

Name of Policy	Statement on Work-and-Life Balance	
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Human Resources Directorate

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1. Australian Catholic University Statement on Work-and-Life Balance

Australian Catholic University is committed through its Mission Statement “to the dignity of all human beings”. In line with broader Catholic Social teaching, the University recognises that work is integral for underpinning personal fulfilment, and private and social dignity. One of the principal ways that this recognition is manifested at ACU is through the practical development and application of a work-and-life balance philosophy which is a core component of the University’s emerging workplace culture.

Work is recognised as an important, but not an exclusive, means through which a person contributes to society at large. In balance to their work activities, people need to share time with their family, to attend to their personal spiritual development, to rest, and to pursue broader cultural, educational and recreational interests through which they might grow, develop and further contribute to their spiritual and intellectual life.

As an employer ACU strives to balance the needs of the individual employee and the University to enable work-and-life needs to be addressed appropriately. The overall aim is to optimise the contribution of employees in the achievement of both personal and professional outcomes in an environment that is co-operative, supportive and efficient.

Work-and-life balance strategies can be most beneficial to staff and the University when the interconnectedness of needs – personal, human and institutional is recognised and acted upon. Importantly, an effective work-and-life balance philosophy recognises that benefits, support and assistance need to flow reciprocally between the University and its staff.

At ACU, this philosophy is intentionally encouraged so that work-and-life balance is an intrinsic component of University workplace culture. Such a philosophy underpins the emerging coherency of the whole ACU workplace and scholarly community. It is expected, however, that this coherency will be grounded in the concept of mutuality. This means that the institution, staff, management and other bodies or groups who form a part of ACU community life (including employee associations) collectively share responsibility for its well-being. Shared responsibility in turn means that benefits warrant definite returns and that rights come with definite obligations. Community members throughout the organisation have roles to play in contributing to their and others well-being, and mutual obligations are fulfilled by ensuring efficient and effective quality service.

In embracing a work-and-life balance philosophy the University has signalled that, as an institution, it has a significant role to play in this important endeavour, in partnership with its staff in all fields of ACU activity. The extent of the ACU’s practical commitment to this philosophy is outlined in the attachment to this statement.

As new and sometimes unique work-life-balance needs emerge they necessitate exploration of novel and creative solutions. The overall aspiration, however, will be wherever possible, to achieve a work-and-life balance that equitably and fairly recognises the needs of the employee and the University.

Australian Catholic University

9 June 2003

2. Policy Review

The University may make changes to the Statement on Work-and-Life Balance from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about the Statement on Work-and-Life Balance may forward her/his suggestions to the Director, Human Resources.

3. Further Assistance

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding the Statement on Work-and-Life Balance should first consult her/his nominated supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in her/his work area. Should further advice be needed, she/he should contact the Human Resources Consultant responsible for their campus.

Attachment 1

Work-and-Life Balance at Australian Catholic University

At ACU work-and-life balance initiatives are wide-ranging and incorporate many family-friendly initiatives. Together, they provide potential for considerable flexibility as well as access to “safety nets” of various types, which may be utilised on the basis of need. When used they can directly assist work-and-life balance. If left unused, they still provide a welcome support for all staff, and are available if needed to provide workplace security and comfort.

Work-and-life balance initiatives at ACU exist in an environment that is properly focussed on the effective delivery of University programs and services. They, generally operate within parameters set by industrial agreements and policies. Such instruments guide their application and implementation through balancing both personal and organisational needs which is achieved in consultation with supervisors.

Currently work-and-life balance initiatives, in place at ACU and under development, range across:

1. Working Arrangements:

- Flexible working hours
- Job share arrangements
- Part-time and fractional work
- Hours averaged over an extended period
- Time off in lieu at ordinary and penalty rates
- Flexible start and finish times.
- Hours of work may be negotiated by staff
- Make up time
- Workload averaging for academic staff

2. Leave Arrangements:

- Maternity leave (3 variants depending on length of service).
- Adoption leave (3 variants depending on length of service)
- Paternity leave
- Child rearing leave
- Foster parenting leave
- Access to single days of annual leave
- Flexi-leave provisions
- Purchased leave (deferred salary)
- School term work arrangements
- Career break
- Time in lieu
- Leave without pay (full or part-time)
- Concessional days

- Encashment of long service leave
- Long service leave (after 7 years).
- Paid special leave
- Pre-retirement contracts
- Extraordinary leave
- Personal leave incorporating:
 - Carers' leave
 - Emergency leave
 - Ceremonial leave for Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islander peoples
 - Religious and culturally significant days
 - Funeral of a close family member
 - Medical or therapeutic appointments of a dependent
 - Moving house
 - Child care on a "student-free day".

3. Career Development Opportunities:

- Performance development strategies that assist establish learning needs
- A comprehensive induction process to introduce and socialise new staff into the ACU workplace community and ethos
- Study time provisions and mechanisms that assist research and coursework program completion
- Financial assistance to support relevant formal study
- Competitive grants to support relevant development initiatives for both the University and individual staff
- Management training initiatives for supervisors

4. Employee Welfare

- Parenting rooms
- Counselling services
- Employee assistance program
- Phased retirement
- Superannuation seminars
- Relocation assistance (conditional)
- Flexible remuneration

The University is open to considering proposals from staff who have particular needs in line with existing industrial parameters or the explicit facilitative provisions in the University's respective enterprise agreements. In cases where these fall outside of existing options, proposals are assessed on a case by case basis giving full consideration to the personal circumstances of the staff member.