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Date reviewed: 22 June 2020

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1. Introduction

The University of the Sunshine Coast provides the following types of leave to eligible staff:

- Recreation Leave
- Sick Leave
- Carers' Leave
- Bereavement/Compassionate Leave
- Leave Without Pay
- Long Service Leave
- Parental Leave and Maternity Leave (refer to separate policy & procedures)
- Special Leave
- Domestic and Family Violence
- Defence Force Training
- Jury Service
- National Sporting Events Leave
- Natural Disaster Leave
- State Emergency Call Out Leave
- Trade Union Leave
- Public Holidays
- University Holiday - Christmas/New Year Close Down

The following guidelines are based on a full time staff member working 36.25 hours per week. Fractional staff members' leave entitlements are calculated on a proportionate basis.

Casual staff are entitled to paid long service leave and unpaid leave for sick, carers', Domestic and Family violence, bereavement/compassionate, jury service, and state emergency call out purposes.

Leave may be taken for periods of 15 minutes or greater, except in the case of long service leave, which is normally taken in blocks of no less than 4 weeks.

2. Leave types

2.1 Recreation leave

Full-time staff are entitled to recreation leave on full pay, with an additional 17.5% loading, at the rate of 20 working days for each completed year of service from the date of appointment.

A staff member will apply for leave indicating when they wish the leave to commence, normally giving reasonable notice. Leave will be allowed or deferred at the discretion of the Supervisor. Taking of recreation leave will be such that the operational requirements of the organisation are met.

Supervisors are to ensure that staff have adequate opportunity to take recreation leave as a continuous period and staff are to inform the supervisor of their intention to take leave. Where a public holiday occurs during the period of recreation leave no deduction for this day will be made from the recreation leave credits of the staff member.

In circumstances where recreation leave has been approved, approval may only be revoked by mutual agreement.

Where a staff member's leave entitlement equals or exceeds six working weeks, the staff member's supervisor can direct the staff member to take at least two working weeks of the leave entitlement within a three month period from the date of direction. The Supervisor must provide two months' notice of this direction.

A staff member who has accumulated an equivalent of six weeks recreation leave may request to have a proportion of their recreation leave paid out. Where a staff member requests a pay out of recreation leave, a recreation leave entitlement equivalent to four weeks leave must be retained, and the staff member must demonstrate they have taken a period of recreation leave equivalent to the amount to be paid out in the preceding 12 month period. The maximum amount of recreation leave to be paid out in any calendar year will be two weeks.

When a staff member is ill for three or more consecutive working days whilst on recreation leave, on provision of a certificate from a registered medical practitioner, no deduction of recreation leave credits will be made for the period in question. Medical certificates must be submitted within one week of returning from recreation leave.

No re-credit will be granted to a staff member on recreation leave immediately prior to retirement, resignation or termination of employment.

The 17.5% loading component will be payable on the pay period immediately prior to Christmas. The leave loading is calculated on the ordinary salary/wage rate of payment (excluding weekends, public holidays, overtime and penalty rates). Staff will be paid recreation leave as part of their normal pay or they may request payment in advance (4 week's notice is required). On termination of employment, the staff member will be paid pro-rata all accrued recreation leave credits not taken, and receive the pro-rata 17.5% loading component.

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2.2 Sick leave

Full-time staff are entitled to paid sick leave for up to ten working days per year. Sick leave is available twelve months in advance during the first year of service, and then accrues on a proportionate, cumulative basis. Casual staff are entitled to unpaid leave of up to two days on each occasion of a personal illness and must provide a medical certificate from a medical practitioner.

A staff member absent from work through illness must advise their supervisor as soon as practicable on the first day of absence. Applications for sick leave of four or more days must be supported by a certificate from a medical practitioner stating the nature of the illness and the period or approximate period for which sick leave is required. When a staff member is ill for three consecutive days whilst on recreation or long service leave, supported by a certificate from a medical practitioner no deduction of recreational or long service leave credits will be made for the period of illness. No re-credit will be granted to a staff member on recreation or long service leave immediately prior to retirement, resignation or termination of employment.

A supervisor can request a staff member with a proven regular pattern of sick leave to provide a medical certificate for any sick leave taken in the six months following the supervisor's request.

Staff who have used their full entitlement of sick leave may be granted sick leave without pay, subject to the approval of the supervisor and satisfactory medical certification. In addition, a staff member can use any recreation leave entitlement.

Where a supervisor has concerns about a staff member's ability to perform their normal duties on their return from a period of sick leave, they can request that the staff member provide a medical clearance certifying that the staff member is fit to resume normal duties.

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2.3 Carers' leave

Carers' leave is available for a staff member's absence to provide care and support for a member of their immediate family or household under their care when they are ill.

Immediate family includes:

- a spouse (including a former spouse, a de facto spouse and a former de facto spouse of the opposite or same sex);
- a child (including an adopted child, a step-child, ex-nuptial child or foster child), or grandchild;

- a parent, grandparent, or sibling of the staff member or the staff member's spouse; and
- a person approved by the Vice-Chancellor and President or authorising officer.

A full-time staff member will be entitled to paid carers' leave at the rate of five days per year. Carers' leave is non-cumulative.

Proof of carers' leave in excess of four days must be furnished by way of a medical certificate from a medical practitioner or via a statutory declaration stating the illness of the person concerned. In addition, a staff member may be entitled to use any sick leave entitlements for the period of absence if carers' leave entitlements have been previously exhausted. A staff member may elect, with the approval of their Supervisor, to take leave without pay, recreation leave, time off in lieu of payment for overtime or hours accumulated under the flexible work arrangement for the purposes of providing care to a member of their immediate family or household who is ill.

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2.4 Bereavement leave/ compassionate leave

Full-time and fractional staff members may be granted up to two days paid bereavement/compassionate leave on full pay, per occasion, when a member of their immediate family or a member of their household:

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

For a death outside Australia, staff are entitled to an additional two days paid bereavement leave for travel purposes. A staff member can be required to show supporting evidence.

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2.5 Public holidays

Staff are entitled to the following holidays, without loss of pay:

- New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Saturday, Easter Monday, Christmas Day and Boxing Day; and
- The following days as prescribed in the relevant states, territories and localities: Australia Day, Anzac Day, Queen's Birthday and Labour Day; and
- An additional day as observed in the State of Queensland.

Substitute days:

- When Christmas Day or Boxing Day is a Saturday or a Sunday, a holiday in lieu will be observed on 27 December and/or 28 December respectively.
- When New Year's Day or Australia Day is a Saturday or Sunday, a holiday in lieu will be observed on the next Monday.

Where in Queensland, public holidays are declared or prescribed on days other than those set out above, those days will constitute additional holidays for the purpose of this Agreement.

2.6 University holiday - Christmas / New Year closedown

Any day between a Christmas and the next New Year's Day, which is not a public holiday, will be treated as a day off without loss of pay or recreation leave credits.

2.7 Leave without pay

Leave without pay may be granted at the discretion of a Supervisor and normally only after all recreation leave credits have been exhausted. If a continuous period of leave exceeds ten working days, the period of leave is not recognised as service for the purpose of calculating leave entitlements including long service, recreation and sick leave. Superannuation payments are not made for periods of leave without pay. For leave in excess of four weeks, the staff member's increment date is changed by the total period of leave.

Leave without pay commences on the first working day of the leave (excluding public holidays) and ceases on the day prior to resumption of duty. Public holidays which fall in the period of leave without pay form part of the leave. Leave may not be granted in broken periods separated by public holidays or by periods of long service or recreation leave.

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2.8 Long service leave

Staff who complete ten years continuous service are entitled to long service leave at the rate of 1.3 weeks on full pay per year and proportionate amount for an incomplete year.

Staff must provide at least six months written notice of their intention to take long service leave. If less than six months notice is given, it is at the Supervisor's discretion to approve the leave. Leave is normally taken in blocks of not less than four weeks.

In circumstances where long service leave has been approved, approval may only be revoked by mutual agreement.

The University can direct a staff member with long service leave accruals exceeding eighteen weeks to proceed on long service leave of up to three months, at a time convenient to the needs of the University.

A staff member who has an entitlement to long service leave may request to have a proportion of their long service leave paid out. Requests for the payment of long service leave must be for a minimum of four weeks and will be limited to one request per calendar year. Where a staff member chooses to have a proportion of their long service leave paid out they must retain a minimum entitlement of eight weeks.

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2.9 Special leave

Full-time staff may be granted up to three days paid special leave in special circumstances. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, and staff from other cultural backgrounds, may be granted an additional two days special leave for cultural or religious days of observance. Special leave is non-cumulative, accrues on the anniversary of commencement and is subject to the approval of the Supervisor.

2.10 Domestic and Family Violence

A staff member experiencing domestic and family violence in their personal life that affects their attendance or capacity to perform their work may be granted up to 20 days per annum paid leave to attend to matters including, but not limited to:

- medical appointments and legal proceedings;
- protection of children and dependents;
- other necessary actions associated with the violence.

Staff may also use their accumulated sick leave to attend to necessary related matters.

More information on domestic and family violence and available support measures can be accessed by staff on MyUSC (login required).

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2.11 Defence force training

Staff who are members of the Defence Reserve Forces are entitled to leave on full pay for the purposes of attending annual training camp of up to 16 days duration or up to 18 days where certified by the relevant commanding officer.

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2.12 Jury service

A staff member who is required to attend a Court for the purpose of jury service will be entitled to paid leave for the duration of such attendance. Any fees paid to a staff member by reason of leave to attend jury service will be payable to the University. Casual staff are entitled to unpaid leave for the purposes of jury service.

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2.13 National sporting events leave

Full-time staff selected as national competitors, officials or umpires/referees to participate in major international and national sporting competitions may be granted five days leave on full pay each year. Fractional staff are entitled on a proportionate basis.

2.14 Natural disaster leave

Where a staff member is prevented from traveling from their usual place of residence to attend duty as a result of floods, cyclonic disturbances, bushfires or earthquakes, three days paid leave per year may be granted. Where a staff member is required to return home to ensure their own safety, protection of their family or property, or availability of transport facilities which may later be disrupted or discontinued because of weather conditions, paid leave for the remainder of the day may be granted.

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2.15 State emergency call out leave

Any full-time or fractional staff member who is a voluntary member of the State Emergency Service, Voluntary Fire Brigade, or similar organisation can take paid leave during an emergency declared by a recognised authority. Casual staff can take unpaid leave.

2.16 Trade Union leave

Subject to the operational requirements of the relevant work area, a staff member who is nominated by the Union to attend a trade union training course, seminar or development activity including Council meetings, will be granted leave with full pay for the duration of the course, seminar or activity up to a total of five days in any one calendar year. Leave is non-cumulative. A staff member taking trade union training leave is required to give their supervisor reasonable notice of the leave of absence.

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3. Applying for leave

Staff member accruals for recreation, sick and long service leave (when entitled) are accessible via USC Staff (Employee Self Service) on the University website or USC Portal, or via the following link: <https://uscstaff.usc.edu.au/psp/ss/?cmd=login>

Leave on Line is used to apply for leave via USC Staff (Employee Self Service) for Paid Recreation Leave, Paid Sick Leave and Paid Carer's Leave after a staff members first anniversary date of employment, Long Service Leave and Unpaid Leave. Instructions on how to use Leave on Line are available on here.

Leave on Line is not currently available for Paid Carer's Leave prior to your next anniversary date of employment, for cancelled leave requests that have previously been approved through Leave on Line, and other leave types including Maternity Leave and similar. Leave forms must be completed in these cases and the form is available electronically on the Portal.

3.1 The role of the staff member

It is the responsibility of the staff member to apply for leave for the period of their absences as soon as possible. In the cases of Recreation and Long Service Leave, staff may become aware of absences well in advance of the period of leave. In these situations, it is the staff member's responsibility to advise their supervisor of their intended absence so other work arrangements can be made.

The staff member will, wherever practicable, give notice prior to an absence of the:

- intention to take leave
- reasons for taking leave (including the relationship involved when accessing Carers' and Bereavement/Compassionate leave)
- estimated length of absence

In the cases where it is not possible for a staff member to give prior notice of the absence, the staff member will notify their supervisor of the absence as soon as practicable, stating the details outlined above. Excluding sick leave, where a staff member and supervisor anticipate the absences due to personal reasons may be regular or for extended periods, the staff member and supervisor should explore alternative means of balancing University needs and family and personal responsibilities, including fractional work and job sharing arrangements.

It is the staff member's responsibility to ensure that approval has been given before proceeding on leave.

3.2 The role of supervisors

Wherever possible, leave applications must be approved prior to the commencement of the leave period. Where this is not possible (e.g. sick leave) the supervisor can complete a leave application on behalf of the staff member or the staff member can complete an application on their return to work.

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3.3 The role of Human Resources

Human Resources maintain and process staff records, including leave applications. Human Resources can provide advice on:

- Different types of leave available to staff
- Leave entitlements
- Current leave applications
- Previous leave applications

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