



# COVID-19 Staff Leave Management Info Sheet (Continuing and Fixed Term Staff)

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This information provides guidance to Supervisors on the management of Annual and Long Service Leave, for continuous and fixed term staff, during the COVID-19 situation.
- 1.2 The *COVID-19 Leave Entitlement Info Sheet* (<https://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/covid-19-leave-entitlements>) considers a range of scenarios whereby staff may be impacted by COVID-19 and details the specific leave arrangements that apply.
- 1.3 This information provides Supervisors with guidance on how to appropriately manage staff leave requests, leave cancellations and excessive leave balances during this period.
- 1.4 This information should also be considered in conjunction with Section 4: Leave and Conditions under *The University of Adelaide Enterprise Agreement 2017-2021 (EA)* and *Workforce Management* information available on the HR website <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/hr-handbook/workforce-management>.
- 1.5 If a supervisor requires further guidance on staff leave management, they should contact their HR Advisor or the HR Service Centre.

## 2. Management of Staff Leave Applications

- 2.1 When considering any leave applications during the COVID situation, Supervisors should first refer to the *COVID-19 Leave Entitlement Info Sheet* available at <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/covid-19-leave-entitlements> or access link in SSO Manager.
- 2.2 Where staff are not covered by a scenario detailed within the *COVID-19 Leave Entitlement Info Sheet*, Supervisors should refer to the guidelines below.
- 2.3 Supervisors hold the authority to approve or deny staff leave applications. In making a decision, Supervisors are, as far as practicable, required to consider the preferences of staff members in relation to the scheduling of leave and applications for leave should not be unreasonably denied.
- 2.4 Wherever possible, Supervisors should seek to approve requests for Annual and Long Service Leave submitted during the COVID-19 situation. Supervisors may also seek to encourage staff to access leave in areas where workload has decreased as a result of COVID-19.
- 2.5 Annual leave makes an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of staff. The need for staff to prioritise rest and recuperation, familial and social connection and overall wellbeing is particularly important during the COVID-19 crisis.
- 2.6 The Supervisor should give careful consideration as to if the staff member works in an area deemed to provide 'essential' services and if there is a surge in workload as a consequence of COVID-19.
- 2.7 Supervisors should also flag with staff alternative options that are available where staff may be seeking to adjust work schedules. This includes applying for partial days of leave (for example, to enable care of children in the morning and work in the afternoon). Refer <https://sso.adelaide.edu.au>.

2.8 Alternatively, staff may wish to temporarily decrease working hours by reducing their employment fraction through a Voluntary Flexible Work Arrangement (VFWA). Refer <https://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/salary-and-benefits/voluntary-flexible-working-arrangements> for more information.

2.9 In summary, when considering staff leave during the COVID-19 situation, Supervisors should take into account:

- If the staff member works in an area deemed an 'essential service'
- If the area is experiencing a surge or decrease in workload
- Alternative options to adjust staff work schedules (i.e. partial leave days or reduced fraction (VFWA)) by agreement
- Staff member's existing leave balances
- Date staff member last accessed leave

### **3. Management of staff requests to cancel Leave**

3.1 In response to the COVID-19 situation, staff may seek to cancel approved, upcoming leave. This may be prompted by a range of reasons, including government imposed travel restrictions impacting on interstate/ overseas holiday plans; isolation restrictions or a desire to retain leave entitlements during a period of uncertainty.

3.2 Supervisors hold the authority to approve or deny staff leave cancellations. In coming to a decision, Supervisors are, as far as practicable, required to consider the preferences of staff members in relation to the scheduling of leave.

3.3 It is important to note that Annual leave makes an important contribution to the health and wellbeing of staff. The need for staff to prioritise rest and recuperation, familial and social connection and overall wellbeing is particularly important during the COVID-19 crisis.

3.4 When considering if a request to cancel leave is practicable, Supervisors should give thought to operational requirements including any backfill arrangements that may have been planned and area workload across the period of leave.

3.5 When considering staff requests to cancel leave during the COVID-19 situation, Supervisors should take into account:

- The reason the staff member is seeking to cancel leave
- Staff member's existing leave balances
- Date staff member last accessed leave
- If staff member is willing to submit a request for alternative leave dates
- If the staff member has any other leave booked across the coming 12 months
- If coverage arrangements have been put in place to backfill leave
- Workload in the staff member's area

*Example: A Staff member submits leave cancellation request for a six (6) week period of annual leave across May – June 2020. The staff member was intending to travel to Europe for a holiday prior to travel restrictions being imposed. The staff member last accessed Annual leave in December 2019 and has two (2) weeks of annual leave booked in December 2020. The Supervisor identified that no backfill arrangements had been put in place at the point the cancellation request was received and that the staff member's leave balances were not excessive.*

*The supervisor discussed the option of the staff member accessing a reduced amount of leave across the coming three (3) months, to support the staff member take a break prior to the end of 2020. The*

staff member agreed to reapply for two (2) weeks' annual leave in June 2020. Staff member flagged intent to travel to Europe in 2021, on the basis travel restrictions were lifted.

#### 4. Management of Excessive Leave Balances

- 4.1 Staff members are deemed to have excessive leave when they have accrued in excess of 30 days annual leave (35 days for shift workers) and 80 days Long Service Leave, or pro-rata for part time staff.
- 4.2 Supervisors of areas that have observed a reduction in workload as a result of COVID-19 can conduct a review to identify staff with excessive leave balances.
- 4.3 Where an agreement to take leave is not already in place, Supervisors can require staff to develop a plan and apply for leave to reduce their balance. Where an agreement cannot be reached, Supervisors can direct staff leave dates, in accordance with notice requirements in the [Managing Excessive Leave Accruals Procedure](#).
- 4.4 Where staff do not have excessive leave balances, Supervisors may still encourage staff to apply for leave, with reference to the impact of COVID-19 to work load in their area. Mutual agreement must be obtained and leave dates cannot be directed in this scenario.

#### 5. Helpful Links

COVID-19 Leave Entitlement Info Sheet	<a href="https://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/covid-19-leave-entitlements">https://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/covid-19-leave-entitlements</a>
Workforce Management information	<a href="https://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/hr-handbook/workforce-management">https://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/hr-handbook/workforce-management</a>
Leave Entitlement Procedure	<a href="https://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/3243/?dsn=policy.document;field=data;id=7505;m=view">https://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/3243/?dsn=policy.document;field=data;id=7505;m=view</a>
Voluntary Flexible Work Arrangements information	<a href="https://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/salary-and-benefits/voluntary-flexible-working-arrangements">https://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/salary-and-benefits/voluntary-flexible-working-arrangements</a>
Managing Excessive Leave Accruals Procedure	<a href="https://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/3243/?dsn=policy.document;field=data;id=6306;m=view">https://www.adelaide.edu.au/policies/3243/?dsn=policy.document;field=data;id=6306;m=view</a>
Staff FAQs on COVID-19	<a href="https://www.adelaide.edu.au/newsroom/covid-19/information-for-staff">https://www.adelaide.edu.au/newsroom/covid-19/information-for-staff</a>
University of Adelaide Enterprise Agreement 2017 -2021	<a href="https://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/ua/media/1089/enterprise-agreement.pdf">https://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/ua/media/1089/enterprise-agreement.pdf</a>
Staff Services Online for leave requests	<a href="https://sso.adelaide.edu.au">https://sso.adelaide.edu.au</a>
Employee Assistance Program	<a href="https://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/hsw/wellbeing/employee-assistance-program">https://www.adelaide.edu.au/hr/hsw/wellbeing/employee-assistance-program</a>

#### 6. For assistance or clarification

Should you require assistance or guidance in relation to this information, please contact your HR Advisor or the HR Service Centre on 8313 1111 or at [hrservicecentre@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:hrservicecentre@adelaide.edu.au)