraordinary Leave as the University decides is warranted in accordance with the Extraordinary Leave Policy.

Long Term Illness, Injury or Medical Condition

(18) A staff member with a long-term illness, injury or medical condition may elect to convert the period of the absence to half pay, subject to the provision of a medical certificate to support such long-term absence. In such circumstances, the staff member will be regarded as a part-time staff member for the purposes of leave accruals and superannuation contributions.

(19) Where a staff member undertakes half pay Personal (sick) Leave, their normal superannuation contribution and the University's contribution will reduce to 50 percent. Alternatively, the staff member may elect, in writing, to maintain and pay their full contribution and top-up the University contribution from 50 percent to the full-time level in order to maintain their normal contributions.

Medical Assessment

(20) Where a staff member has exhausted their Personal (sick) Leave entitlement, and/or the staff member has been absent either for an extended period of time or is absent on a regular basis on Personal (sick) Leave, and/or in circumstances where the University may have a doubt about a staff member's wellbeing, it is appropriate for the University to seek information about a staff member's health.

(21) The University may request permission from the staff member to seek information from their treating doctor and/or specialist/s. In addition, the University may require the staff member to attend an independent medical assessment to ascertain the staff member's capacity to perform the duties of their position. The University will choose the medical practitioner to conduct the medical examination at the expense of the University. The University will give the staff member written notice of not less than four (4) weeks, except in exceptional circumstances, that a medical assessment is required.

(22) The Medical Assessment Policy provides further information regarding procedures for arranging access to medical information about a staff member's health and capacity to perform the inherent requirements of their position.

Section 4 - Approvals

(23) An application for Personal Leave must be submitted for approval by the appropriate delegated officer in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 5 of this policy. Information on delegated officers for leave approvals can be found in the Delegations of Authority Policy and Register.

Section 5 - Procedures

Notice and Notification of Absence to Supervisor

(24) A staff member is required to provide the University with notice of taking leave as soon as practicable. Such notice will be accompanied by appropriate evidence in accordance with clauses (26) to (39).

(25) If a staff member fails to make contact within a reasonable timeframe (normally one (1) day), the supervisor will make arrangements to contact the staff member as set out in the Abandonment of Employment Policy.

Evidence Requirements

Personal Leave – medical reasons

(26) A staff member who is absent on a period of leave for reasons associated with personal illness, injury, medical condition or procedure, for more than three (3) consecutive working days is required to provide the University with appropriate evidence in accordance with clauses (31) to (39).

(27) A staff member may be required to provide proof of medical condition(s) for absences of less than three (3) consecutive working days in certain circumstances, such as:

a. when the staff member has a pattern of recurring absences on personal sick leave; or
b. when there is evidence that a staff member is not using personal leave for its proper purpose and notification has been provided.

The requirement for such notification will be reviewed after six (6) months.

Personal Leave – carer responsibilities

(28) A staff member who is absent on a period of leave because they are required to provide care or support to a member of their immediate family, child or grandchild, or a member of their household or elder for three (3) or more consecutive working days, is required to provide proof of the illness or injury to the University in the form of a complying medical certificate, as outlined in clauses (31) to (39).

(29) If it is not reasonably practical for the staff member to provide a medical certificate, a Statutory Declaration by the staff member must be provided.

(30) Within the Statutory Declaration, staff member may be required to confirm that:

a. they are the carer; and
b. the person receiving care is a member of their immediate family, child or grandchild, a member of their household or elder.

Evidence Requirements and Medical Certificates

(31) A staff member is required to provide to the University with such evidence as would satisfy a reasonable person that the leave is being used for a purpose outlined in clause (12) (for example, a medical certificate for themselves or their family member requiring care). In the absence of such proof, the period of absence from duty will be without pay or, at the request of the staff member, will be deducted from their annual leave credits.

(32) Where an absence is for personal sickness for a period of more than three (3) days, applications for Personal leave must be supported by a medical certificate.

(33) Medical certificates will be accepted from a registered health practitioner or registered medical practitioner where the reason for leave relates to their area of expertise.

(34) Medical certificates will also be accepted from Pharmacists, however, restricted to certificates for illness or injury

that the Pharmacist is qualified to issue which are normally restricted to two (2) days or less. For the purposes of this policy a Pharmacist is not considered to be a medical practitioner.

(35) A staff member must not return to work if they have a medical certificate declaring that they are unfit for work during that period. If recovery is earlier than expected, the staff member must obtain a certificate of clearance to work from a registered health or medical practitioner. The certificate of clearance must be provided to their supervisor prior to the staff member returning to work.

(36) If the University believes that the medical certificate provided by a staff member does not comply with clauses (31) to (39), the staff member will be given a copy of this Policy and will be asked to provide an amended certificate within a specific timeframe.

(37) The University may contact the registered health practitioner or registered medical practitioner to seek verification of a medical certificate.

(38) If a complying medical certificate is not provided within the specified timeframe, the absence will be treated as leave without pay or another form of leave, if available, and if requested by the staff member.

(39) If it is not reasonably practical for the staff member to provide a medical certificate, a Statutory Declaration by the staff member must be provided.

Applying for Leave and Submitting Documentation

(40) A staff member must submit their application for Personal Leave via Staff Connect, indicating the type of Personal Leave required. Where, for example, a staff member is on a period of Personal (sick) leave for more than three (3) consecutive working days supporting documentation in accordance with clauses (31) to (39) must be included in their application for leave. It is the responsibility of the staff member and supervisor to ensure that a staff member's leave requests and approvals are registered on Staff Connect.

Section 6 - Revisions Made to This Policy

(41) The revision table includes revisions up until this document was migrated into the current policy platform. Any later changes will show in the Status and Details tab.

Date	Major, Minor or Editorial	Description
15 December 2016	Minor	Updated with minor administrative changes to incorporate the provisions of the Australian Catholic University Staff Enterprise Agreement 2013-2017.
11 March 2018	Major	Updated to incorporate provisions of the ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2017-2021.
11 March 2018	Editorial	Updated to incorporate new ACU branding and updated policy template as per the ACU Policy Development and Review Policy.
24 August 2022	Editorial	Updated Director, Human Resources to Chief People Officer. Updated clause 5.2.3 to refer to 5.2.2 rather than 6.2.2. Updated Educational Services (Post-Secondary Education) Award from 2010 to 2020.
30 November 2023	Minor	Updated to incorporate provisions of the Australian Catholic University Staff Enterprise Agreement 2022 – 2025. Updated Human Resources to People and Capability.

(42) The University may make changes to this Policy from time to time to assist statutory compliance and or to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about

this Policy may forward their suggestions to People and Capability.

Section 7 - Further Assistance

(43) Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this Policy should first consult their nominated supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in their work area. Should further information or advice be required staff should visit Service Central.

Section 8 - Associated Information

(44) For related legislation, policies, procedures and guidelines and any supporting resources please refer to the Associated Information tab.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	13th October 2025
Review Date	13th October 2029
Approval Authority	Governance Officer
Approval Date	13th October 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Angelle Laurence Chief People Officer
Responsible Manager	Angelle Laurence Chief People Officer
Enquiries Contact	Bernardine Lynch ER and Safety Committees and Policy Officer People and Capability