Abandonment of Employment Policy

Section 1 - Background Information

(1) This Policy has been developed to address the management of abandonment of employment at ACU.

Section 2 - Policy Statement

(2) The University may deem that a staff member has abandoned their employment in circumstances where the staff member is absent from work for a period of 10 working days or more without explanation; has failed to make contact with the University regarding their absence from work; and / or has failed to formalise this absence by providing written advice of their intentions, and does not return to work.

Section 3 - Policy Purpose

(3) This Policy informs staff members of their obligations in relation to attendance at ACU and the circumstances in which the University may deem a staff member to have abandoned their employment.

Section 4 - Application of Policy

(4) This Policy applies to all general and Academic Staff members who are covered by the ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2026-2029 (the Agreement).

(5) If a staff member is absent from work without explanation or has failed to formalise this absence by providing written advice of their intentions and does not return to work, the University will take all reasonable steps to attempt to contact the staff member.

(6) If a staff member is absent from work for a period of more than one working day, and no contact has been made with the University, the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer will endeavour to make contact with the staff member. Normally, the initial attempt at contact will be via telephone to home and mobile numbers where provided, and email, where appropriate. The nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer should also check with the staff member's immediate colleagues to ascertain if the staff member has made contact with the University.

(7) If the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer is unable to make personal contact with the staff member, the nominated supervisor will endeavour to make contact through the staff member's nominated emergency contact.

(8) If the staff member has not provided an emergency contact, the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer will endeavour to contact the staff member by visiting their address (or arranging for an alternative staff member to visit, particularly where the nominated supervisor is located at another campus). In such circumstances, the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer will be accompanied by another member of staff.

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.

(9) These initial attempts at contact emphasise the University's concern for the staff member's welfare. The nominated supervisor or nominee should seek advice from the staff member as to the reason for their absence, and their date of anticipated return. The staff member should be requested to formalise this absence by providing written advice of their intentions (for example, through the completion of a leave application or other written advice).

(10) If the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer continues to be unable to contact the staff member after 2 working days, or is able to contact the staff member but the staff member fails to formalise this absence after 2 working days, and has not provided written advice of their intentions and does not return to work, the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer will, in consultation with People and Capability, formally write to the staff member at the staff member's contact address. This letter will confirm the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer's request, as outlined in clause 9, along with any additional relevant information identified through any contact made with the staff member (for example, advising leave balances). This letter will also request that the staff member respond within 2 working days and will inform the staff member of the possible consequences of their ongoing absence, including that their salary will be suspended if this response is not received.

(11) This letter will be sent via all available mechanisms including registered mail (to ensure a record of the delivery and receipt of the letter). A copy of this letter will be provided to the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer's supervisor and / or the relevant Executive member, and to People and Capability.

(12) If, after 2 working days of the letter being issued, the staff member fails to make contact with the University or fails to formalise the absence by providing written advice of their intentions and does not return to work, the nominated supervisor should advise People and Capability to suspend the staff member from the payroll.

(13) The nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer will then endeavour to make reasonable attempts to contact the staff member through the steps outlined above. Depending on the circumstances of the situation, and particularly where no contact with the staff member can be made, consideration should be given to notifying third parties, such as the Police, of the staff member's unexplained absence.

(14) If the staff member has made no contact with the University following issuing of the letter sent in clause 10, or has failed to formalise this absence by providing written advice of their intentions and does not return to work and a total of 10 working days have passed, the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer will provide a report to the relevant Executive member to advise that the staff member has abandoned their employment. This report will detail all attempts to contact and any communication received from the staff member.

(15) The Executive member will consult with the Chief People Officer prior to recommending to the delegated officer that the employment of the staff member be terminated on the grounds that the staff member has abandoned their employment.

(16) If the delegated officer makes a determination that the staff member's employment is to be terminated on the grounds that the staff member has abandoned their employment, the Chief People Officer will formally write to the staff member advising that the University has considered the staff member's continuing absence to be an indication that they have abandoned their employment with the University. A copy of this advice will also be provided to the relevant Executive member. The University will then implement the normal procedures associated with a staff member's termination of employment with the University.

Section 5 - Approvals

(17) All decisions in relation to the application of this Policy must be made in accordance with the relevant University delegations. Information on delegated officers for leave approvals is available in the Delegations of Authority Policy and Register.

Section 6 - Revisions made to this Policy

(18) 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
26 Oct 2012	Major	Updated to incorporate the provisions of the Australian Catholic University Staff Enterprise Agreement 2010–2013.
1 Apr 2019	Editorial	Updated to include reference to ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2017-2021 (item 4) and Service Central.

(19) The University may make changes to this Policy from time to time 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

(20) 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

(21) 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	6th August 2024
Review Date	6th August 2027
Approval Authority	Governance Officer
Approval Date	6th August 2024
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