

Information for Staff and Supervisors

Unpaid Leave



General information

Unpaid leave (leave without pay) may be granted by the University for a variety of reasons. This document explains the University's arrangements for unpaid leave and describes the application process. Before considering applying for or approving unpaid leave it is recommended that staff and supervisors consult your [HR Business Partner](#) or [HR Advisor](#).

Leave eligibility

All continuing, contingent, and fixed term staff who have exhausted their available annual and long service leave balance are eligible to apply for unpaid leave which will be granted at the discretion of the University.

Casual staff members are entitled to not be available to attend work or to leave work for up to 2 days per occasion for carer's reasons. Casual staff will not be entitled to any payment for the period of non-attendance. Because of the nature of their employment, casual staff do not need to apply for and record unpaid leave, instead they would advise their supervisor that they will be absent and returning to any work available after the period of absence.

Unauthorised unpaid leave includes absences for periods of industrial action by staff members and taking time off work without the University's permission. Unauthorised absences don't count as service.

Unpaid leave for the purposes of career development

The University may consider applications for the purposes of career development, exchanges, skill enhancement or study. In considering applications to undertake external development, regard will be given to the potential benefit to the University. A minimum period of notice of 3 months for Professional Staff and a semester for Teachers and Academic Staff applies for periods of unpaid leave greater than 1 month, unless otherwise approved by relevant [University delegate](#).

Consideration of all unpaid leave applications will be based on the following principles:

- a) The applicant must have served a minimum of twelve months with the University (Depending on the circumstances other types of leave may be available for those applicants not falling into this category);
- b) For Academic Staff, Special Studies Program (SSP) post-service commitments have been met.

Conditions relating to unpaid leave

During a period of unpaid leave a staff member remains bound by the University's policies and procedures. For example, staff are bound by the University's [Code of Conduct](#) and the [Outside Work Policy](#).

The minimum amount of unpaid leave that can be taken is one hour.

The maximum single continuous period of unpaid leave that will generally be approved is 2 years.

A staff member is not to be paid for any public holiday or University holiday that falls during a time when the staff member is on unpaid leave.

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Unpaid leave and how it relates to University closedown periods

Where a staff member does not have sufficient annual leave to cover the directed annual leave days during University closedown periods, they may elect to take annual leave in advance, long service leave or unpaid leave.

Staff are not paid for any Public Holiday that falls during a time when they are on unpaid leave. If a Staff member applies for unpaid leave on directed annual leave days, they will still be paid for the public holidays falling within an end of year closedown period at their ordinary rate of pay for the hours they would usually work on those days.

Unpaid leave and how it impacts superannuation entitlements

A Staff Members' superannuation contributions (employer and employee) will not be maintained during a period of unpaid leave with the exception of Defence Reserves service for periods of 10 days or more in any calendar year, subject to the rules of the staff member's nominated superannuation fund.

Unpaid leave and how it impacts paid leave entitlements

Most unpaid leave doesn't count towards a staff member's service, even if it has been agreed to by the University. This means most unpaid leave doesn't count when calculating most accumulated entitlements such as paid leave. Some exceptions are outlined below.

Unpaid leave greater than 5 working days within a 12-month period, will not count as service for the purpose of calculating annual leave accruals. (The 12-month period is calculated from the staff member's anniversary of commencing employment with the University).

During unpaid leave, staff do not accumulate personal/carer's leave. Staff Members will not be entitled to access personal/carer's leave or life leave while on unpaid leave.

Staff on unpaid leave (other than unpaid parental leave) will not be eligible for paid parental leave for the duration of the unpaid leave.

For the purpose of determining a Staff Members long service leave entitlement, unpaid leave will affect the accrual of long service leave as follows:

- a) For Staff Members with less than 10 years' service, any period of unpaid leave greater than 5 days in any 12-month period, will generally not count as service;
- b) For Staff Members with 10 years or more service, any period of unpaid leave of 6 months or less will count as service;
- c) Where an employer other than the University pays to the University an appropriate amount to cover the staff member's accrual of long service leave during the period of unpaid leave, the period of unpaid leave will count as service.

Even though unpaid leave generally doesn't count as service, it doesn't break a staff member's period of continuous service.

Unpaid leave and how it relates to incremental salary progression

For the purposes of determining a Staff Members eligibility to receive an increment, any period of unpaid leave in excess of 5 working days within 1 year for any purpose will not count for incremental purposes. Where a staff member has been granted a period of unpaid leave which does not count as service, the appropriate date for subsequent increments will be deferred by the period of time equivalent to the period of unpaid leave.

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Unpaid leave and how it relates to probation

Unpaid leave in excess of one month will not normally be approved during a staff member's probationary employment period. Where unpaid leave is approved, the probationary period may be adjusted, subject to approval of the Chief People and Culture Officer.

Unpaid leave and NES entitlements

Unpaid leave that has been agreed by the University counts towards a staff member's continuous service for:

- A staff member's right to request flexible working arrangements
- Notice of termination or payment in lieu of notice.

For the purpose of these entitlements, the entire period of employment will count as service except for any periods of unauthorised absence.

Application Process

Requests for unpaid leave should be discussed between the staff member and the relevant supervisor/manager in the first instance. This will be an opportunity to also discuss any alternatives to unpaid leave with consideration to the staff members' individual circumstances.

The staff member must complete an [unpaid leave application form](#).

Requests for unpaid leave for a period of up to two weeks may be approved by the staff member's immediate supervisor. All other requests must be forwarded to the relevant authority as per the [delegation schedule](#).

The application should include:

- a) The reasons for the request;
- b) The commencement date and finish date.

The request should also outline any potential impact that the staff member believes the arrangement may have on:

- a) Other staff, work commitments, and the organisational unit; as well as
- b) How any potential adverse effects may be addressed.

It is recommended that the staff member consult their [HR Business Partner or HR Advisor](#) before applying for or commencing a period of unpaid leave.

Approved applications for unpaid leave must be submitted to your HR Advisor's positional email [HR Advisor](#).

The decision not to approve the request should be discussed verbally with the staff member in the first instance. Where possible, alternatives should be considered.

Any final decision to decline the application must be communicated to the staff member. The decision must clearly set out the reasonable business grounds upon which the application was declined.

A staff member may request to return to the University prior to the agreed end date of the unpaid period. Authority to approve such requests shall be at the discretion of the or relevant authority as per the [delegation schedule](#).

Alternatives will be considered by the delegate where it is not possible to return the staff member to their substantive position early.

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ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Staff members are responsible for:

- Making their own arrangements relating to salary deductions during unpaid leave (for example, mortgage payments, private health insurance);
- Remaining informed of the Universities activities in which they may have an interest, for example, academic promotion;
- Informing their work area about their wishes to remain informed of workplace matters;
- For periods of unpaid leave in excess of three months, Staff members are required to give four weeks' notice in writing, confirming their intention to return to the University at the end of the leave period.

Supervisors are responsible for:

- Forwarding the approved applications to your HR Advisor's position email in sufficient time to prevent the overpayment of the staff member;
- Planning for the distribution of work of the staff member on unpaid leave;
- Keeping staff on unpaid leave informed of any significant change to the workplace that directly impact them.