

Submission to Academic Board, November 2018.

The Monash Postgraduate Association (MPA) requests the university recognise that its students sometimes experience situations of violence or abuse in their personal lives, and that this violence, constituting family violence, may affect their attendance at or performance during their studies.

One in six women in Australia have experienced family violence¹. Family violence includes physical, sexual, financial, verbal or emotional abuse by a family or household member.

The introduction of paid family violence leave to HDR scholarships and of unpaid leave to research and coursework degree regulations would place Monash University as a leader in responding to family and gender-based violence. It also provides the university with the opportunity to demonstrate its commitment to the *Respect.Now.Always.* campaign in a very practical and meaningful manner.

The MPA proposes the following:

1. Paid family violence leave for all research postgraduate scholarship holders

The MPA has been lobbying the university over the past year to include paid family violence leave as a provision in all HDR scholarships. This would bring Monash scholarship conditions into line with conditions for staff as set out in the Monash enterprise agreement. It is anticipated that the cost to effect this across all Monash scholarships would be minimal.

Recommendation 1: That Academic Board approve the inclusion of a provision in all Monash scholarships for paid family violence leave for absences due to family violence experienced by research postgraduates.

2. Unpaid family violence leave for all coursework and research degree students

The MPA believes that unpaid family violence leave should be included in the regulations governing all undergraduate and postgraduate coursework degrees and all research degrees. Family violence leave should be applied in addition to the maximum intermission period available to all students undertaking those degrees. There is no financial burden to the university to effect this other than the administrative cost of processing such requests, which is anticipated to be minimal.

Recommendation 2: That Academic Board approve the inclusion of a provision for unpaid family violence leave in addition to the maximum intermission period for all coursework and research degrees, for absences due to family violence experienced by students.

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics 2017, Personal safety, Australia 2016