



Special leave

This document applies to staff:

- covered by the Academic and Teaching Staff Agreement 2003-2006 or the General Staff Agreement 2003-2006.
- whose managers grant approval to take Special leave.

It does not apply to casual staff.

In this document, refer to the [Delegations of Authority Administrative Functions 2005](#) 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 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 Attachment 1
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 *Attachment 1*).

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 member 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 Academic & Teaching Staff Agreement 2003 – 2006 and the General Staff Agreement 2003 - 2006 into a document that includes appropriate procedures to enable implementation.

- Academic & Teaching Staff Agreement 2003-2006
- General Staff Agreement 2003-2006
- Delegations of Authority: Authority for Human Resource Functions 2004

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

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Infrastructure)

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)

h. Signatures

Approved by:

Name

Position

Date

Signature

g. References

Attachment 1 – 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.
- 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.
- Circulars issued by the NSW Premier's Department may be used as a guide to cultural and religious days of significance to staff members in a multicultural workforce (see attachment 2). These can be accessed at the NSW Premier's Department website: <http://www.premiers.nsw.gov.au>. The most recent copy of these circulars is available from the Staff and Student Equal Opportunity Unit¹.

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.

¹ Note: the **attached** circular issued by the NSW Premier's Department is not a complete listing of cultural and religious days.

Attachment 2 – Days of Cultural/Religious Significance

The following list is not intended to be comprehensive in terms either of events, religions or cultures. It is included as a guide on the kinds of events for which staff may request leave. It is sourced from the Premier's Department Circular on "DAYS OF RELIGIOUS SIGNIFICANCE FOR MULTICULTURAL NEW SOUTH WALES FOR THE YEAR 2005"

JANUARY 2005		
5	Gurpurab - Birth of Guru Gobind Singh	Sikh
6	Christmas	Armenian Christian
6	Epiphany	certain Orthodox Christian, inc. Greek, Serbian
7	Christmas	certain Orthodox Christian, inc Russian, Serbian
14	Serbian new year	Serbian
21	Eid Al Ad-Ha (festival of sacrifice)	Islam, Druze
27	St Sava's Day	Serbian
FEBRUARY		
9	Lunar new year, Chinese new year, Tet	Chinese, Vietnamese, Buddhist
9	Lent (Ash Wednesday)	Western Christian
19	St. Vartan's Day	Armenian Christian
10	Islamic new year	Islam
23	Dhamma Day	Buddhist (Theravada)
MARCH		
8	Mahashivaratri	Hindu
14	Lent commences	Orthodox Christian
20	Palm Sunday	Christian
21	Naw Ruz	Baha'i
	Jamshedi Navroze	Zoroastrian
25	Purim (begins sunset 24th)	Jewish
25	Good Friday	Christian, incl. Armenian
27	Easter Sunday	Christian, incl. Armenian
APRIL		
13	New year (Sonkran)	Buddhist (Theravada)
14	Vaisakhi	Sikh
18	Rama Navami	Hindu
21	First day of festival of Ridvan	Baha'i
22	Birth of the Prophet Muhammad	Islam
28	Holy Thursday	Orthodox Christian
29	Ninth day of Ridvan	Baha'i
	Good Friday	Orthodox Christian
24 to 1 May	Pesach or Passover (begins sunset 24th)	Jewish
MAY		
1	Easter	Orthodox Christian
2	Twelfth day of Ridvan	Baha'i
5	Ascension	Western Christian
15	Birth of Buddha	Buddhist (Mahayana)
22	Vesak Day - birth, enlightenment and passing away of the Buddha	Buddhist (Theravada)
23	Declaration of the Bab	Baha'i

29	Ascension of Baha'u'llah	Baha'i
JUNE		
9	Ascension of Jesus	Orthodox Christian
13 - 14	Shavuot (begins sunset 12th)	Jewish
19	Pentecost	Orthodox Christian
20	Feast of the Holy Spirit	Orthodox Christian
28	St. Lazarus the Great Martyr	Serbian
JULY		
9	Martyrdom of the Bab	Baha'i
20	Asalha Puja	Buddhist (Theravada)
AUGUST		
6	Transfiguration of Christ	Orthodox Christian
15	Dormition of the Virgin Mary	Orthodox Christian
20	Shahenshahi new year	Zoroastrian
26	Krishna Janmanshtami	Hindu
28	Dormition of the Mother of God	Serbian
SEPTEMBER		
2	The night journey and ascension (Al Isra Wal Mi'raj)	Islam
7	Ganesh Chaturthi	Hindu
11	Synaxis of the Serbian Saints	Serbian
OCTOBER		
4	Navarathiri	Hindu
4 - 5	Rosh Hashanah (new year - begins sunset 3rd)	Jewish
5	Ramadan commences (period of fasting)	Islam
13	Yom Kippur (begins sunset 12th)	Jewish
18 - 24	Succot (begins sunset 17th)	Jewish
25, 26	Shemini Atzeret, Simchat Torah (begins sunset 24th)	Jewish
20	Birth of the Bab	Baha'i
30	Night of Power (Laylatul Qadr)	Islam
NOVEMBER		
1	Deepavali	Hindu
4	Eid al-Fitr (celebration of completion of Ramadan)	Islam
12	Birth of Baha'u'llah	Baha'i
15	Gurpurab - Birth of Guru Nanak	Sikh
DECEMBER		
25	Christmas	Christian, incl Greek
26 - 2 Jan	Chanukah (begins sunset 25th)	Jewish

Note: the Islamic days may adjust one or two days either side of the dates above; the Jewish days commence at sunset the previous day.