

Employment of Sessional Academic Staff Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This Policy provides information about the conditions of employment and procedures relating to the engagement of academic sessional staff at the University.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Policy applies to all Academic Staff members who are employed at ACU on a sessional basis. The [ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2017-2021](#) (the Agreement) sets out the broad terms and conditions that apply to sessional employment at the University.

Section 3 - Application of Policy

(3) Employment of sessional academic staff is employment on a non-continuing basis, for which payment is made at an hourly rate. Sessional employment provides a mechanism for the University to engage staff on a pattern of hours to assist the University to meet its needs at identified peak work periods, such as for teaching sessions, or to cover identified short-term absences. The employment of sessional academic staff will be in accordance with the provisions set out in this Policy.

Section 4 - Approvals

(4) An online sessional work schedule must be completed by a nominated supervisor. The schedule must be approved in accordance with the [Delegations of Authority Policy and Register](#).

Section 5 - Procedures

Request for Sessional Academic Staff

Recruitment of Sessional Academic Staff

(5) Each School should create and maintain an eligibility list of suitable persons who may be engaged as sessional academic staff. Schools should be mindful of the [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency \(TEQSA\)](#) requirement that academic staff who teach are qualified to at least one Qualification Standards level higher than the course of study being taught (or with equivalent professional experience)¹.

¹ See the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#) (Chapter 3, 4.2)

(6) The list of eligible persons should be regularly updated including contact details and curriculum vitae (CV). Where

practicable the School should arrange for a prospective sessional academic staff member to be interviewed, particularly when the sessional academic is going to be a National Unit Leader (NUL) of a unit.

(7) Sessional academic staff may be employed through the following processes:

- a. publishing a call for expressions of interest for persons to submit their CV for consideration (e.g. in suitable vocational journals, newspapers and online job sites);
- b. putting up a notice on a School/hospital noticeboard;
- c. placing an advertisement on the University's website on the [Careers at ACU](#) page; and
- d. sending an email to all relevant higher degree research and honours students asking for them to submit an expression of interest in undertaking casual/sessional work.

Request for Sessional Academic Staff

(8) The nominated supervisor initiates the appointment of a sessional academic staff member by completing online the Sessional Work Schedule which must be approved in accordance with the [Delegations of Authority Policy and Register](#).

Offer of Employment

(9) Following approval of the Sessional Work Schedule, and prior to the commencement of employment, the Sessional Employment system issues an offer of employment to the prospective sessional academic staff member.

(10) The offer of sessional academic employment informs the staff member of the terms of engagement, including the name of the supervisor, the duties required, the number of hours required, the rate of pay for each class of duty required, and a statement that any additional duties required during the term of appointment will be remunerated.

(11) All sessional academic staff are required to accept the offer of employment by reading the "Declaration by Prospective Employee", accepting the terms that have been offered, and clicking on the "Accept Offer" icon which confirms their acceptance of the offer.

Sessional Academic Staff Employment Pack

(12) The offer of appointment to a prospective sessional academic staff member is accompanied by the following information from the Sessional Academic Employment Pack:

- a. General Information;
- b. Mission Statement;
- c. [Code of Conduct for Staff](#);
- d. Applicable induction materials;
- e. Induction Checklist;
- f. Privacy Statement;
- g. [Staff Sexual Misconduct Policy](#);
- h. [Equal Opportunity Policy](#);
- i. [Work, Health, Safety and Wellbeing Policy](#);
- j. Tax File Number Declaration; and
- k. Calendar of Pay Periods;

(13) The information contained in this Pack may vary from time to time according to legislative and other requirements that apply to the employment of sessional academic staff. Other materials that the University considers relevant to the employment of a sessional academic staff member may also be included.

Section 6 - Conditions of Employment for Sessional Academic Staff

Sessional Academic Staff Remuneration

(14) A sessional academic staff member will be paid in accordance with the University's provisions for the payment of casual and sessional academic staff and in line with the casual academic salary rates detailed in Schedule 2 of the [ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2017-2021](#). The hourly rates are inclusive of a 25 per cent loading which is paid in compensation for the casual nature of the appointment and in lieu of all paid leave entitlements including personal leave, public holidays, annual leave and annual leave loading and long service leave (other than where, in accordance with the [Fair Work Act 2009 \(Cth\)](#), an applicable award or a State Act provides an entitlement).

Structure of Casual Academic Rates

(15) Each sessional academic staff member is remunerated at an hourly rate of pay for the formal face-to-face delivery of lectures, tutorials, clinical education or musical accompanying and the provision of associated non-contact duties directly related to the formal delivery in the nature of preparation, in class marking and student consultation.

(16) The number of non-contact hours associated with the formal delivery is calculated in accordance with the casual academic salary rates schedule and should be discussed with the National Head of School or nominated supervisor at the commencement of the semester. For example payment for a standard lecture includes one hour of preparation, one hour of delivery and one hour of associated work (which includes student consultation). If a sessional academic staff member is employed to work for less than a full hour, then the rates are to be pro-rated accordingly.

Preparation for Lecturers and Tutorials

(17) Preparation includes:

- a. researching material for a lecture or tutorial;
- b. writing notes/overheads/PowerPoint for a lecture/tutorial;
- c. preparing materials for posting onto the University's Online Learning platform (LEO); and
- d. communications with the Course Adviser and/or with the National Unit Leader to talk about the unit or program.

(18) Preparation does not include researching and preparing Unit Outlines and Reading Lists which, if required, must be paid for separately (see clauses (23) to (26)).

Student Consultation

(19) Student consultation will normally occur at the rate of at least 30 minutes per week in total for each hour of lectures or tutorials given (including repeat lectures and tutorials).

(20) This may include consultation:

- a. immediately adjacent to lectures or tutorials;
- b. at regular advertised times each week;
- c. through an open door policy; and/or
- d. through email correspondence.

Marking

(21) In class marking means marking undertaken within the lecture or tutorial delivered (i.e. within the learning

activity or the class). It includes:

- a. marking of student presentations given in tutorials, and
- b. marking of short answer/multiple choice tests which are conducted and marked within the lecture/tutorial or seminar.

(22) A sessional academic staff member may be required to mark assignments and/or examination papers. In these circumstances once the final number of students in a unit is confirmed after the semester census date, the National Head of School or nominated supervisor should arrange for the additional marking requirements to be paid by initiating a Sessional Work Schedule Variation on the Sessional Employment system.

Other Required Academic Activities

(23) A sessional academic staff member who is required to undertake an activity (e.g. attend an Orientation or Induction Program and/or participate in a School assessors' meeting) must be paid at the appropriate rate for that activity. It is important that the National Head of School or nominated supervisor clearly specify those activities that a sessional academic staff member is required to undertake, and those activities which are voluntary and for which no payment will be made (e.g. an invitation to attend an open lecture by a visiting scholar).

(24) The following duties must be paid for at the relevant "Other Academic Activity Rate":

- a. development of teaching and subject (unit) materials such as the preparation of unit guides;
- b. the conduct of practical classes, demonstrations, workshops, student field excursions, etc;
- c. the conduct of clinical sessions other than clinical nurse education;
- d. the conduct of performance and visual art studio sessions;
- e. musical coaching, repeteurship and musical accompanying other than with special educational service;
- f. preparation of reading lists and basic activities associated with subject/unit coordination;
- g. development of open/distance learning materials;
- h. consultation with students (other than associated with a lecture or tutorial);
- i. supervision;
- j. attendance at School and/or Faculty meetings as required; and
- k. attendance at Orientation and Induction sessions as required.

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive, but is provided by way of examples and guidance.

(25) A higher base is applicable when the sessional academic staff member either holds a doctorate and/or is undertaking co-ordination duties (e.g. when the sessional is also the National Unit Leader).

Examples of Sessional Academic Workloads

(26) The following table contains examples of sessional academic staff workloads:

	Per Week	Per 12 Week Semester
Standard Lectures	1 lecture per week includes:	1 lecture per week means:
	1 hour of preparation	12 hours of preparation
	1 hour of delivery and	12 hours of delivery and
	1 hour of associated work (student consultation and/or in class marking)	12 hours of associated work (student consultation and/or in class marking)

	Per Week	Per 12 Week Semester
Repeat Lectures	1 repeat lecture per week includes:	1 repeat lecture per week means:
	1 hour of delivery and	12 hours of delivery and
	1 hour of associated work (student consultation and/or in class marking)	12 hours of associated work (student consultation and/or in class marking)
Standard Tutorials	1 tutorial per week includes:	1 tutorial per week means:
	1 hour of preparation	12 hours of preparation
	1 hour of delivery and	12 hours of delivery and
	1 hour of associated work (student consultation and/or in class marking)	12 hours of associated work (student consultation and/or in class marking)
Repeat Tutorials	1 repeat tutorial per week includes:	1 repeat tutorial per week means:
	1 hour of delivery and	12 hours of delivery and
	1 hour of associated work (student consultation and/or in class marking)	12 hours of associated work (student consultation and/or in class marking)
	Major Assignment Marking - As Required	
Non-contemporaneous marking	Standard marking of major assignments will normally be based on a ratio of 15 minutes per 1000 words or as determined by the National Head of School	
Examination Marking	The number of papers to be marked per hour will be determined by the National Head of School or nominee	

Payments to Sessional Academic Staff

(27) A sessional academic staff member will be paid on a fortnightly basis in line with the formal delivery of lectures, tutorials, clinical education and musical accompaniment and other academic activities undertaken, as per the Sessional Work Schedule.

Advice of when payment is not to be made

(28) People and Capability will automatically pay the sessional academic staff member in accordance with the approved Sessional Work Schedule.

(29) If additional duties are required by the University and expressly communicated by the sessional academic staff member's supervisor, this work will be paid at the appropriate rate (described above).

(30) If the sessional academic staff member does not perform any of the duties detailed in the Sessional Work Schedule (e.g. because the sessional academic staff member is on authorised leave), the nominated supervisor must record the variation as soon as possible for the staff member not to be overpaid.

(31) In such circumstances the supervisor should initiate and action a Sessional Work Schedule Variation to advise of the exact number of hours which are no longer to be paid. Providing this information in a timely manner will avoid the possibility of an overpayment occurring which would then have to be recovered in line with the University's [Payment of Salaries Policy](#).

Sessional Engagement Period

(32) Sessional academic staff are offered casual employment within a defined sessional engagement period, which starts on the first date listed and ends no later than the last date listed in the Sessional Work Schedule. The estimated end date of the period is the date on which it is expected that all associated non-contact duties directly related to formal delivery will have been completed.

Access to University IT Systems

(33) Sessional academic staff will have access to relevant and approved University systems for twelve months after the nominal end date for the autumn and spring semesters in which they work, and the staff member's employment is not otherwise terminated. The University uses its electronic resources to disseminate information to staff. Each sessional academic staff member is allocated an ACU email address and is expected to regularly access and maintain that email address in order to receive information from the University. Such information may include advice regarding accessing pay slips and payment summaries on the University's Staff Connect facility.

Induction and Staff Development

(34) Sessional academic staff who commence employment with the University for the first time are subject to the provisions of the University's [Staff Induction Policy](#). The induction and orientation process for new staff at ACU provides a mechanism for introducing new staff members to their role and responsibilities and to the University's Mission so that they become integrated into the ACU environment and community as quickly as possible.

(35) The responsibility for successful induction is shared between the nominated supervisor and the commencing staff member, supported by colleagues in the relevant organisational unit and in other areas of the University.

(36) All sessional academic staff members must participate in the University's induction program in a timely manner following the staff member's appointment. An appropriate induction will be provided to the staff member to ensure they have the information to perform their role effectively and safely and in alignment to the [Code of Conduct for Staff](#). Sessional academic staff will receive an appropriate payment for participation in the induction program.

(37) Where possible the University will provide sessional academic staff with opportunities for further staff development, normally on a voluntary basis. These may include attending professional development workshops and seminars offered by the University.

Meal Breaks

(38) A sessional or casual academic staff member will not be required to work for more than five consecutive hours, without taking an unpaid meal break of at least 30 minutes.

Notice Periods for Termination of Engagement

(39) A sessional academic staff member is required to give a minimum of one hour's notice of separation from employment with the University. The University may terminate the employment of a sessional academic staff member at any time during the sessional engagement period by giving one hour's notice.

Superannuation for Sessional Academic Staff

(40) The management of superannuation contributions for all staff is subject to the provisions of the [Superannuation Guarantee \(Administration\) Act 1992 \(Cth\)](#) and the University's [Superannuation Policy](#).

(41) The University will make employer contributions to a complying superannuation fund on behalf of sessional academic staff members at the relevant minimum superannuation guarantee rate.

(42) In circumstances where a complying superannuation fund does not accept employer contributions made on behalf of staff members who are over 74 years of age, the University will make equivalent contributions in the form of the payment of additional monies to such staff members.

Unpaid Carers Leave for Sessional Academic Staff

(43) A sessional academic staff member is entitled to a period of up to 2 days unpaid carer's leave for each permissible occasion when a member of the staff member's immediate family or household requires care or support during such a period because of:

- a. a personal illness or injury; or
- b. an unexpected emergency affecting the member.

(44) A sessional academic staff member is required to give their nominated supervisor advice of their absence from the workplace as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made.

Unpaid Compassionate Leave for Sessional Academic Staff

(45) A sessional academic staff member is entitled to a period of up to 2 days of unpaid compassionate leave for each occasion when a member of the staff member's immediate family or household:

- a. contracts or develops a personal illness that poses a serious threat to her or his life; or
- b. sustains a personal injury that poses a serious threat to her or his life; or
- c. dies.

(46) The sessional academic staff member may take compassionate leave for a particular permissible occasion if the leave is taken:

- a. to spend time with the member of the sessional academic staff member's immediate family or household who has contracted or developed the personal illness, or sustained the personal injury; or
- b. after the death of the member of the sessional academic staff member's immediate family or household.

(47) If the permissible occasion is the contraction or development of a personal illness, or the sustaining of a personal injury, the staff member may take the compassionate leave for that occasion at any time while the illness or injury persists.

(48) A sessional academic staff member is required to give their nominated supervisor advice of their absence from the workplace as soon as possible in order for alternative arrangements to be made.

Unpaid Parental Leave for Sessional Academic Staff

(49) A sessional academic staff member may be entitled to unpaid parental leave where they become an eligible casual employee as provided for in the relevant Federal legislation.

(50) For the purposes of eligibility for unpaid parental leave, an eligible casual staff member is a person who has been employed as a casual or sessional academic on a regular and systematic basis for a period of at least 12 months and who is the primary carer of the child.

(51) The unpaid parental leave entitlement for sessional academic staff is as follows:

- a. up to 52 weeks of unpaid parental leave;
- b. a further 52 weeks of unpaid parental leave subject to written request to ACU to agree to the extension.

Requests must be made at least 4 weeks prior to the end date of original leave.

Section 7 - Conversion from Sessional to Non-Sessional Employment in a Teaching-Focussed Position

Call for Expressions of Interest

(52) The University will call for expressions of interest from sessional academic staff for conversion to a teaching-focussed continuing or fixed-term position in one or more specified Faculties annually via the [Careers at ACU](#) website.

(53) For the avoidance of doubt, expressions of interest are open to existing ACU staff only.

Identification of and Distribution in Specified Faculties

(54) The University will determine which Faculties will be specified Faculties, and the distribution of teaching focussed continuing or fixed term positions, following consideration of the relevant factors which include (but are not limited to):

- a. workforce planning requirements including the academic career pathway profile;
- b. the percentage of teaching activities undertaken by sessional academic staff members;
- c. the availability of academic staff within particular Schools (taking into account leave and fractional employment arrangements); and
- d. the allocation of suitable teaching duties for continuing and/or fixed-term academic staff members who have been identified as being under load.

Submitting an Expression of Interest

(55) Following the call for expressions of interest for conversion from sessional to non-sessional, eligible sessional academic staff may complete an expression of interest, provide copies of relevant supporting documentation and lodge their expression of interest with the University through the [Careers at ACU](#) website.

(56) The sessional academic staff member must meet the eligibility criteria for conversion set out in the Agreement and provide supporting evidence.

(57) Evidence to support an expression of interest may include:

- a. copies of qualifications;
- b. a current curriculum vitae/resume;
- c. a letter of acknowledgement where a colleague/peer is no longer at ACU;
- d. copies of unit and other teaching evaluations undertaken in the past 24 months;
- e. copies of undergraduate and higher degrees and/or evidence of enrolment in a higher degree program (including a report from the HDR supervisor); and/or
- f. copy of membership of the relevant professional association.

(58) The selection of successful applicants will occur in a manner that is consistent with the University's [Recruitment and Selection Policy](#). Applicants may be requested to provide additional supporting documentation and/or evidence and will normally be interviewed by a Faculty Sessional Conversion Selection Committee.

(59) A sessional academic staff member who is offered conversion to a continuing or fixed-term Teaching-focused role will be advised in writing and may also be required to serve a reasonable period of probation, in accordance with the relevant University policy on probation for academic staff. Conversion of a sessional academic staff member holding a Doctoral qualification will be converted to no less than Academic Level A, Step 6.

Section 8 - Revisions made to this Policy

(60) The revision table includes revisions up until this document was migrated into the new policy system. Any later revisions will show in the Status and Details tab.

Date	Major, Minor or Editorial	Description
18 December 2018	Major	Updated to incorporate the provisions of the Australian Catholic University Staff Enterprise Agreement 2013 - 2017.
11 March 2019	Major	Updated to incorporate the provisions of the ACU Staff Enterprise Agreement 2017-2021.
11 March 2019	Editorial	Updated to incorporate new ACU branding and updated policy template as per the ACU Policy Development and Review Policy.
20 January 2020	Major	Updated to include information on conversion from sessional to non-sessional employment in a teaching-focused position.
15 October 2020	Editorial	Update to item 6.6 Access to University IT Systems.
29 March 2021	Minor	Update to items 6.1.2: Preparation for Lecturers and Tutorials and 6.4: Clarifying payment for academic activities.
9 December 2021	Major	Updated to incorporate the provisions of the Treasury Laws Amendment (Your Future, Your Super) Bill 2021.

(61) The University may make changes to this Policy 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 9 - Further Assistance

(62) 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 10 - Associated Information

(63) 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	19th December 2023
Review Date	30th April 2024
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Approval Date	19th December 2023
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 <hr/> People and Capability