Special leave

Last updated: 30 March 2011 Policy assigned to: Director, Human Resources

This document applies to staff:
- covered by The University of Sydney Enterprise Agreement 2009-2012 and other agreements that provide for Special Leave; and
- whose manager grants approval to take Special leave.

It does not apply to casual staff.

In this document, refer to the University of Sydney (Delegations of Authority - Administrative Functions) Rule 2010 (as amended) for the definition of:
- School
- Head - refers to HOS/HOA

'Organisational unit' is an administrative and equivalent to a budget unit for which a HOA has responsibility.

Policy

A staff member may be granted up to three days of paid Special leave per year for absences from work that are 'special' in nature and for which other leave types are not as suitable.

Principles

- Special leave applies to atypical circumstances, beyond the staff member's control, in which the staff member's involvement is deemed appropriate for personal or community reasons.
- Special leave does not accrue or accumulate.
- Special leave cannot be taken during any other period of leave.
- The University may grant additional Special leave if the circumstances justify it.
- Special leave will not be approved for everyday family responsibilities where there is no element of urgency or where other leave is thought to be more appropriate. Normally staff will be expected to use either a Scheduled Day Off (SDO) or Annual leave, unless the circumstances determine otherwise. Those circumstances will be negotiated between the staff member and the Head.

Guidelines for circumstances which may qualify for Special leave

- Domestic emergencies (eg house fire; hail damage)
  Domestic emergencies exclude circumstances which would be more appropriately covered by Carer's or Bereavement leave.

- Natural disasters (eg bushfires)
  Natural disasters exclude emergency services which would be more appropriately covered by Emergency Services leave.

- Receiving citizenship
  Receiving citizenship includes attendance for the interview with the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and the Citizenship Ceremony.

- Cultural/Religious leave – see the **Attachment** to this Policy
  The University may approve paid or unpaid leave of absence for staff to participate in cultural and religious events significant to the individual staff member on days which are not gazetted as public holidays in NSW.

  Normally only one day per year of Cultural/Religious leave as special leave will be approved (see the **Attachment)**.

  Indigenous Staff Cultural and Ceremonial leave is an additional entitlement that is available to Indigenous Australian Staff. The University may grant Indigenous Australian staff up to an additional five days paid leave for the staff member to attend indigenous cultural/ceremonial obligations. Staff will provide appropriate documentation to their supervisor.

- Moving house
  There is a maximum entitlement to one day per 12 months. Both old and new addresses must be recorded on the leave application form (or forwarded to the relevant HR Services Team as soon as practical) when applying for special leave.

- Attendance at a superannuation retirement seminar
  A copy of a letter from the relevant superannuation scheme detailing the date of the seminar is to be attached with the leave application form.

Procedures

(a) Staff members are to submit a leave application form prior to the absence where possible, giving as much notice as possible to the supervisor/Head.

Details of the circumstances and the justification for the Special leave are to be included with the leave application. (See *Guidelines for circumstances which may qualify for Special leave*)

(b) Approval of the Special leave request is at the discretion of the Head.

Administration

a. Background/context

This document converts the Special leave provisions of the enterprise agreement into a document that includes appropriate procedures to enable implementation. The references to The University of Sydney Enterprise Agreement 2009-2012 were updated in January 2010. The link to the calendar of religious days was updated in March 2011 (in the Attachment).

b. Authority/consultation

This document was updated by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Infrastructure).

All staff were given an opportunity to comment on this document during its development.

c. Management responsibility

Director, Human Resources

d. Implementation responsibility

Heads

e. Dates

Approval (version 1)	22/05/2001
Effect	22/05/2001
Review	12/08/2005
Approval (version 2)	30/11/2005
Effect	30/11/2005

f. Approval

Version 1	Professor Ken Eltis Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Planning and Resources)
Version 2	Professor Ann Brewer Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Infrastructure)

g. References

- The University of Sydney Enterprise Agreement 2009-2012
- University of Sydney (Delegations of Authority - Administrative Functions) Rule 2010 (as amended)

h. Signatures

Approved by:

Name

Professor Ann Brewer

Position

Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Infrastructure)

Date

30 November 2005

Signature

Attachment – Cultural/Religious leave

- The University is committed to acknowledging that staff from various multicultural backgrounds, and/or with certain religious affiliations, may be required to participate in ceremonial activities and other cultural or religious obligations which do not coincide with Commonwealth and/or State public holidays. Refer to the Staff and Student Equal Opportunity website for more information on cultural diversity.

- The principles regarding cultural/religious leave, but not the leave provisions, apply to casual staff. This means that a casual staff member, within the terms of their employment and without prejudicing future employment offers, can reject an offer of casual work, and consequently salary, on a day that is culturally and/or religiously significant to the staff member.

- Staff must not be disadvantaged, or treated in a prejudicial way, when they apply for and take approved cultural/religious leave for their respective significant days.

- Refer to the website of the NSW Government Community Relations Commission for a guide to cultural and religious days of significance: http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/days_of_religious_significance

1. Workforce planning requirements

Staff applying for leave to participate in their significant cultural and religious events should give their supervisor advanced notice in order that arrangements may be made within the work unit to accommodate the leave.

All Heads and staff must be aware of their responsibilities as determined by the University of Sydney EEO and Affirmative Action Policy Statement to ensure that this policy is applied fairly.

2. Taking cultural/religious leave

a. A staff member who wishes to apply for special leave to participate in a significant cultural/religious event or ceremony must demonstrate, to the satisfaction of their supervisor, the relevance and the appropriateness of their application.

b. Special leave will not be approved merely because a day is declared a public holiday in a country outside Australia, implying a cultural or religious connection.