# Community Engagement Time Release Policy

## Section 1 - Background

(1) It is recognised that ACU staff undertake community engagement outside of their normal work arrangements and that this takes many forms.

(2) This Policy has been developed to support staff to participate in community engagement activities and outlines time release arrangements during normal working hours.

## Section 2 - Policy Statement

(3) In line with its mission as a Catholic university that seeks to serve and promote the common good, the University encourages staff to contribute to the community by working collaboratively with community partners, targeting priority groups and communities identified by ACU Engagement, in order to achieve mutually agreed goals. Approved Community Engagement Time Release provides staff with access of up to 5 days per calendar year to participate in community-based activities (where it occurs during your normal working hours) that contribute to the common good, address social justice issues in the community, and help those in our communities who are experiencing disadvantage and / or marginalisation.

## Section 3 - Policy Purpose

(4) This Policy informs staff members on how to access Community Engagement Time Release and its application at ACU.

## Section 4 - Application of Policy

(5) This Policy applies to all continuing and fixed term staff of the University.

(6) Community Engagement Time Release is not available to staff that undertake the types of community engagement activities, as per Section 5, that are a requirement of the normal duties of their position.

(7) For academic staff, Community Engagement Time Release needs to be consistent with the principles for allocating academic workload under the Academic Workload Policy. Australian Catholic University focuses its community engagement on academic staff expertise in teaching and research. Thus, community engagement will normally be embedded within a staff member's teaching and/or research workload. In special circumstances, it may be reflected in other activities as outlined under clause (66) of the Academic Workload Policy, which provides an allocation for all staff to participate in and undertake other University activities, including Community Engagement Time Release activities, not already embedded within the staff member's academic role.

*This policy document may be varied, withdrawn or replaced at any time. Printed copies, or part thereof, are regarded as uncontrolled and should not be relied upon as the current version. It is the responsibility of staff printing this document to always refer to the ACU Policy Portal for the latest version.*

# Section 5 - Availability

(8) Community Engagement Time Release provides staff with the opportunity to contribute to advancing the Catholic mission of the University. Community Engagement Time Release enables staff to participate in community-based activities that contribute to the common good, address social justice issues in the community, and help those in our communities who are experiencing disadvantage and / or marginalisation.

(9) Community Engagement Time Release will normally be taken to support recognised ACU community partners and targeting priority groups and communities identified by ACU Engagement. Community Engagement Time Release is designed to support activities including, but not limited to:

a. homework support/tutoring programs for children from low Socio-Economic Status (SES) communities or other backgrounds of disadvantage;
b. international community development programs with ACU Engagement international partners and recommended organisations;
c. programs providing education, training and support for those who are sleeping rough, have been incarcerated, are living in conditions of poverty, or have experienced domestic violence;
d. programs providing education, training and support for refugee and newly arrived migrant communities, and members of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities who are socially isolated;
e. social support programs supporting elderly people;
f. programs supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities;
g. activities and organisations supporting people with disabilities, mental health issues, or chronic illness; and
h. programs supporting those who are experiencing hardship or disadvantage (such as living with domestic violence or having an incarcerated parent or recognised carer).

(10) A staff member may access up to five (5) days per calendar year (January to December) of time release to participate in approved community engagement activities that satisfy the parameters in this Policy and where it occurs during the staff member's normal working hours. Community Engagement Time Release is not cumulative.

(11) Where a staff member can demonstrate the merits of additional Community Engagement Time Release, time release of greater than five (5) days per annum may be approved. A proposal that includes the merits of the proposed community engagement activity and its alignment with the ACU Mission, Identity and Values must be provided to the Head, ACU Engagement for appropriate consideration.

# Section 6 - Procedures

(12) Approval is required before a staff member or a group of staff may proceed on a community engagement activity. A staff member that intends to request Community Engagement Time Release should first contact ACU Engagement via email: ACUEngagement@acu.edu.au for guidance on whether the proposed community engagement activity satisfies the parameters of this Policy.

(13) The request for Community Engagement Time Release will require endorsement of the request by the Nominated Supervisor and then approval of the community engagement activity by the Head, ACU Engagement. If not approved, ACU Engagement will advise the staff member of the decision.

# Section 7 - Revisions made to this Policy

(14) Unless otherwise indicated, this Policy will still apply beyond the review date.

# Section 8 - Further Assistance

(15) Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this Policy should contact ACU Engagement via email: ACUEngagement@acu.edu.au.

(16) This Policy relates to Community Engagement Time Release for ACU Staff and is not associated with Community Service Leave which is covered by the separate Community Service and Emergency Services Leave Policy.

# Section 9 - Associated Information

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

## Status and Details

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| **Status** | Current |
| **Effective Date** | 2nd April 2024 |
| **Review Date** | 30th April 2024 |
| **Approval Authority** | Vice-Chancellor and President |
| **Approval Date** | 2nd April 2024 |
| **Expiry Date** | Not Applicable |
| **Responsible Executive** | Sandra Jones<br>Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research Impact) |
| **Responsible Manager** | Matthew Pink<br>Head, ACU Engagement |
| **Enquiries Contact** | Vivien Cinque<br>Manager, Community-engaged Research<br><br>ACU Engagement |