

Name of Policy	Abandonment of Employment Policy
Description of Policy	This policy describes the circumstances in which the University may deem that a staff member has abandoned their employment with ACU.
Policy applies to	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> University-wide <input type="checkbox"/> Specific (<i>outline location, campus, organisational unit etc.</i>)
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff Only <input type="checkbox"/> Students Only <input type="checkbox"/> Staff and Students
Policy Status	<input type="checkbox"/> New Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revision of Existing Policy

Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Governing Authority	Chief Operating Officer
Responsible Officer	Director, Human Resources

Approval Date	8 November 2006
Effective Date	8 November 2006
Date of Last Revision	1 April 2019
Effective Date of Last Revision	1 April 2019
Date of Policy Review*	1 April 2022

* Unless otherwise indicated, this policy will still apply beyond the review date.

Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Local Protocols	Availability of Academic Staff Policy Flexible Working Arrangements Policy Personal/Carer's Leave Policy
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1. Background Information

This policy has been developed to address the management of abandonment of employment at ACU.

2. Policy Statement

The University may deem that a staff member has abandoned their employment in circumstances where the staff member is absent from work for a period of 10 working days or more without explanation; has failed to make contact with the University regarding their absence from work, and/or has failed to formalise this absence by providing written advice of their intentions, and does not return to work.

3. Policy Purpose

This policy informs staff members of their obligations in relation to attendance at ACU and the circumstances in which the University may deem a staff member to have abandoned their employment.

4. Application of Policy

This policy applies to all general and Academic Staff members who are covered by the *Australian Catholic University Staff Enterprise Agreement 2017 – 2021* (the **Agreement**), and to all Teachers in Centres who are covered by the Educational Services (Post-Secondary Education) Award, 2010.

- 4.1 If a staff member is absent from work without explanation or has failed to formalise this absence by providing written advice of their intentions and does not return to work, the University will take all reasonable steps to attempt to contact the staff member.
- 4.2 If a staff member is absent from work for a period of more than one working day, and no contact has been made with the University, the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer will endeavour to make contact with the staff member. Normally, the initial attempt at contact will be via telephone to home and mobile numbers where provided, and email, where appropriate. The nominated supervisor or the next most

senior officer should also check with the staff member's immediate colleagues to ascertain if the staff member has made contact with the University.

- 4.3** If the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer is unable to make personal contact with the staff member, the nominated supervisor will endeavour to make contact through the staff member's nominated emergency contact.
- 4.4** If the staff member has not provided an emergency contact, the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer will endeavour to contact the staff member by visiting their address (or arranging for an alternative staff member to visit, particularly where the nominated supervisor is located at another campus). In such circumstances, the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer will be accompanied by another member of staff.
- 4.5** These initial attempts at contact emphasise the University's concern for the staff member's welfare. The nominated supervisor or nominee should seek advice from the staff member as to the reason for their absence, their date of anticipated return. The staff member should be requested to formalise this absence by providing written advice of their intentions (for example, through the completion of a leave application or other written advice).
- 4.6** If the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer continues to be unable to contact the staff member after 2 working days; or is able to contact the staff member but the staff member fails to formalise this absence after 2 working days and has not provided written advice of their intentions and does not return to work, the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer will, in consultation with Human Resources, formally write to the staff member at the staff member's contact address. This letter will confirm the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer's request, as outlined in section 4.5, along with any additional relevant information identified through any contact made with the staff member (for example, advising leave balances). This letter will also request that the staff member respond within 2 working days and will inform the staff member of the possible consequences of their ongoing absence, including that their salary will be suspended if this response is not received.

This letter will be sent via all available mechanisms including registered mail (to ensure a record of the delivery and receipt of the letter). A copy of this letter will be provided to the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer's supervisor and/or the relevant Executive member, and to Human Resources.

- 4.7** If, after 2 working days of the letter being issued, the staff member fails to make contact with the University or fails to formalise the absence by providing written advice of their intentions and does not return to work, the nominated supervisor should advise Human Resources to suspend the staff member from the payroll.

The nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer will then endeavour to make reasonable attempts to contact the staff member through the steps outlined above. Depending on the circumstances of the

situation, and particularly where no contact with the staff member can be made, consideration should be given to notifying third parties, such as the Police, of the staff member's unexplained absence.

- 4.8** If, the staff member has made no contact with the University following issuing of the letter sent in section 4.6, or has failed to formalise this absence by providing written advice of their intentions and does not return to work and a total of 10 working days have passed, the nominated supervisor or the next most senior officer will provide a report to the relevant Executive member to advise that the staff member has abandoned their employment. This report will detail all attempts to contact and any communication received from the staff member.
- 4.9** The Executive member will consult with the Director, Human Resources prior to recommending to the delegated officer that the employment of the staff member be terminated on the grounds that the staff member has abandoned their employment.
- 4.10** If the delegated officer makes a determination that the staff member's employment is to be terminated on the grounds that the staff member has abandoned their employment, the Director, Human Resources will formally write to the staff member advising that the University has considered the staff member's continuing absence to be an indication that they have abandoned their employment with the University. A copy of this advice will also be provided to the relevant Executive member. The University will then implement the normal procedures associated with a staff member's termination of employment with the University.

5. Approvals

All decisions in relation to the application of this policy must be made in accordance with the relevant University delegations. Information on delegated officers for leave approvals is available in the Delegations of Authority Policy and Register.

6. Revisions made to this Policy

Date	Major, Minor or Editorial	Description
26 October 2012	Major	Updated to incorporate the provisions of the Australian Catholic University Staff Enterprise Agreement, 2010 – 2013fa.
1 April 2019	Editorial	Updated to include reference to Australian Catholic University Staff Enterprise Agreement 2017 – 2021 and Service Central.

The University may make changes to this policy and procedures from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about this policy may forward their suggestions to Human Resources.

7. Further Assistance

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this policy should first consult their nominated supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in their work area. Should further information or advice be required staff should visit [Service Central](#).