

# COVID-19 SPECIAL MEASURES KEY EMPLOYMENT PRINCIPLES

@ 15 September 2021

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Our University community has responded very constructively to the actions required in response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Extraordinary efforts have been made by our staff members to transition our education provision to a greater online presence and we are all playing our part to ensure we can continue to teach our students; conduct our research and provide administrative support services whilst maintaining health and safety across our University community.

We have introduced a series of measures that have been necessary for the effective operational management of our University throughout the pandemic, from logistical arrangements for remote working to prudence measures to support the ongoing sustainability of our University. Keen to provide support and clarity for our staff members, we developed a set of employment principles to determine how we will manage a number of key activities and to maximise our efforts to keep staff members engaged and working productively whilst minimising the spread of the virus. We continue to review these principles as we progress our response, so do check back here regularly for the latest information.

## 2. OUR COMMITMENTS

We will continue to comply with requirements that are binding on the University and our staff members in accordance with employment legislation, our [Enterprise Agreement](#), [Senior Staff Collective Agreement](#) and our policies.

## 3. SUPPORTING OUR STAFF

### 3.1 Health and Wellbeing

We continue to support the health and safety of our staff members, our students and the wider University community in line with the latest SA Health and State and Federal Government advice. In responding to the implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, the safety and wellbeing of our people will remain our highest priority.

A suite of support mechanisms and guidance for staff members and supervisors have been provided and will continue to evolve. If you have any feedback or any specific questions relating to your own situation, please contact your [People, Talent and Culture Business Partner](#) or email [PTC@unisa.edu.au](mailto:PTC@unisa.edu.au).



### 3.2 Alternative Duties

#### *Continuing and fixed term staff*

If, as a result of COVID-19, the duties (and associated workload) assigned to a **continuing or fixed term staff member** reduce, or are required to change, due to:

- Government directives or advice;
- Operational decisions made by the University to require staff members to work remotely or to pause specific operational activities; or
- Other factors beyond the University's control,

the University will work with the staff member to assign them duties consistent with their classification level and employment fraction. This can include assigning duties in areas of the University that are not the staff member's usual location.

If a staff member is not able to perform their normal role and alternative duties are not able to be identified, the University will work with the staff member to consider access to accrued recreation or long service leave entitlements for a period agreed between the staff member and their supervisor.

Whilst the University's preference is to reach agreement on the taking of leave, if the staff member has excess recreation leave, the University may require the staff members to take leave consistent with the requirements and process outlined in the [Enterprise Agreement](#).

#### *Casual staff*

In the event that the projected hours of a **casual staff** member are unable to be performed due to:

- Government directives or advice;
- Operational decisions by the University to require staff members to work remotely or to pause specific business activities; or
- Other factors beyond the University's control,

the University will consider whether it can provide alternative duties consistent with the work and hours outlined in the staff member's casual contract or other arrangements as agreed with the staff member. If this is not possible, and the casual staff member is unable to undertake their duties in a remote working arrangement, the staff member will be paid for time they have worked to date as approved by their time sheet approver **up until the date the work ceased**.

### 3.3 Family Responsibilities

The University recognises that many of our staff members will have competing demands with family responsibilities, particularly if staff members have to care for their family members due to COVID-19. We want to be as accommodating as we reasonably can by exploring ways of managing these responsibilities alongside work requirements, so staff members can continue to support their family and remain engaged in their work.



If this is not possible, and a staff member must take some time away from their usual work to care for their family, they may access appropriate leave entitlements in accordance with the requirements of the [Enterprise Agreement](#).

The University provides a range of flexible work options in accordance with our [Flexible Work Arrangements Procedure](#) and these can be considered by a staff member at any time.

The University will explore alternative methods with staff members based on their individual circumstances that may enable them to take different combinations of leave and work (for example, work half day/half day off; work one day/one day off etc) and for professional staff members, alter the customary hours of work (between 8.30am and 5.00pm) to carry out work within the broader span of ordinary hours (7.00am to 7.00pm) Monday to Friday inclusive.

Any arrangements must be at the request of the staff member based on their personal circumstances and will require agreement by their supervisor. Any agreed arrangements must be consistent with our Enterprise Agreement. For further advice please contact your [People, Talent and Culture Business Partner](#).

A casual staff member who is caring for a member of their household, may access up to 2 days unpaid carer's leave for each occasion it is required in accordance with the provisions of clause 43 of the [University's Enterprise Agreement](#).

## 4. LEAVE

### 4.1 Exceptional Special Leave with Pay

The University has introduced an exceptional special leave with pay provision as a discretionary benefit to support staff members impacted by COVID-19 in the following circumstances:

For **continuing or fixed term staff members** required to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19, and who are not able to carry out their duties working remotely, exceptional special leave with pay will be provided for up to 14 calendar days per year. Part time staff members will be provided exceptional special leave with pay for the ordinary hours they would have worked in that 14-calendar day period.

In the event a staff member is confirmed as having COVID-19, they will be required to access personal leave, or other accrued leave entitlements, to cover the period of their absence.

Where a staff member is in self-isolation or quarantine required following overseas or interstate travel undertaken for personal reasons, staff members may work remotely as agreed with their supervisor, access their accrued leave entitlements or, if necessary, take leave without pay.

If the contracted work of a **casual staff member** is unable to be performed due to the impact of COVID-19, the staff member will be paid for time they have worked to date, as approved by their timesheet approver, up until the date the work was no longer able to be performed. Casual staff members may be able to work remotely, subject to the duties required and the approval of the supervisor.



Where a casual staff member is caring for a member of their household, the provisions of clause 43 of the [University's Enterprise Agreement](#) apply and the staff member may access up to 2 days unpaid carer's leave for each occasion it is required. Where this leave is sought, a casual staff member should submit their timesheet for approval as normal.

## 4.2 Accessing Other Leave

The following table outlines paid and unpaid leave arrangements available to staff members in accordance with the University's [Enterprise and Collective Agreements](#), including the exceptional special leave with pay discretionary benefit and agreed working from home arrangements.

	Working from Home	Exceptional Special Leave with Pay*	Personal Leave	ERL Recreation Leave	Long Service Leave	Family Responsibility Leave	Carers Leave#	Unpaid Carers Leave##	Special Leave without Pay
<b>Continuing and Fixed Term Staff</b>									
Self-Isolation/Quarantine	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓
COVID-19 Personal Illness	✓		✓	✓	✓				
Non-COVID-19 Personal Illness			✓	✓	✓				
Diagnosed Medical Condition or High-Risk Profile Due to COVID-19	✓			✓	✓				
Carer Responsibilities				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
All other paid entitlements that are eligible to take have been exhausted									✓
<b>Casual Staff</b>									
Self-Isolation	✓								
COVID-19 Personal Illness	✓								
Diagnosed Medical Condition or High Risk Profile Due to COVID-19	✓								
Carer Responsibilities due to COVID-19	✓							✓	
University Partial or Full Shutdown	✓								

\* Not available when self-isolation/quarantine is required following interstate or overseas travel undertaken for personal reasons

# Carer's leave is accessed from accrued personal leave entitlement.

## Unpaid carers leave in periods of up to 2 days or any separate periods agreed between the supervisor and staff member.



### 4.3 Professional Experience Program (PEP) Leave

The Professional Experience Program (PEP) for academic staff members has commenced for the 2021/22 calendar years in accordance with the PEP [Policy](#) and [procedure](#). Current travel restrictions still apply to PEP applications and programs. For further information, contact your supervisor or your local [PTC Business Partner](#).

## 5. FLEXIBLE WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

The University offers staff members the opportunity to participate in flexible work arrangements. Where a staff member seeks to enter into a flexible working arrangement, please refer to the [Flexible Working Arrangements Procedure](#) for further information. Requests need to be made in writing and approval sought from the staff member's supervisor.

There are further resources provided for staff members who have their supervisor's approval to [work from home](#).

## 6. STAFF RECRUITMENT

Our normal approach to recruitment has been varied to respond to our current circumstances, by seeking to maintain employment levels within the University whilst not accruing additional ongoing cost commitments. One of our key priorities is to ensure that we are maximising employment continuity for our existing staff members and focusing our resources on business-critical services with specific recruitment and appointment requirements now subject to the approval of the Enterprise Leadership team (ELT).

The following principles have been introduced for recruitment or appointment of wholly or partially internally funded positions in excess of six (6) months:

- a) The Enterprise Leadership Team (ELT) will review all requests for recruitment and appointment, and requests for conversion to continuing employment.
- b) Requests to progress recruitment/appointment for a continuing or fixed term vacant or new position, (either via merit selection or appointment without merit) require approval from the ELT.
- c) For each request, the relevant ELT member will need to indicate their endorsement (or otherwise) for the request for approval by the ELT.
- d) Recruitment will be conducted internally unless otherwise approved by the ELT.
- e) All positions will be advertised assuming Step 1 of the salary/classification range and appointments will be made at Step 1 of the range unless:
  - 1) Step 1 of the higher classification is less than the current substantive salary of an internal candidate, in which case they will be appointed to Step 2 of the classification. In the event that Step 2 is the equivalent of their current substantive salary they will be appointed to Step 3 of the classification.
  - 2) an internal candidate is appointed to an alternative position within their substantive classification, in which case they will maintain their substantive step and increment date.

Any requests for exceptions to the above principles must be approved by ELT.

In the event the request is to appoint an individual named on a grant, or where the position will be wholly externally funded, ELT approval is not required nor do these positions require the endorsement of an ELT member. This also applies to positions wholly funded through allocation from the DVCRE budget. The same applies for positions wholly or partially funded by the VCDF.

For clarity, appointment to fully externally funded positions do not require ELT approval when:

- a) a person is named on the grant; and/or
- b) the funding is clearly identifiable as external and covers the period of employment or provides the necessary resources for the required period of employment.

Where special operational considerations arise, the Vice Chancellor may exercise authority to appoint by invitation, in accordance with [Council Policy H-27 Recruitment and Selection](#).

## 7. FIXED TERM EMPLOYMENT

We have introduced the following principles for the appointment and renewal of fixed term contracts and to continue to review the employment of fixed term staff members with 10 or more years' service, in line with the commitments of our Enterprise Agreement.

For clarity, the principles that apply to salary scales and increment dates in Section 6 apply to all fixed term appointments, other than in those circumstances outlined below.

### 7.1 Fixed Term Contracts

#### *Fixed term contracts: Internal funding*

New internally funded fixed term contracts of less than six (6) months can be approved by the relevant ELT member. Fixed term contracts of six (6) months or more require approval from the ELT.

Renewal or extension of fixed term contracts, up to twelve (12) months where the person has been merit-selected, is performing well and the budget has been confirmed, require approval by the relevant ELT member only.

Requests for professional staff member appointments without merit greater than 12 months, require approval by ED: PTC. For academic staff member appointments ELT approval is required.

For renewal/extensions of fixed term contracts, even in the event the staff member has been merit-selected, there are no performance concerns, the work is continuing, and finance has been confirmed, approval by the relevant ELT member must be sought.



**Fixed term contracts: External funding, including allocations from DVC:RE budget / VCDF**

Appointment to fully externally funded positions does not require ELT approval when:

- c) a person is named on the grant; and/or
- d) the funding is clearly identifiable as external and covers the period of employment or provides the necessary resources for the required period of employment.

## **7.2 10 Years and Over Fixed Term Employment Reviews**

Reviews of fixed term employment for staff members with 10 years or more continuous service will progress in accordance with the requirements of the [Enterprise Agreement](#).

## **7.3 Conversion to Continuing Employment**

All conversions from fixed term employment to continuing employment require ELT approval (for both academic and professional staff members).

# **8. SECONDMENTS**

Supervisors will consider the need for secondments in the current environment.

The principles outlined above for recruitment or appointment also apply to secondments.

Requests to appoint or recruit existing Program Director roles will require approval from the Provost & Chief Academic Officer only.

# **9. HIGHER DUTIES ALLOWANCES AND RECLASSIFICATIONS**

## **9.1 Higher Duties Allowances**

Supervisors will consider the need for higher duties allowances in the context of our commitment to operating as prudently as possible in support of the future financial sustainability of the University. Where specific circumstances require it, in order to meet operational needs, higher duties may be offered in accordance with the Enterprise Agreement as approved by the relevant VCA delegation holder.

The principles outlined above for recruitment or appointment also apply to higher duties allowances.



## 9.2 Market Attraction or Retention Allowances

Approved market attraction or retention allowances will continue as normal until their scheduled end date. Any new request for a market allowance, or an extension of an existing allowance, will need to be supported by the relevant **Executive Dean or Executive Director/Director** and approved by the Executive Director: People, Talent and Culture.

## 9.3 Professional Staff Reclassifications

An individual staff member's request for re-evaluation of their position can continue in accordance with existing University [reclassifications processes](#).

All management-initiated requests for reclassification of a professional staff position will only be considered where specific circumstances require a reclassification process to proceed. A business case seeking ELT approval for the management-initiated reclassification will be required **before** a reclassification process is progressed.

## 9.4 PD Funds

Approved existing PD Funds can be accessed in accordance with the Professional Development Fund [Guidelines](#), taking into account current travel restrictions.

# 10. FRACTION VARIATIONS

Temporary or permanent fraction increases require ELT approval unless:

1. It is the staff member seeking to increase within their substantive fraction
2. It is at the Manager's initiation for three (3) months or less.
3. The increase in fraction is wholly externally funded,

# 11. MAJOR WORKPLACE CHANGE

## 11.1 Major Workplace Change

Major workplace change will only be initiated by approval of the ELT.



*History of amendments*

Version	Date	Author	Amendments
1.0	01 April 2020	Ms Jane Booth, Executive Director; People, Talent and Culture	First published
2.0	26 June 2020	Ms Jane Booth, Executive Director; People, Talent and Culture	Updated to reflect new approval process to recruit and appoint via ELT
3.0	29 October 2020	Ms Jane Booth, Executive Director; People, Talent and Culture	Updated to reflect new approval process to recruit and appoint via ELT
4.0	18 February 2021	Ms Jane Booth, Executive Director; People, Talent and Culture	Updated to reflect current COVID-19 management approach and new approval process to recruit and appoint via ELT
5.0	19 April 2021	Ms Jane Booth, Executive Director; People, Talent and Culture	Updated to reflect new PEP and other development arrangements and changes to discretionary leave provisions.
6.0	15 September 2021	Ms Jane Booth, Executive Director; People, Talent and Culture	Updated to clarify appointment to step increases and ELT requirements