

Domestic Violence Guidelines

Section 1 - Overview

(1) In keeping with UNE's Respect & Dignity in the Workplace Charter, these guidelines guide the response of the University, by supporting staff members who may require assistance as a result of domestic violence.

(2) The University is committed to supporting staff experiencing domestic violence to continue to participate in the workplace and maintain their employment. In addition the University seeks to create a supportive work environment where staff are comfortable in requesting assistance for domestic violence related concerns.

Section 2 - Scope

(3) The purpose of these Guidelines is to assist the University in responding effectively to circumstances of domestic violence. The guidelines specify both the entitlements and obligations UNE representatives, as defined, are to comply with or afford when dealing with Domestic Violence issues.

(4) Where a matter considered under these guidelines relates to Gender-based Violence (GBV), Part E - Reporting Procedures of the [Gender Based Violence Prevention and Response Policy](#) must be followed and applied, having regard to the [National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence](#). Disclosures and Formal Reports of GBV may be made anonymously. If the University receives an anonymous report of GBV, it must act in accordance with relevant UNE policies and procedures.

Section 3 - Guidelines

(5) The purpose of these guidelines is to outline the support the University provides to staff experiencing domestic violence and to detail how line management and the People and Cultures can assist.

Domestic Violence Support

Requesting Support

(6) A staff member may contact their immediate supervisor, other senior line manager or People and Culture staff to request specific support as outlined below. If a request is made to a supervisor, the supervisor should confidentially liaise with their more senior line management or People and Culture representatives for advice on coordinating support.

(7) Staff approached by a fellow staff member raising issues of domestic violence should as much as possible refer their colleague to these guidelines, related support materials and the Employee Assistance Program.

Types of Support

(8) The University will provide support to a staff member experiencing domestic violence.

(9) Depending on the circumstances, staff experiencing domestic violence may have access to a range of supporting measures, including:

- a. Domestic Violence Leave;
- b. Flexible Work Arrangements;
- c. Changes to work telephone; email address or work location;
- d. Blocking of particular email contacts or telephone callers; and
- e. Changes to the staff members' contact details on the University website.

(10) In applying for these measures, the staff member may be required to provide supporting documentation of the kind below.

Domestic Violence Leave

(11) The Director People and Culture will approve paid leave on a case by case basis where supporting evidence is provided. Supporting evidence of treatment for domestic violence could take the form of a document issued by the police service, a court, a medical practitioner, a domestic violence support service or lawyer, or a counselling professional.

(12) Other types of leave — In addition to domestic violence leave an employee may choose to apply for other forms of leave such as annual leave, long service leave or entitlements for family / carers responsibilities or bereavement / compassionate reasons, as contained in agreements for both professional and academic staff.

(13) Domestic violence leave may be required to care for family members, attend doctor's appointments, attend court, make arrangements for children, and seek alternative accommodation, counselling or other appointments as appropriate.

Flexible Working Arrangements

(14) Staff, affected by domestic violence, may request flexible work arrangements including part-time employment and flexible start / finish times.

(15) Flexible working arrangements will vary dependent on the circumstances of the staff member. Generally they will be for a defined period and regularly reviewed.

(16) Records of agreed flexible working arrangements established to address circumstances of Domestic Violence are to be kept.

Employee Assistance Program

(17) Staff may access the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) which is a free counselling service through Centacare (ph. 02 6738 7200), (website reference: <http://centacarenewengland.com/>).

External Support Services

(18) Staff may also be referred to external support services as appropriate (refer Related policies or other documents).

Addressing Safety Concerns

(19) When a staff member requests support, line management in conjunction with Human Resources Services Directorate Staff should discuss with them whether a safety plan should be developed to assist the staff member to perform their duties safely and productively.

(20) In developing a safety plan the following should be considered:

- a. The plan must have the staff member's agreement and consent;
- b. It should be reviewed with the staff member on a regular basis;

- c. The staff member's emergency contact details must be kept up to date;
- d. All reasonable attempts should be made to ensure staff maintain their normal working hours and working conditions (including contacts) to minimise the impact on the individual;
- e. In certain circumstances however change to work location, email address and or telephone number may be appropriate;
- f. Co-operation with legal orders (e.g. Apprehended Violence Orders) may be required;
- g. The plan may require consultation with other areas within the University such as Security and IT — this will be coordinated by the line management on a confidential basis; and
- h. Action to be taken if the staff member does not arrive at work.

(21) In applying for such measures, the staff member may be required to provide supporting documentation of the kind listed in the Domestic Violence clause.

Confidentiality

(22) Any request for leave or support by a staff member as a result of domestic violence will be dealt with on a confidential basis. The reasons for the leave or support will not be discussed with anyone outside Human Resources or line management unless there is a legal obligation to do so, or as agreed by the affected staff member for the purposes of providing support or security.

(23) All documentation relating to matters dealt with under these guidelines must be filed confidentially and must not be placed on staff files.

Domestic Violence Leave — Application Procedures

(24) Wherever possible the staff member should discuss their intention to apply for domestic violence leave with their line management so that appropriate safety arrangements, including leave, can be made.

(25) At the employee's election a direct request for leave may be made to People and Culture.

(26) The staff member should be prepared to discuss such matters as how much leave is requested and provide supporting evidence of the circumstances necessitating the leave. It is to be noted that supporting evidence takes the form of but is not limited to; a document issued by the police service, a court, a medical practitioner, a domestic violence support service or lawyer, or a counselling professional.

(27) Wherever possible the leave must be applied for sufficiently in advance to ensure that adequate consideration can be given to approval and so that alternate working arrangements can be made where necessary. In emergent circumstances however the minimum standard for an employee to be absent from the workplace, in circumstances of domestic violence, is for either line management or Human Resource Services Directorate to be advised as soon as possible.

(28) The Director Human Resource Services is responsible for approving the request for domestic violence leave. Wherever possible the application for the leave should be submitted for approval prior to the domestic violence leave commencement date. The Director Human Resource Services will take account of the operational requirements of the work area and the need for the domestic violence leave when considering each leave request.

(29) Applications for domestic violence leave must be made on the Multipurpose Leave Form (13.01a) in hard copy form submitted to Line Management or Human Resource Services as appropriate.

Authorisation

(30) The People and Culture is to administer this guideline.

Section 4 - Definitions

(31) UNE Representatives means a University employee (casual, fixed term and permanent), contractor, agent, appointee, UNE Council member, adjunct, visiting academic and any other person engaged by the University to undertake some activity for or on behalf of the University. It includes corporations and other bodies falling into one or more of these categories.

(32) Domestic Violence involves a person in a family or domestic situation being subjected to patterns of behaviour that include: physical and or sexual assault, verbal abuse and insults, social isolation, economic deprivation, emotional abuse, threats and intimidation, harassment and stalking.

(33) Line Management — principally immediate Supervisor but can extend to more senior management in the School/Directorate as appropriate.

(34) Human Resources Services Directorate — including staff such as the Director Human Resources Services, Business Relationship Managers and Workplace Health and Safety Consultant.

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