WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY

Vice-Chancellor's
GENDER EQUITY FUND
Final Report 2024

Developing a research and audit-informed framework to support working carers: a focus on university workplaces

Author/s: Dr Michelle O'Shea and Leila Frijat

Contents

Acknowledgements

Recommendations

Western Sydney University (Western) has made considerable progress toward carer inclusion. Although not currently engaged in Carers NSW 'Carers +Employers' Accreditation program; at present Western meets 4 of the 6 criteria required to be awarded Level 1 accreditation. Of the criteria required for Level 2 accreditation Western has met 7 of the 14 required criteria. While the accreditation does not redress the challenges of supporting working informal carers it is a credential and highly respected framework that can be drawn on for purposeful and impactful action. If Western were to seek accreditation via this framework, and subsequently progress to Level 2 recognition, it would be the first public University in Australia to do so. Therefore, it is recommended that the accreditation program provides Western with a credentialed framework to guide and support continuous improvement. Recommended priority areas are:

- **Develop systems to identify staff carers and allow staff opportunities to self-identify** – to encourage self-identification Western could consider including questions regarding carer status through onboarding processes, staff payroll and internal HR profiles.

- **Understand Western's carer population and link staff carers to relevant support -** through formally identified processes and practices.

- **Revise Western's personal leave policy to include carer's leave, increased personal leave, and adhere to the more inclusive Carers Recognition Act (2010) definition of carers.**

- **Develop specific training for managers and supervisors to support staff with caregiving responsibilities –** training programs are currently offered by CarersNSW who have an existing relationship with Western, presenting as part of recent Carers week activities coordinated by Equity and Diversity.

- **Establish identified positions that value and illuminate the lived experience of caring –** such as appointing carer champions for professional and academic staff and/or establishing a Carer-in-Residence program.

- **Provide practical supports –** examples could include developing carer specific career coaching programs and grants or establish a dedicated Carers peer support/network collective

Executive Summary

The proceeding report presents the outcomes of an audit of carer policies and institutional supports across Australian publicly funded universities. The audit reviewed publicly available information on university websites and their Enterprise Agreements using standardised criteria. This criterion was modelled and modified against Carer NSW's 'Carer + Employer's Accreditation Program' framework. Drawing on the themes Carer Recognition, Policies and Procedures, Capacity-Building & Awareness, and Practical Supports our overarching objective was to identify sector-leading practice.

With this information (a). Western has a comprehensive evidence base upon which to evaluate is current policy and practice and (b). a framework to guide continuous improvement. The audit's key findings include:

- **Policy language and carer definitions –** the language used to describe carers was frequently found to be inconsistent and inaccurate.
- **Parents and carers commonly conflated-** together with a general absence of carer-specific policies and practices.
- **Best practice benchmarking progress –** 14 of the 38 publicly funded Australian universities achieved 3 or more of the 6 criteria required for Level 1 accreditation. 10 universities achieved seven or more of the criteria for the Level 2 award. Only 4 achieved more than half of the criteria in both levels.
- **Western Sydney University –** meets 4/6 criteria for level 1 accreditation and 7/14 criteria required for Level 2 recognition.

Western has a significant opportunity to lead carer inclusion in Australian higher education. If Western were to engage in Carers NSW's 'Carer + Employer's Accreditation Program' and seek accreditation they have a credential and highly respected framework that can be drawn on for purposeful and impactful action. The significance of this undertaking can also be usefully tied to Western's Athena SWAN Silver award progress, in particular our Parents and Carers Cygnet Award.

Itemised Budget Expenditure

Total funded amount $ *4901.10*

Date	Activity / Item	Cost (GST incl.)
May – December	Personnel: Research Assistance HEW Level 5, 81 hours* Step 1 $59.87/hour	4,849.53
Total expenditure:		$4,849.53

Research Report

Aims

This project and audit examine publicly available information to benchmark Australian Public University Carer policies against the Carers+Employer accreditation standards. With this evidence base, the project further aims to identify best practice Carer policy and practice so that Western can adopt like practices in their efforts towards supporting employees who are negotiating work and informal care commitments.

Methodology

As a credentialed and respected tool, the audit was guided by Carers NSW's 'Carer + Employers' Accreditation Program framework. The program was established by the state peak body (Carers NSW) to set best practice standards aimed at supporting employees with caring responsibilities in Australian workplaces [1]. By adopting this framework, the project findings and recommendations establish a pathway for Western to be recognised under the accreditation program. For analytical and reporting purposes and owing to our focus on the higher education sector we modified the accreditation program's five general themes into the following:

1) Carer Recognition
2) Policies and Procedures
3) Capacity-Building & Awareness[2]
4) Practical Support

The project team collated relevant criteria from Level 1 and Level 2 of the accreditation program beneath these themes. To limit grading variability, these criteria were rewritten as yes-or-no questions. While a secondary focus on the current project, best practice examples of student carer support are also highlighted. The project addresses how these policies and practices might be adapted for employees. The process/framework used to map the accreditation frameworks' key criteria is outlined in Appendix Table 1.

---

[1] (Carers + Employers, 2024)

[2] *'Capacity-building'* and *'Communication and Awareness'* were consolidated as the audit relied upon publicly available information which made it difficult to discern the universities' communication strategies and internal communication channels.

The audit is grounded in publicly available information hosted on an official university ".*edu. domain"* (e.g., http://www.westernsydney.edu.au/) or affiliated union groups representing/acting in the interests of university employees. Information and programs delivered via third-party organisations or social media were excluded due to the inconsistency in how different universities used these channels. The audit search strings are outlined below:

"*University NAME" + staff + "carers" + support -student*
"*University NAME" + work and care/caring/family -student*
"*University NAME" + "carers recognition act"*
"*University NAME" + Enterprise Agreement*
"*University NAME" + flexible work policy*
"*University NAME" + leave policy*
"*University NAME" + discrimination + "carer" or "caring"*

Enterprise Agreement Audit

The project also conducted an audit to identify gaps/inconsistencies between Western Enterprise Agreements and related policy frameworks. To address these gaps, and drawing on the following criteria the audit reviewed the Enterprise Agreements of each publicly funded university[3]:

Criteria to evaluate Enterprise Agreement	Yes/No/Number
Does the Enterprise Agreement accurately use the term 'carer' as stated in the Carers Recognition Act?	
Does the enterprise agreement specifically name "Carers Leave" as a separate leave provision available to employees?	
Maximum number of days/hours staff can access paid personal/carers leave?	
Does the enterprise agreement specify/name "carers leave"? If so, what was the maximum number of paid and unpaid days/hours provided?	
Are casual staff entitled to carer's leave? If, so, maximum number of days/hours provided?	
Is there a named specific right to request flexible work arrangements for carers?	
Has the organisation implemented policies & procedures to assess & engage the carer population among its staff?	
Are there policies that include protections against discrimination for staff with caring responsibilities in recruitment, requesting leave or flexible work arrangements?	

---

[3] (Carers NSW , 2024)

Limitations

The audit relied on publicly available information communicated through university websites. Many universities provide additional information via internal staff intranet and allied platforms unavailable to the research team. Accordingly:

- The audit did not examine university social media or other communication channels to identify additional support.
- The audit excluded school/faculty-specific interventions/supports that were not universally available.
- The audit excluded research reports published by the university examining working carers in Higher Education Institutions as a general research topic. It did consider reports that reviewed the university's current policy and practice, such as UNSW's Report.
- We were unable to ascertain how the audited policies and procedures are implemented or their effects.

Accordingly, the audit identifies gaps and documents best practice policy and practice supports for informal carers navigating paid employment (in Australian publicly funded universities) and caring responsibilities.

Key Insights

Encouragingly, this audit identified 14 Australian universities that have already achieved three or more of the six criteria points required for Level 1 accreditation[4]. A further 10 Universities have achieved 7 or more of the 14 criteria required for Level 2 accreditation. The table below outlines universities that achieve more than half of the criteria points for one or both Carer+Employer accreditation levels.

University	Level 1	Level 2
Australian Catholic University	4/6	4/14
Australian National University	3/6	5/14
Charles Sturt University	**4/6**	**6/14**
Charles Darwin University	3/6	2/14
Deakin University	3/6	2/14
Edith Cowan	3/6	3/14
Griffith University	3/6	2/14
La Trobe University	4/6	3/14
Monash University	**5/6**	**5/14**

---

[4] Note: The audit slightly amended the framework, meaning that some additional criteria points may need to be evaluated by these universities.

The University of Adelaide	4/6	4/14
The University of Melbourne	4/6	4/14
The University of New South Wales	**3/6**	**8/14**
The University of Queensland	4/6	2/14
University of South Australia	3/6	1/14
University of Tasmania	3/6	1/14
University of Technology Sydney[5]	**5/6**	**6/14**
Western Sydney University	**4/6**	**7/14**

Identified Best Practices & Recommendations

Western Carers + Employers Accreditation Program accreditation

Western has made considerable progress toward carer inclusion. Although not currently engaged in the accreditation program at present Western meets 4 of the 6 criteria required for level 1 accreditation together with 11 of the 16 criteria for Level 2. If Western were to progress toward Level 2 accreditation, it would be the first University in Australia to do so. While the accreditation does not redress the challenges of supporting carers it is a credential and respected framework that can be drawn on for purposeful and impactful action.

The following section identifies best practices across the five modified themes previously discussed. If Western were to apply for accreditation with the 'Carers + Employers' program, these recommendations inadvertently highlight which criteria points it has already addressed and remaining gaps. Recommendations map directly to the accreditation program criteria. The criteria not yet achieved by Western are marked with an asterisk '*'.

Carer Recognition

Unify Carer definitions across the Enterprise Agreement and relevant policy communications

Though current Western Enterprise Agreements appropriately apply the Carer's Recognition Act (2010) definition it is inconsistently applied. For example, within the professional and academic Enterprise Agreements, the Carer's Recognition Act

---

[5] University of Technology Sydney is the first university in Australia to be awarded Level 1 by the accreditation program

definition is not acknowledged/applied for staff members seeking to use personal leave for caring responsibilities (See Appendix Table 3).

Encouragingly, the Workplace Flexibility Policy does use the Carer's Recognition Act (2010) definition. As Western works toward Enterprise Agreement renewal the language of policies, supports, and procedures should be consistent and per the Carers Recognition Act. Further, it is important to differentiate caring for dependent children from other caring responsibilities (i.e. caring for a dependent child with disability or illness). This definitional approach limits the conflation of parenting and other care responsibilities as it can obscure the unique and layered nature of caring.

Develop systems to identify carers and allow staff to self-identify*

While some universities encouraged staff to self-identify for programs such as UNSW's '3C Carer-Career Coaching' initiative or Staff Wellbeing Surveys; this audit did not find any university that had developed any system to identify or monitor members of staff with informal carer commitments together with the nature of these demands.

To encourage self-identification (disclosure of care commitments is a personal decision however Western should create an institutional environment encouraging disclosure. These systems must offer ways for staff (should they wish to do so) to update their profiles if their circumstances change (i.e. no longer caring or increase in caring responsibilities due to illness).

Establish a carer-specific policy, processes or guidance to recognise work and care responsibilities

The University of Technology Sydney (UTS) is the first Australian university to establish a carer-specific policy supporting staff and student carers. The policy signals UTS's commitment to providing an accessible, supportive, and flexible environment. Significantly, the policy acknowledges the often-episodic nature of caring and designates HR as responsible for providing information and strategies to support carers.

Although the Western 'Flexible Work Toolkit' and 'Workplace Flexibility Policy' both specifically articulate how carers are valued and protected from discrimination when requesting flexible working arrangements.

Considering the growing number of Western employees likely negotiating paid work and care commitments (currently 1-10 Australians are informal carers) developing a standalone Carer policy connects with Westerns aims of championing sustained leadership, recognition, and accountability in Gender Equity as outlined in its Gender Equity Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2026.

Identify Carers as a priority group for Western's Gender Equity Strategy and Action Plan

Charles Sturt University (CSU) demonstrates its understanding and commitment to workplace inclusion by identifying carers as one of the six focus areas of its 'Workplace Diversity Plan'. Through its plan, the university acknowledges the intersectionality of care across other focus areas including gender and diverse faith and culture groups.

As Western looks to review its Gender Equity Action Plan it would benefit from applying a Carer's lens.

Explain how Western relates to the Carer's Recognition Act

The University of Queensland explains how the university supports the Queensland Carers Charter and its commitment to improving awareness and knowledge among university staff. It should not be assumed that staff members will be aware of the act or its purpose. Clarifying how Western demonstrates its commitment to the Act will help staff carers recognise their rights at work and offer another channel for them to learn about available workplace supports and encourage self-identification among these employee cohorts.

Understanding carer populations and linking staff carers to relevant supports*

The University of Melbourne is currently embedding flexible work arrangements/agreements through its ServiceNow System. With the aim of centralized support, coordination, and personalisation of supports for employees with carer and parental responsibilities[6.] A similar undertaking could be enabled through Western's

---

[6] (The University of Melbourne, 2024, p. 60)

Staff online platform. Alongside this approach, several universities have established systems that assist student carers in receiving appropriate information and support to balance care and studying commitments[7]. Western's 'Carer Verification Statement' was a notable example of excellent support for student carers. Western could explore adapting this into a similar system for staff carers (and other employee cohorts) to assist them in accessing relevant policies and programs.

Institutional policies and procedures

Revise Western's personal leave policy

On average Australian universities provide employees with 14.5 days of personal leave. Western provides six personal leave days for academic staff and seven days for professional staff.

Comparatively, the University of Adelaide provides 15 days of carer leave to full-time staff. When this leave entitlement is exhausted, staff can access 20 additional days of personal leave. Relatedly, Southern Cross University provides employees with 10 days of carer leave together with an additional 15 days of personal leave once carer leave entitlements are exhausted.

The Australian National University was the only university offering casual staff paid carer's leave (up to three days). Western could adopt a similar leave entitlement for casual staff. This could be actioned in the upcoming review of Western's Enterprise Agreement.

While like provisions are available to carers at Western, the current Western EA stipulates that personal leave entitlements can only apply to staff who are caring for someone in their immediate family in an emergency or owing to illness. This limited definition could result in staff concluding that they are ineligible to use personal leave for their caring responsibilities. To alleviate this, Western should enable the use of "personal leave" entitlements for care responsibilities (as defined under the Carers Recognition Act 2010) and consistently apply this definition through the enterprise

---

[7] It should be noted that not all carers are included or supported by these systems. Many of these systems are established to comply with disability discrimination policies and primarily support students with disability and may provide some provisions to students who care for people with disability.

agreement and policies. Relatedly, given the carer leave entitlements offered by many other universities Western should investigate the cost and impact of like entitlements for this employee cohort.

Finally, caring can be episodic and/or only require staff to be away from work for an hour or two. Encouraging Western staff to take leave more flexibly (e.g. by enabling staff to take leave on an hourly basis) could assist staff carers to utilise their leave more effectively and better negotiate work and caring commitments.

Capacity Building & Awareness

Develop specific training for managers and supervisors to support staff with caregiving responsibilities*

There are limited carer-specific training opportunities for staff provided by Universities in Australia. The only two training programs identified in this audit did not provide specific training about supporting staff carers but instead focused on Workplace Flexibility with a focus on employees with all forms of family and caregiving responsibilities, including parents of young children.

Of the two examples, Monash University developed a [training program](#) for managers and supervisors to support staff with caregiving responsibilities. The training was designed to "equip managers with strategies to create successful, engaged, and productive flexible teams".[8] Alongside this, educational resources should complement these training programs for managers so that they can easily adopt and practice inclusive management techniques. Edith Cowan University's ["Managers Checklist: What you need to know about flexible work requests"](#) offers an easily actionable resource so that managers/supervisors can ensure that they are best-supporting employees with flexible work requests.

Western should reinstate and update its ['Flexible Work at Western Sydney University'](#) training module to provide more carer-specific information. Further, this training could be built upon existing resources including the ['Flexible Work Toolkit for Staff and Supervisors'](#) and relevant content/resources from the ['Supporting our Parents and Carers Toolkit'](#).

---

[8] (Monash University, 2024)

Host events to raise awareness of available Carer supports

Universities can host workshops and events (i.e., National Carers Week) sharing information relevant to policies and supports. that can help Staff Carers balance work and caring responsibilities. In 2017, the Australian National University hosted a 'Disability & Carers Market Day Expo'. The Expo promoted local external organisations offering services and support for people with disability and their carers.[9] Though Western has help one off events, Western could develop a series of events, workshops and communications that share internal university-provided supports and pathways to accessing external organisational supports.

Share information with all staff on carers through different communication channels.

Western's dedicated web page for student and staff carers was among the most comprehensive repositories for all available internal and external supports. This page should be regularly updated to ensure information remains up to date.

Sharing information through various communication channels with all staff members is crucial to developing a culture of care at Western. These channels can also help support the uptake of these supports by engaging with staff members with caring responsibilities who may not identify as carers. Ensuring that this messaging recognises Staff carers can also help to raise awareness among other staff of specific policies and supports that may be able to be used to balance their own work and caring responsibilities.

Establish identified positions or roles that value the lived experience of caring

Carer Champions can share insights gained from their lived experience to inform and address barriers and challenges Staff Carers may face when balancing work and caring responsibilities. Aligning with Charles Sturt University's 'Workplace Diversity and

---

[9] (Australian National University, 2024)

Inclusion Plan 2023-25'; the university selected two carers champions to represent their professional and academic staff members.

Carer Champions advocate and promote matters that impact carers at Charles Sturt University and to progress in understanding of challenges faced by Staff Carers and barriers to their success in the workforce. They also support the university's strategic objective to promote a healthy, equitable, and inclusive working culture within its current Inclusion Plan.[10] These advocacy positions could form part of the current EDWP networks across Schools and institutes. In so doing the labour associated with this work is formally acknowledged as is the local context and how this context shapes the experiences, needs and wants of carers in nuanced ways. must acknowledge that they may overburden staff members who may already be at their limits. Other ways to recognise this work could include financial honorariums for carer champions and clarifying the workload capacity (e.g. role is equivalent to .1 FTE per week).

Valuing the knowledge of lived experience can also be demonstrated in offering paid identified positions such as the University of Technology's 'Carer-in-Residence' program. The role provides flexible and capacity-building work to a carer who is also committed to research in this domain.[11]

The residency is a novel and innovative way to action institutional carer-inclusive commitments and generate meaningful impact in the lives of carers who are working and studying at the university[12]. Renumerating staff members can demonstrate how the university values the lived experience of carers in driving inclusion. Especially staff that take on these roles as additional responsibilities such as Carers Champions.

Provide financial support through grants

Over 10 universities offer career interruption or travel grants specifically including staff with caring responsibilities (See Appendix 2). The average grant amount was $2,000 with Monash University's 'Advancing Women's Success Grant' providing up to $11,000

[10] (Charles Sturt University , 2024)
[11] (University of Technology Sydney, 2024)
[12] (Frijat, Teague, & Gleeson, 2021)

in financial support. However, many of these grants are framed through a gendered lens, excluding men and non-binary people from applying. Further, eligibility was often restricted to care of immediate family members which might not speak to the diverse ways in which care responsibilities manifest.

If Western were to develop similar grants, it is recommended that grants are less restrictive for carers in all their diversity and that "carer" definitions, and their use are in line with the Carers Recognition Act (2010). Furthermore, most current parenting and care grants exclude professional staff, casual, non-continuing, and part-time academic staff. Grants or awards of this kind must be more accessible to these cohorts as carers are more likely to be employed in these positions. Western's Career Interruption Grant could be updated to use more inclusive language that broadens eligibility to carers.

Other Practical Supports

Support and promote staff with caring responsibilities into leadership positions through career coaching programs

Caring can often impact a staff member's career development. To redress these impacts and support the career development needs of carers "career-specific coaching programs" can provide carers with the resources and agency to navigate a professional development pathway toward academic and professional leadership. For example, the University of New South Wales (UNSW)'s 'Career Coaching for Carers 3C' program offers small-group career coaching sessions to academic women, including sessional staff and post-graduate students, with current or recent carer responsibilities to develop their careers.[13] Monash University's 'Advancing Women's Success Grant' is a further example of how ESU can develop specific programs that meet cares needs and their unique lived experiences.

---

[13] (University of New South Wales, 2024)

Offer dedicated parking permits for carers

Parking permits for carers – The University of Queensland offers specific parking permits for carers of infants. Western could extend this practical support to other carers who owing to their care commitments (appointments during work hours, disability accessible vehicles) may need to travel to work by car.

Offer additional EAP/Counselling/ Mental Health for carers.

Care can be time-consuming and all-encompassing. Leaving little time for carers to focus on their wellbeing, notably their mental health (Carers NSW , 2024). Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) can be a useful avenue to provide staff carers with an opportunity to engage in counselling to help them balance work and care responsibilities.

Western partners with Access EAP to deliver its EAP program, delivering up to six sessions over the phone or face-to-face for Western employees and their families. The independent service also offers a 'Carers Assistance Program' which provides carer-specific counselling support. To build upon this support, offering carers and their family's additional sessions may assist staff carers to continue to balance and resolve personal, care, and work challenges.

Integrate Staff Carers with support officers.

The audit identified that some universities offer support officers to students, providing advice, support access, and assistance with applying for study adjustments. However, no University offered dedicated support officers for staff. For instance, Australian National University's 'DisAbility and Equity' Advisor team offers targeted carer evidence-based support and adjustments to minimise the impact of caring responsibilities on students' studies. Working with student carers to develop a personalised Education Access Plan (EAP), outlining reasonable adjustments while maintaining inherent course requirements could be extended to staff and their employment positions[14]

Edith Cowan University's 'University Contact Officers (UCO's)' offer an alternative support contact for matters related to harassment, discrimination, and

---

[14] (Australian National University, 2024)

victimisation. Trained UCOs are available on each campus to assist students and staff who feel that they may have been subjected to bullying, harassment, or discrimination[15]. UCOs listen to staff and student concerns, explain university policies and procedures, and provide information about complaint options and available support services. Western could adopt this practice with greater visibility and intentionality by initiating processes which link Staff Carers to Equity and Diversity teams. These teams could assist with advocacy, navigating university policies, addressing discrimination, and accessing relevant support provided by the university and external organisations.

Establish a dedicated Carers peer support or networking group*

Peer Support Groups offer a valuable space for carers to share and learn from one another's perspectives, challenges, and experiences. Continuing a persistent trend through this audit, many peer support groups invited carers to attend or are named 'Parent and Carer' groups. They often focused on parenting as a form of care. This meant that the experiences of many carers were marginalised in these spaces and could result in staff carers not feeling welcome or their needs remain unmet.

Charles Sturt University's 'Carer Employee Network' aims to provide a safe place for staff carers. Offering a space for carers to raise issues of importance, provide feedback, and guide decisions around the University's priorities and initiatives that impact them as staff carers were found to be impactful.[16] Relatedly, Flinders University has a dedicated website for its 'Carer Support Network'. Its network utilised the Recognition Act's definition of carers and meets regularly, every six to eight weeks.

While Western has several parenting and family-focused employee groups establishing a dedicated carer-specific peer support group would offer a valuable space for Western staff carers to share and learn from one another's perspectives, challenges, and experiences working and while caring. Further, carers are often time-poor and cannot attend events that require them to meet after work hours. To support carers to attend these groups, Western could consider setting these meetings during typical working hours and recognising these groups as wellbeing support such as

---

[15] (Edith Cowan University, 2024)
[16] (Charles Sturt University , 2024)

attending EAP sessions or capacity-building opportunities such as networking opportunities.

Conclusion

We have presented the outcomes of an audit of carer policies and institutional supports across Australian publicly funded universities. With this information Western has a comprehensive evidence base upon which to evaluate is current policy and practice and a credentialed framework to guide continuous improvement.

References

Australian National University. (2024, June 13). *Disability & Carers' Day Market Day Expo*. Retrieved from Australian National University: https://services.anu.edu.au/news-events/disability-carers%E2%80%99-day-market-day-expo

Australian National University. (2024, August 2). *Support for Carers* . Retrieved from Australian National University: https://www.anu.edu.au/students/contacts/support-for-carers

Carers + Employers. (2024, May 31). *Home*. Retrieved from Carers + Employers: https://carersandemployers.org.au/#:~:text=Supporting%20carers%20in%20the%20workplace,disability

Carers NSW . (2024). *Impacts of caring*. Retrieved from Carers NSW : https://www.carersnsw.org.au/about-caring/impacts-of-caring#:~:text=Caring%20can%20be%20time%20consuming,75%25%20for%20the%20general%20population.&text=Providing%20care%20for%20a%20loved%20one%20can%20impact%20carers'%20mental%20health.

Carers NSW . (2024, June 03). *Know Your Rights: Information for family and friend carers.* Retrieved from Carers NSW : https://www.carersnsw.org.au/uploads/main/Files/2.Services-and-Support/Advice-for-Carers/Rights-and-Complaints/Carers-Fact-Sheet-7-Your-rights-at-work_V2.pdf

Charles Sturt University . (2024, June 13). *Carers - People and Culture*. Retrieved from Charles Sturt University : https://www.csu.edu.au/division/people-culture/current-staff/respect-equity-and-diversity/carers#:~:text=We%20are%20committed%20to%20providing,with%20family%20or%20caring%20responsibilities.&text=We%20welcome%20children%20under%20the,our%20campuses%20for%

Deakin University. (2024, June 19). *CAREER CONTINUITY FOR RESEARCHERS WHO ARE PRIMARY CARERS GUIDELINES.* Retrieved from Deakin University: https://policy.deakin.edu.au/download.php?associated=1&id=560&version=3

Edith Cowan University. (2024, August 2). *University Contact Officers (UCOs).* Retrieved from Edith Cowan University: https://www.ecu.edu.au/about-ecu/commitment-to-equality-and-diversity/equity-diversity-and-inclusion/harassment-bullying-and-discrimination/university-contact-officers-ucos

Frijat, L., Teague, T., & Gleeson, P. (2021). *Inclusion in Action The Carer-in-Residence Toolbox.* Retrieved from The Centre for Carer's Research: https://www.uts.edu.au/sites/default/files/2021-10/IPPG%20-%20Carer%20in%20Residence%20Toolbox%20Final.pdf

Monash University. (2024, June 13). *Workplace Flexibility for Parents - Gender Equity.* Retrieved from Monash University: https://www.monash.edu/gender-equity/parents/flexibility

The University of Melbourne. (2024, June 3). *University of Melbourne Annual Report 2023.* Retrieved from https://about.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/422345/University-of-Melbourne_2023-Annual-Report.pdf: https://about.unimelb.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0020/422345/University-of-Melbourne_2023-Annual-Report.pdf

University of New South Wales. (2024, August 15). *Career Coaching for Carers (3C).* Retrieved from University of New South Wales: https://www.unsw.edu.au/edi/diversity-inclusion/gender-equity/womens-wellbeing-academy/career-coaching-carers

University of Technology Sydney. (2024, June 13). *Carer-in-Residence.* Retrieved from University of Technology Sydney: https://www.uts.edu.au/research-and-teaching/our-research/institute-public-policy-and-governance/about-institute/centre-for-carers-research/about-us/our-work/carer-in-residence#:~:text=In%20July%202020%20Leila%20Frijat,following%20her%2014%20month%20resid

Western Sydney University . (2024, August 15). *Family Responsibilities in the Workplace Policy.* Retrieved from Western Sydney University : https://policies.westernsydney.edu.au/document/view.current.php?id=137&version=2

Western Sydney University. (2024, June 13). *Western Professional Agreement 2022.* Retrieved from Western Sydney University:

https://www.westernsydney.edu.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0003/1971246/Western_Professional_Agreement_2022_FWC_approved_2.pdf

Appendix

Table 1 - Development of Benchmarking Criteria

Benchmarking Criteria		
Carers NSW 'Carers + Employers' Accreditation Framework	**Amended Criteria for Audit**	**Notes**
Carer Recognition		
1.1 – Accurately uses the term 'carer'	1.1 - Does the university accurately use the term carer as defined by the Carers Recognition Act in its Enterprise Agreements/Policies?	
1.2 - Recognises and supports work & caring responsibilities.	1.2 - Does the university make clear that it recognises and supports working and caring responsibilities in its communication?	
2.1 - Systems in place to identify carers or have established processes to encourage carers to self-identify.	2.1 - Does the university have systems in place to identify carers or for carers to self-identify?	
2.2 Carers are recognised across organisational policies, procedures and other employee-related areas.	2.2 - Are Carers recognised in organisational policies and procedures?	Omitted in final audit as demonstrated in criteria 1.4 and 2.3
1.3 - Develop and communicate carer-friendly policies & procedures."	1.3 - Does the university comply with the employment rights of carers in the workplace?	Omitted in final audit as it is too difficult to answer as yes or no.
Policies & Procedures		
1.4 - Demonstrates knowledge and compliance with the employment rights of carers in the workplace.	Does the University comply with the employment rights to access Carers Leave? of carers in the workplace?	
2.3 – Established policies and formal procedures regarding carers' rights to request flexibility at work.	2.3 - Does the University comply with the employee's right to Request Flexibility at Work due to caring?	
2.4 - The organisation has implemented policies and procedures to assess and monitor the carer population within the organisation.	2.4 - Does the university have policies/procedures to assess and monitor the carer population within the organisation?	

Capacity Building & Awareness		
1.5 - The organisation demonstrates a commitment towards developing its workforce capability to support carers in the workplace 2.7 - The organisation utilises education to build the capacity of employees to support carers in the workplace.	1.5 - Does the university provide training/career development opportunities to develop workforce capability to support carers in the workplace?	Merged due to limited availability of publicly available information.
1.6 - The organisation uses workplace communications to raise awareness and contribute to creating a culture of support for carers.	1.6 - Does the university share information with Staff about Staff Carers and how to support carers in the workplace?	
2.6 - The organisation actively engages in activities or tasks that aim to inform employees about carers in the workplace.	2.6 - Does the university host activities with Staff about Carers (e.g. National Carers Week) and how to support carers in the workplace?	
2.8 - The organisation embeds a culture of support and recognition of working carers through regular communication.	2.8 - Does the university showcase carer champions or case studies of Staff Carers through regular communication?	
2.9 - The organisation embeds a culture of support for working carers by incorporating information on workplace practices that support carers into existing and new programs and/or initiatives.	2.9 - Does the university share information with Carers on workplace practices that support them in existing and new programs?	
2.10 - The organisation has developed or purchased tools to assess and monitor the carer population within the organisation.	2.10 - Has the organisation developed or purchased tools to assess and monitor the carer population?	
2.11 - The organisation has a communication strategy that specifically addresses how the organisation communicates about carers and contributes to a positive carer culture.	2.11 - Does the university have a specific communication strategy?	Omitted due to limited availability of publicly available information.
Practical Support		
1.7 - The organisation identifies and promotes practices that provide working carers with practical support within the workplace.	1.7 - Does the university identify and promote practices to provide working carers with practical support within the workplace?	Expanded to identify good practice.

	1.7a - Financial Assistance and Grants	
	1.7b - Other forms of Support	
2.12. - The organisation has dedicated workplace supports that focus on improving carers' health and wellbeing.	2.12 - Does the university have dedicated workplace supports that improve carers health and wellbeing?	Expanded to identify good practice.
	2.12a - Mental Health/Counselling/EAP	
	2.12b – Support Officers	
	2.12c – Other (e.g. Fitness Passport)	
2.14 - The organisation promotes peer support opportunities within and outside the organisation.	2.14 - Does the university promote peer support/carer networks opportunities?	Expanded to identify good practice.
	2.14a - University-based peer support groups	
	2.14b - Externally-based peer support groups	

Table 2 – Carer-related Grants

University	Maximum Amount	Name, Purpose and Eligibility
Australian National University	$2000	Carer's Career Development Assistance Fund (CCDAF) – The grant is for individual academic and professional staff with caring responsibilities who require support to participate in national or international conferences, workshops, and symposia that contribute to their careers. Types of costs covered may include: • Childcare costs • Care costs for dependants other than children • Airfares for the dependant to accompany the staff member. There are three rounds annually for grant applications
Curtin University	$2000	Academic Carer Support Scheme – provides financial assistance to participate in activities that significantly contribute to their career development. Eligibility: • Early and mid-career favoured • Carer responsibilities (dependent child/children or dependent relative/s)

		• Requires a carer themselves • Academic staff member (including post-doc fellows, HDR students) • Full-time, part-time – continuing or fixed term • Requires alternative care costs in order to participate • Participation in a significant learning and teaching or research activity aligned with your career development plan • Achieved satisfactory work performance as evidenced by PCP. •
Deakin University	$2000	Vice Chancellor's Conference Care Support Fund – Recognition that attendance at conferences is integral to fostering networks. Researchers and HDR students with caring responsibilities are usually disadvantaged in this regard. Funding can be used for: • Travel for a carer/family member to accompany the researcher • Childcare costs Eligibility: 1. Continuing or fixed-term Academic or Research Only staff who have a minimum 20% workload allocation for research. 2. Current Deakin student undertaking a higher degree by research 3. Evidence of Head of School approval to attend the conference 4. Evidence that substantiates their role as a primary carer in the form of a statutory declaration. A researcher is considered a carer when they have sustained responsibility for full-time care of: • dependent children up to 12 years of age • an elderly parent or other elderly relative • a partner, offspring or other relative with disability
La Trobe University	Not available	Tracey Banivanua Mar Fellowships – ensures that staff who have demonstrated potential to be our future research leaders

		and who have major care-giving responsibilities to maintain their career momentum and be supported to fulfil their research potential. Fellowships are part-time or full-time positions for up to three years to enable eligible research to develop or re-establish their careers.
		Carers Travel Support Fund – can be used to support the cost of arranging alternative care while the staff member is carrying out these activities or pay for an alternative carer to travel with the staff member.
Macquarie University	$500 for conference within Sydney Metro. $1000 for national conference. $1500 for conferences in WA, NT, far North QLD $2000 for international conference	Macquarie University Carer Conference Support Scheme (MQCCSS) - assists academic staff who have carer responsibilities to attend and present at academic conferences. Scheme is open throughout the year. The conference cannot be less than 2 months from the time of application. Eligibility: • Available to all research staff (e.g. part-time, fixed term) • HDR Students and Casual Staff are not eligible to apply • Only one application per year • Must be presenting a paper/poster at conference • Demonstrate how attendance will enhance career • Must be research Active
Monash University	$11, 000	Advancing Women's Success Grant – supports career progression of early to mid-career academic women with significant caring responsibilities. Funds can be used to purchase: • Research Assistance • Extraordinary carer support (max $3,000, extra stipulations) • Academic collaboration • Teaching relief or relief from other duties (e.g. unit/course coordination, marking). • Travel for educational development and research where other funding is unavailable

		• Access to editorial and/or external grant funding application review services • Other direct research costs not funded by department. Includes Career coaching as part of the grant.
Queensland University of Technology	N/A	Carer Support for Academic Staff – provide academic staff with financial assistance towards the additional costs of alternative care, so that staff (male and female) who have carer responsibilities are not deterred from, or penalised for, engaging with necessary academic duties and professional development.
The University of Adelaide	N/A	Barbara Kidman Fellowship Scheme – designed to support female academics to enhance and promote their career. The scheme offers opportunities to enhance, maintain, or re-invigorate research momentum and assist the Fellows in applying for roles. Preference is given to staff who have caring responsibilities that have resulted in career-disruption or reduced working hours. Up to ten Fellowships each year are offered. Eligibility: • Female academic staff already employed at Levels B and C. • Hold a continuing position or have a contract for a minimum two years from 2024. • Employed since 1/01/23 at minimum of 0.4FTE • Experienced career disruption from caring within last 5 years. • Awarded PhD or equivalent standing • Not have had SSP within last 12 months.
The University of Melbourne	N/A	Investigator Grants - supports the health and medical research program of outstanding investigators at all career stages. It will consolidate separate salary and research support into a single grant scheme by offering a salary component (if required) and a research support package (RSP).

		Acknowledges caring responsibilities as valid reason for career disruption.
University of New South Wales	$2000	UNSW Carers' Support Fund - In 2023, UNSW replaced the Vice-Chancellor's Childcare Support Fund for Women Researchers with the introduction of the Carers' Support Fund, which broadens eligibility criteria to: • All UNSW employees (professional and academic) and HDR students of all genders with both childcare and primary caring responsibilities. • Participation in a wider range of career development activities, such as networking and fieldwork.

Appendix 3 – Western Personal Leave Policy in Enterprise Agreements.

PERSONAL LEAVE Definitions:	For the purposes of this clause: (a) compassionate grounds mean circumstances in which a member of the Employee's immediate family: • contracts or develops a personal illness that poses a serious threat to the immediate family member's life; or • sustains a personal injury that poses a serious threat to the immediate family member's life; or • dies. • a child is stillborn, where the child would have been a member of the Employee's immediate family, if the child had been born alive; or • the Employee, or the Employee's current spouse or de facto partner, has a miscarriage before 20 weeks' gestation; and Immediate family means: • the Employee's spouse or former spouse; or • the Employee's de facto spouse or former de facto spouse; or • a child or an adult child (including an adopted/foster child, a stepchild, or an ex nuptial child), parent, parent-in-law, grandparent, grandchild, or

	sibling of the Employee or of the Employee's spouse or de facto spouse; or • a member of the Employee's household.
	31.2 In recognition of the fact that University staff also have family and cultural commitments outside of work or may require leave on compassionate grounds, an eligible Employee may access personal leave in accordance with this clause. 31.3 The University expects Supervisors to be sensitive and flexible in making arrangements for an Employee to attend to personal matters. 31.4 Subject to subclause 31.8, a full-time ongoing or fixed term Employee is entitled to up to 6 days of paid personal leave per calendar year and may also use their accrued sick leave entitlement if they have exhausted their paid personal leave: • to meet family, cultural, religious or special needs in accordance with the NSW Premier's List of Days of Religious Significance for Multicultural NSW; or • to care for a dependent or a member of their immediate family who requires **care or support due to personal illness or injury or an unexpected emergency affecting the family member; or** • **when compassionate grounds arise; or** • to provide support to a person who is experiencing family and domestic violence, in accordance with subclause 36.11. 31.5 Paid personal leave accrues on a daily basis according to an Employee's ordinary hours of work. Unused personal leave does not accrue from year to year. 31.6 A part-time Employee accrues paid personal leave on a pro-rata basis. 31.7 A casual Employee is entitled to 3 days of unpaid personal leave for each occasion on which compassionate grounds arise.

	31.8 A full-time ongoing or fixed-term Employee who has exhausted their paid personal leave entitlement will be entitled to further paid personal leave of 3 days per occasion on which compassionate grounds arise.