



QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE (QRG) CATEGORIES OF EMPLOYMENT PROFESSIONAL & ACADEMIC STAFF

OVERVIEW OF THE SECTION

CLAUSE REFERENCES:

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC STAFF AGREEMENT 2022

Categories of Employment (Clause 14)

WESTERN SYDNEY UNIVERSITY PROFESSIONAL STAFF AGREEMENT 2022

Categories of Employment (Clause 14)

BRIEF DESCRIPTION:

The Categories of Employment clause in the Agreements outlines the types of employment available at the University—namely ongoing, fixed term, and casual employment—with specific guidelines for each category.

This QRG should be read in conjunction with the Casual Pay Rate and Minimum Engagement Periods QRG.

INTERPRETATION AND APPLICATION

ONGOING EMPLOYMENT

- An ongoing employee is employed for an indefinite period and can be full-time or part-time.

FIXED TERM EMPLOYMENT

- A fixed term employee is engaged for a specified period of time or for a specific task or project and can be full-time or part-time.
- Breaks between fixed term contracts (of up to 6 weeks, twice per year) do not break a fixed term employee's continuity of service.

The use of fixed term employment is limited to the specific categories set out in the table below. Fixed term employment **must not be used** in any other circumstances.

CATEGORIES OF FIXED TERM EMPLOYMENT

CATEGORY	DEFINITION
Specific Task or Project	For clearly defined tasks or projects with a specific timeframe. Example: A research assistant hired for a 12-month project to digitise archival materials.
External Funding	Roles funded entirely by an identifiable external source other than operating grants from the government or student fees. Example: A research officer employed for a 3-year position, fully funded by a private grant.
Research only	Research only positions for a period of up to five years. Example: A postdoctoral fellow engaged on a 4-year contract to conduct research on climate change.
Temporary Replacement	To temporarily replace an ongoing employee who is on leave, secondment, or performing higher duties, or fill a vacant position for which recruitment action has commenced. Example: A lecturer hired for 9 months to cover for a colleague on parental leave.
Recent Professional Practice	Where curriculum or accreditation requires specialised industry or vocational expertise with recent practical experience, for up to five years (professional) or up to three years (academic). Example: A professional with recent industry experience hired to teach a specialised 2-year course.
Pre-Retirement Contract	A non-renewable contract of up to five years for employees approaching their intended retirement date. Example: An academic offered a 3-year pre-retirement contract as they near retirement age.
Post-Retirement Contract	A non-renewable contract of up to five years for employees after retirement. Example: A retired academic re-engaged for a 2-year contract to mentor junior faculty members.
Enrolled Student	For current students or recent graduates (within 12 months of completion), for up to two years during or after their studies. Example: A postgraduate student hired for 1 year as a research assistant during their PhD candidacy.

Discontinued Teaching Program	To fill roles supporting teaching programs that are set to be discontinued. Example: A lecturer hired for 1 year to teach a subject that will be phased out at the end of the year.
New Organisational Area	Fixed term roles in new organisational areas where there is uncertainty about continuation, for up to three years. Example: A data analyst employed for 2 years in a new research centre, pending its ongoing viability.
Disestablished Organisational Area	For roles in areas that are set to be discontinued within three years but may convert to ongoing if the decision is reversed. Example: A project manager hired for 18 months in a department slated for closure, with conversion possible if closure is reversed.

FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT

- Full-time employment is ongoing or fixed term employment for the ordinary hours of work, which are 35 hours per week.

PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

- Part-time employment involves working less hours than a full-time employee (ie. less than 35 hours per week).
- A part-time employee receives entitlements on a pro rata basis based on their hours of work.
- A full-time employee can apply to work part-time to balance personal and work commitments.
- Part-time work arrangements can be varied through written agreement with an employee's supervisor.

CASUAL EMPLOYMENT

- A casual employee is engaged and paid by the hour. Casual rates of pay include a 25% loading in lieu of entitlements that casual employees do not receive (for example, paid leave), and the rates for casual academic employees will vary depending on the type of work they are engaged to perform (e.g., lectures, tutorials, marking, etc.).
- Casual employment must only be used where there is no firm advance commitment to continuing and indefinite work.
- Casual appointments must be transparent, evidence-based, and adhere to University policy.

- An ongoing or fixed term employee may also work as a casual employee if the work is unrelated to, or identifiably separate from, their normal duties.

**Please note: The ability to engage in casual employment (when already engaged as an ongoing or fixed-term employee) will be contingent upon the employee's FTE, employment type and the conditions outlined in their contract of employment.*

- **Minimum engagement periods:**
 - For casual academic employees, the minimum engagement period is 2 hours per session. However, certain types of work may automatically cover more than 2 hours through associated working time (e.g., preparation and consultation). For example:
 - Lectures: Pay rates such as Rate A (Basic Lecture), Rate B (Developed Lecture), or Rate C (Specialised Lecture) include additional associated hours for preparation and delivery, ensuring compliance with the 2-hour minimum.
 - Tutorials: Rates such as Rate E (Normal Tutorial) and Rate F (Repeat Tutorial) also account for preparation and follow-up work, which can fulfill the 2-hour minimum engagement requirement.
 - For casual professional employees (e.g., administrative roles), the minimum engagement period is 3 hours, unless they fall under specific exceptions (e.g., students or those employed in conjunction with other roles).

Casual employees have access to certain University resources and benefits, such as IT resources (network and intranet access), professional development programs, staff directories, and library services. They are also entitled to be paid for undertaking mandatory training.

APPRENTICESHIPS AND TRAINEESHIPS

- This category of employment is applicable to professional staff only.
- The University may employ eligible persons under State or Federal funded programs, such as apprenticeships and traineeships.
- Employees under these arrangements will be subject to the conditions and rates as prescribed in their respective training agreements and government-funded programs.
- Supported Wage Arrangements may be applied for individuals eligible for a disability-supported wage, and they will be paid based on their assessed capacity according to the Australian Pay and Classification Scale.

Traineeships

- Trainees will receive payment in accordance with their trainee agreement, considering time away from work due to training.

- Trainees are paid according to a proportionate rate of the work they are performing as per Schedule 1 of the Professional Staff Agreement.

Apprenticeships

- Apprentices engaged by the University will be compensated according to the relevant rates set out in Schedule 2 of the Professional Staff Agreement.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

QUESTION	ANSWER
What is the difference between ongoing and fixed term employment?	Ongoing employment is for an indefinite period, while fixed term employment is for a specified period or project. A fixed term contract may be renewed provided it continues to fall within one of the specified categories of fixed term employment.
Can an employee switch to part-time employment?	Yes, a full-time employee can apply to switch to part-time to balance personal and work commitments. This arrangement must be confirmed in writing and can be varied through written agreement with their supervisor.
What happens if a fixed term employee completes their contract, but the role continues?	If the employee was hired through an open and competitive selection process and has performed satisfactorily, they must be offered further fixed term employment in the position, provided the appointment continues to fall within one of the specified categories of fixed term employment.
Can a casual employee work as a full-time or part-time employee as well?	Yes, a casual employee can also hold an ongoing or fixed term position if the casual work is separate from their substantive duties. However, the casual work must be distinctly unrelated to their substantive role.
What is the minimum engagement period for casual employees?	The minimum engagement period is 2 hours for casual academic employees and 3 hours for casual professional employees, unless they fall under specific exceptions such as students or those with ongoing/fixed term roles.
How are casual employees paid for lectures and tutorials?	A casual employee delivering lectures or tutorials is paid based on the applicable rate category (e.g., Basic Lecture, Developed Lecture, Normal Tutorial). The rate includes both delivery and associated preparation time, ensuring compliance with the minimum engagement period.
Can students be employed on a fixed term basis?	Yes, an enrolled student can be employed on a fixed term contract for all or part of their candidature, or within 12 months after completing their degree, subject to holding the appropriate working rights

GENERAL EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 1: ONGOING EMPLOYMENT

Mohammed works as a full-time administrator on an ongoing basis, meaning he is employed indefinitely. He completed a 6-month probation period and is entitled to benefits such as annual leave and long service leave. If he chooses, he may apply to reduce his hours to part-time through a written agreement with his supervisor.

EXAMPLE 2: PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

Bob is a part-time academic who works fewer hours than a full-time employee, and his leave entitlements and salary are calculated on a pro rata basis based on his hours of work.

EXAMPLE 3: FIXED-TERM EMPLOYMENT

Linh, a postdoctoral researcher, is hired on a 3-year fixed-term contract to work on a specific project funded by a research grant. When the project receives additional funding, Linh's contract is renewed for a further two years due to her satisfactory performance.

EXAMPLE 4: TRAINEESHIP

Alejandra is employed in the finance department under a 12-month traineeship program. She is paid according to a proportionate rate based on her trainee agreement, which accounts for her time away from work for training.

EXAMPLE 5: APPRENTICESHIP

Jamal is hired as an apprentice in the University's facilities management department under a government-funded program. Jamal's pay and conditions follow the provisions set out in Schedule 2 of the apprenticeship agreement.

MINIMUM ENGAGEMENT EXAMPLES

EXAMPLE 1: PROFESSIONAL STAFF

Priya is hired as a casual administrative assistant in the Office for People. Her role involves managing records and supporting meetings. The minimum engagement period for casual professional staff is 3 hours, so even if she works for just 2 hours on a particular day, she will be paid for a minimum of 3 hours in line with University Enterprise Agreements

EXAMPLE 2: ACADEMIC STAFF

Diego is hired as a casual lecturer to deliver a 1-hour lecture for an undergraduate course. Under Rate A (Basic Lecture), his pay includes an additional 2 hours for associated preparation time, making the total engagement 3 hours. This meets the 2-hour minimum engagement period for casual academic staff, ensuring compliance with the University's minimum requirement.

EXAMPLE 3: ACADEMIC STAFF

Yara is hired as a casual academic to provide academic support for a practical lab class in the School of Science. She is required to assist students for 1 hour during the lab and perform an additional 30 minutes of preparation. Rate T covers 1 hour of work with no associated preparation time. Since the University's minimum engagement period for casual academic staff is 2 hours, Yara will need to be paid for 2 hours, even though the total time worked is 1.5 hours.

INFORMATION IN THIS GUIDE IS A SUMMARY ONLY

This document provides a general summary to assist staff understand the rights and processes related to this entitlement. To avoid doubt, this document:

- does not contain a complete account of the rights, entitlements, conditions, or obligations that may be available;
- does not replace or override the terms of the relevant enterprise agreement or under legislation, or the Western Sydney University's policies or procedures; or
- does not constitute legal or financial advice.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For further details on Categories of Employment, please refer to the relevant Professional/Academic [Enterprise Agreement](#).

KEY CONTACTS FOR FURTHER ADVICE

If you have any questions or would like to discuss your Casual Pay Rate options, please contact the People Services Team (previously known as the HR Operations Team) or the Workplace Relations Team.