

Academic Professional Development Program Procedure



1 Purpose

PLEASE NOTE: All human resource management policy instruments are currently under review to ensure alignment with the new Enterprise Agreement. Contact the People Portfolio for more information.

To ensure Employees are aware of the opportunities, conditions and processes associated with the Academic Professional Development Program (the Program).

2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all eligible continuing, contingent funding and fixed-term Employees in academic positions within the University.

3 Procedure Overview

This Procedure details the conditions and processes associated with the Program.

This Procedure aligns with:

- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021: Standard 3.2 Staffing*

4 Procedures

4.1 Purpose of the Program

The Program is a period of release from normal duties for academic Employees to enable them to improve teaching skills and scholarship, to undertake research, creative work, or clinical innovation, and to make the outcomes public (generally via peer-reviewed outlets), and/or immediate application to practice within the University. The Program must align with the University's objectives. The Program is output focused and aims to improve professional and vocational knowledge and skills to assist Employees to establish and renew links with colleagues in appropriate fields outside the University. The goal is to support them to contribute to academic excellence in research and/or teaching and enhance their contribution to their organisational unit and the University.

4.2 Program duration

Eligible Employees may apply for a planned Program with a duration of two to six months. Applicants are expected to negotiate workload commitments with their Head of Organisational Unit to ensure the organisational unit can accommodate the absence.

A fractional Employee may apply to proportionally decrease the amount of Program time and simultaneously increase the fraction at which they are paid during the Program period provided that the total salary does not exceed the budgeted amount. For example, a 0.5 fractional Employee may apply to undertake the Program at a full-time rate of pay for three months instead of a 0.5 fractional rate for six months with the approval of the Head of Organisational Unit.

4.3 Program categories

Employees seeking to undertake the Program must apply under at least one of the Program categories listed below.

Note that applicants may undertake the Program across blended categories of Research and Teaching and Learning in an agreed split supported by their Head of Organisational Unit.

Academic leaders are encouraged to support new applicants to apply for the Program and to promote a distribution of Programs across the various organisational units of the University.

4.3.1 Research

Enables an Employee to conduct research and/or scholarship which enhances the University's research performance. The objective is to provide Employees with the time and resources to undertake research activities at a level of quality and productivity that would be otherwise difficult to achieve.

Applicants on externally funded fixed-term appointments should provide evidence that the Program is supported by the external funding agency.

4.3.2 Teaching and learning

Aims to advance learning and teaching within the University by supporting Employees to undertake projects and activities that are of direct strategic and practical benefit to the University in accordance with the University's strategic teaching and learning directions.

4.4 Achievement relative to opportunity

Applicants may outline their achievement relative to opportunity, taking into account the diversity of personal circumstances, career and life experiences which may have resulted in an alternative profile in one or more of the criteria, or limited their career progression. Applicants should refer to the Application of the Principle of Achievement Relative to Opportunity

Guidelines for further Information/guidance.

4.5 Eligibility

All continuing and fixed-term Employees in academic positions within the University will be eligible to apply after completing at least three years continuous academic employment prior to the proposed start of the Program.

Employees on pre-retirement contracts are excluded from this Program.

Normally, a minimum period of three years will be required between Programs. The organisation may reduce this to no less than two years, where organisational reasons have required a previously approved application to be deferred.

Employees are not eligible to undertake the Program during their probationary period until confirmation of employment is determined.

Note that Employees accessing financial, workload or other forms of assistance from the University through other schemes which may be in operation at the time, will not normally be entitled to access the Program simultaneously.

4.6 Application for the Program

All applications must be made on the relevant Academic Professional Development Application Form.

4.6.1 Head of Organisational Unit Statement

Applications must be discussed with the Head of Organisational Unit in the first instance, who will comment on the relevance and achievability of the Program's anticipated outcomes. Where multiple applications are received from an organisational unit, the Head will provide feedback on the relative benefits and achievability of the different applications.

Applications must contain a clear statement by the Head of Organisational Unit, developed in consultation with the Employee, regarding the effect that participation will have on the organizational unit's or University activities and how the teaching arrangements, Research Student supervision and administrative and committee responsibilities will be managed during the proposed period of the Program.

In areas where the Head of Organisational Unit is not an academic position, the statement must be prepared in conjunction with a relevant academic head (normally a Head of School, Dean, or Centre Director), that most closely aligns to the applicant's discipline, as nominated by the applicant.

4.6.2 Assessment of Applications

Following the Head of Organisational Unit's recommendations, all applications (whether recommended by Head of Organisational Unit or not) are to be forwarded to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs).

Applications will then be assessed by a Panel convened by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) that includes the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) or nominee, and a nominee of the Provost.

The Panel may seek the input of other relevant senior teaching and research academic leaders in formulating the Decision to approve or otherwise.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) will sign off on the Decision.

4.6.3 Criteria for assessing applications

Program applications will be assessed against the following criteria, where applicable to the category of application:

- Relevance of activities to be performed and the value of the proposed outcomes to the organisational unit and the University;
- Capability to deliver and to achieve the outcomes as evidenced by track record and, if applicable, evidence of outcomes from previous Programs;
- Reasonableness of costs with respect to Program objectives and proposed outcomes;
- Arrangements to deal with teaching commitments and HDR Student supervision, other administrative arrangements, and committee duties;
- Feedback on the application from the Head of Organisational Unit.

4.6.4 Notification of outcomes

Following the Decision, the applicant and Head of Organisational Unit will be advised in writing. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic Affairs) is responsible for ensuring applicants receive feedback about the reasons for an unsuccessful or revised application.

Where an application is declined, it may be submitted for consideration with the next round of Program applications inclusive of any revisions based on feedback about the reasons for the unsuccessful application.

4.7 Conditions and entitlements

4.7.1 Financial assistance

The University will provide a contribution towards an Employee's Program, but such financial assistance is not expected or intended to cover all the costs incurred. Employees undertaking the Program within Australia will be eligible for financial assistance if they undertake their activities at a location more than 400 kilometres from their regular place of work.

The Program financial assistance will be provided to a maximum of \$6,500 per Employee. Employees applying for the Program will be required to submit a budget estimating the expected Expenditure to be incurred, along with justification for the scale of Expenditure.

Additionally, for an Employee travelling away from their home for more than eight weeks with a dependent partner and/or children, a further amount of Program financial assistance of \$150 per week for an accompanying dependent partner and \$80 per week for each accompanying child (for the actual period of absence from home up to a maximum of 16 weeks) is available, capped at a maximum of \$4,000 per Program. A dependent partner/child will be determined in accordance with the Australian Taxation Office definition.

4.7.2 Salary

Employees participating in an approved Program will receive their substantive salary, excluding any allowances associated with special duties that are discontinued for the duration of the Program. Normal superannuation contributions will be maintained.

Employees will be paid during the period of the Program at the same average fractional rate as served during the qualifying period.

The Employee's salary for the period of the Program will continue to be paid by the work area. The Head of Organisational Unit will manage any backfill arrangements to cover staff absence from the workplace on the Program within existing budget arrangements in the relevant Division.

4.7.3 Outside employment

Employees intending to undertake outside employment whilst on the Program must complete an Outside Employment Application Form and receive the prior approval of the Head of Organisational Unit.

4.7.4 Travel

The Program may be undertaken within Australia or overseas.

All travel undertaken for the purpose of the Program must comply with the Travel Policy.

4.7.5 Leave accruals

Employees undertaking a Program will accrue annual leave at the same rate as other service. However, the annual leave accrued during the program must be taken by the Employee during the period of the Program, except where it would cause substantial hardship and where prior approval to defer the leave has been approved by the Head of Organisational Unit.

Other types of leave may be taken immediately before or following the Program. However, this leave is additional to that indicated above and will be deducted from leave entitlements. This additional leave must be identified in the application for the Program and must receive prior approval by the Head of Organisational Unit.

4.7.6 Insurance

The University maintains a corporate travel Insurance Policy for University Travel and it is the responsibility of the Employee to comply with the Policy.

4.7.7 WorkCover

Employees are covered by WorkCover Insurance while on the Program and should notify the University as soon as possible if an injury or illness occur. Employees on annual leave during the Program are not covered by WorkCover and should consider their own Insurance options during these periods. Liability for workers compensation claims is determined by WorkCover QLD.

4.7.8 Additional duties

The University may, if required, request an Employee to carry out critical duties relevant to the University's activities during the period of the Program. Under these circumstances the University may grant an extension of time beyond the period of the approved Program.

4.7.9 Variations to the Program

Employees are expected to pursue the approved Program.

All variations must be reported to, and receive prior approval of, the Head of Organisational Unit, except for illness or emergencies where advice should be provided to the Head as soon as possible following the incident.

Where medically certified periods of leave greater than two weeks interrupt the Program, the Employee may apply to the Head of Organisational Unit, with a copy to the People Portfolio, to have the period regarded as leave other than the Program.

Unauthorised variations or failure to complete the Program may result in the University requiring the Employee to refund a proportion of any financial assistance paid.

4.7.10 Service on return

Approvals granted will be subject to a commitment by the Employee not to undertake any of the following actions in the period following the Program (calculated as a period equal to twice the duration of the approved Program, to a maximum of 12 months):

- retirement
- resignation from the University (other than on the grounds of ill health)
- access a continuous period of extended leave in excess of four weeks (with the exception of medically certified personal leave, or parental leave).

Employees on fixed-term appointments must be able to fulfil this requirement prior to the end of their current appointment, or within an approved subsequent fixed-term appointment.

In instances where resignation or retirement occurs within the specified periods outlined above, the Employee may be required to repay to the University on a pro-rata basis the Program financial assistance and up to half the salary paid during the period of the Program. The amount repaid will be in proportion to the time served upon return from the period of the Program.

4.7.11 Completion of Program reports

An Employee must submit a Program report to the Head of Organisational Unit within three months of return from the Program using the Program Report Template. To be deemed acceptable, the report must indicate that the Program conformed to the stated objectives.

An Employee who fails to submit an acceptable report within six months may, at the discretion of the University on the recommendation of the Head of Organisational Unit, be required to refund the amount of financial assistance received.

Reports will be used in considering the eligibility of the Employee for future Programs. Employees will not be considered eligible for future periods of the Program until an acceptable report has been submitted to the Head.

5 Delegated Responsibilities

Approver	Level of Delegation
Chair, Assessment Panel	Approval or otherwise of the Program applications

6 References

Nil.

7 Schedules

This Procedure must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the

table below.

8 Procedure Information

Accountable Officer	Chief People Officer
Responsible Officer	Chief People Officer
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Performance, Development and Recognition Policy
Subordinate Schedules	
Approved Date	2/8/2023
Effective Date	2/8/2023
Review Date	11/8/2027
Relevant Legislation	Fringe Benefits Tax Assessment Act 1986 Enterprise Agreement
Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	Travel Policy
Related Procedures	Doctoral Support Program Procedure Leave of Absence Procedure Outside Employment Undertaken by University Employees Procedure Recognition of Prior Service Procedure Travel Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade People Portfolio Website Outside Employment Application Forms Program Application Form Program Information Guidelines for Applicants and Supervisors Program Report Template

	Program Variation Form
Definitions	<p>Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary</p> <p>Decision</p> <p>A determination made by an Employee, contractor or other authorised delegate in the course of their duties on behalf of the University.</p> <p>Delegate (noun)</p> <p>Delegate (noun) means the officer, Employee or committee of the University to whom, or to which, a delegation of authority has been made under this Policy.</p> <p>Delegation</p> <p>A formal authority or power granted to Council members, Employees and Council committees to make Decisions on behalf of the University.</p> <p>Direct Costs</p> <p>Costs incurred in, and directly attributable to, the production of Goods and/or Services that can be reliably measured.</p> <p>Employee</p> <p>A person employed by the University and whose conditions of employment are covered by the Enterprise Agreement and includes persons employed on a continuing, fixed term or casual basis. Employees also include senior Employees whose conditions of employment are covered by a written agreement or contract with the University.</p> <p>Expenditure</p> <p>Decreases in economic benefits during the Reporting Period in the form of outflows or depletions of Assets or incurrences of liabilities that result in decreases in equity. This encompasses losses as well as expenses that arise in the ordinary course of business.</p> <p>Higher Degree by Research (HDR)</p> <p>A Research Doctorate or Research Masters program for which at least two-thirds of the Student load for the program is required as research work.</p> <p>Indirect Costs</p>

Costs that are not directly attributable to the production of Goods/Services but are necessarily incurred by the organisation in operational support of the organisational unit producing the product/s.

[Information](#)

Any collection of data that is processed, analysed, interpreted, organised, classified or communicated in order to serve a useful purpose, present facts or represent knowledge in any medium or form. This includes presentation in electronic (digital), print, audio, video, image, graphical, cartographic, physical sample, textual or numerical form.

[Insurance](#)

The equitable transfer of the Risk of a loss from one entity to another in exchange for payment. It is a form of Risk Management primarily used to hedge against the Risk of a contingent, uncertain loss. An Insurer, or Insurance carrier, is a company selling the Insurance. The insured, or policyholder, is the person or entity buying the Insurance policy for a premium. The insured receives a contract (called the Insurance policy), which details the conditions and circumstances under which the insured will be financially compensated.

[Policy](#)

A high level strategic directive that establishes a principle based approach on a subject. Policy is operationalised through Procedures that give instructions and set out processes to implement a Policy.

[Procedure](#)

An operational instruction that sets out the process to operationalise a Policy.

[Semester](#)

A period of time during which instruction is provided, learning is undertaken and Assessment is carried out. There are three Semester periods during an Academic Year, known consecutively as Semester 1, Semester 2 and Semester 3.

[Student](#)

A person who is enrolled in a UniSQ Upskill Course or who is admitted to an Award Program or Non-Award Program offered by the University and is: currently enrolled in one or more Courses or study units; or not currently enrolled but is on an approved Leave of

	Absence or whose admission has not been cancelled.
	Thesis
	Also known as a Standard Thesis, is the material outcomes of a program of research. It is also referred to as a 'dissertation'.
	University
	The term 'University' or 'UniSQ' means the University of Southern Queensland.
	Vice-Chancellor
	The person bearing the title of Vice-Chancellor and President, or as otherwise defined in the University of Southern Queensland Act 1998, including a person acting in that position.
	Definitions that relate to this procedure only
Keywords	Academic Professional Development Program, professional development, ADOSP, Academic Development and Outside Studies Program
Record No	13/222PL