Balancing Family / Carer Responsibilities with Work and Study Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) In Australia today it is increasingly acknowledged that family responsibilities directly impact on employment and educational opportunities. Within the context of higher education, it is clear that such responsibilities have a significant impact on the educational opportunities of students and the employment opportunities of staff.

(2) Under the New South Wales Anti-Discrimination Act 1977 (as amended), it is unlawful to discriminate against a person in education or employment on the grounds of family responsibilities or carers' responsibilities.

(3) The University of Newcastle is committed to providing an accessible, supportive and flexible environment for all staff and students, including those with family responsibilities.

Section 2 - Scope

(4) This Policy applies to all staff and students of the University of Newcastle. For staff, this policy should be read in conjunction with the Flexible Work Policy.

Section 3 - Family Responsibilities

(5) The University recognises that:

a. family responsibilities impact on all aspects of an individual's life and are not confined to the 'private' sphere. The ways in which such responsibilities impact on work and education mean that they are the concern of the University as a whole;
b. family responsibilities affect all genders;
c. families are diverse. 'Family' is defined by the University in an inclusive way, and includes same sex and de facto partners. The University also recognises the wide kinship and family networks of many cultures, and wants to be sensitive to cultural differences in the implementation of its family-friendly policies;
d. students and staff should have access to the same educational and employment conditions regardless of their family responsibilities; and
e. leave and benefits should be reasonably provided to accommodate the roles of students and staff with respect to these family or carer responsibilities.

(6) The University encourages a shared-care model whereby family and carer responsibilities are undertaken by all genders.

(7) The provisions for children on campus (see Managing Family Responsibilities for more information) for staff and students are part of the University's affirmative action for care-givers.

Section 4 - Care of Children

(8) The University of Newcastle is committed to:

a. supporting and providing high quality and affordable child care facilities for students and staff;
b. an understanding that child care facilities should be available to meet a range of needs, for example, vacation care, temporary or emergency care, and that these facilities should be readily available and affordable to those who want them; and
c. providing facilities which are accessible to those who are accompanied by children. This includes, where practicable, provision for ramp entrances to buildings, baby change facilities and breastfeeding rooms.

(9) The University also recognises the occasional need for students to bring children to attend classes, and for staff to bring children to work. For example, a parent may have a babe in arms, child care arrangements or plans may have fallen through, or it may be a 'pupil-free day' in schools. In these instances, students and staff must seek permission from their lecturer/tutor or Supervisor. Permission to bring children to class or the workplace is at the discretion of the lecturer/tutor or Supervisor, though any reasonable request should be treated sympathetically. (For more information, please see "Guideline for Staff/Students Bringing Children on Campus".)

(10) The University recognises the occasional need for staff and students to take their children into the libraries, food outlets, sporting facilities or any other non-teaching areas subject to any regulations which may apply in those areas.

Section 5 - Provisions for Staff with Family Responsibilities

(11) The University offers a range of provisions to support the needs of staff with family responsibilities, as set out in the relevant Enterprise Agreement or Employment Contract, including:

a. Personal Leave;
b. Parental and Surrogacy Leave;
c. Parental Leave for Partners;
d. Purchased Leave Scheme for Professional Staff Members;
e. Return to work from Parental Leave (flexible working agreement);
f. Job sharing; and
g. Flexible Working Arrangements including flex time for Professional Staff.

(12) Approval must be obtained from the designated manager in accordance with the relevant Enterprise Agreement or Employment Contract.

Status and Details

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Effective Date	23rd May 2023
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Responsible Executive	Martin Sainsbury Chief People and Culture Officer martin.sainsbury@newcastle.edu.au
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Campus" - means any place or premises owned or controlled by the University, but may also specifically refer to a designated operating location such as the Callaghan Campus.

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Lecturer" - All teaching academics including lecturers (of all levels), sessional academics and conjoint academics.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

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