Doctoral Support 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 Doctoral Support Program (the Program).

2 Scope

This Procedure applies to all eligible full-time or fractional Employees in academic positions within the University who hold a continuing, contingent, or fixed-term appointment of more than 12 months duration who are currently active in a doctoral program.

3 Procedure Overview

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

4 Procedures

4.1 Purpose of the Program

This Program provides eligible Employees with a period of release from normal duties to significantly progress with or finalise their doctoral program.

4.2 Program duration

Eligible Employees may apply for a planned Program with a duration of up to four months.

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 two months instead of a 0.5 fractional rate for four months with the approval of the Delegate.

4.3 Program categories

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

4.3.1 Post-Confirmation of Candidature

This category aims to provide an Employee who has their doctoral candidature confirmed with a period of absence from teaching and administrative duties in order to progress their doctoral program. An applicant applying under this category has to provide evidence of confirmation of candidature in writing from the relevant institution.

4.3.2 Doctoral completion

This category aims to provide Employees who are close to submission of their doctoral Thesis, with a period of absence from teaching and administrative duties in order to finalise their doctoral program. Employees undertaking this Program category are required to complete and submit their Thesis for examination at the end of the approved Program period. An applicant applying under this category has to provide evidence of near completion of their doctoral Thesis as follows:

- Submission of a letter of progress outlining activities to date in regards to doctoral completion, no later than six weeks prior to the program commencement date.

- Provision of evidence that the Thesis is at least 80% complete (i.e. draft Thesis), verified by the applicant's doctoral Principal Supervisor and Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Coordinator, no later than two weeks prior to the program commencement date.

4.3.3 Program sub-categories

As part of the University's commitment to promoting and enhancing the careers of women and First Nations peoples, a number of Program opportunities in each category will be made available specifically for applicants who identify as a member of these groups.

In this instance, applicants are considered only against other applicants within that group and not the wider applicant pool across the University.

Employees who identify with the above groups are strongly encouraged to apply for the Doctoral Support Program.

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, contingent, and fixed-term Employees in academic positions within the University (excluding casual appointments), are eligible to apply for the Program when they have completed a minimum of 12 months service at the University in a full-time or fractional academic appointment.

Normally a minimum of three years is required between Programs.

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

Applications must be made on the relevant Doctoral Support Program 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.

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 organisational 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 the 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 input from other relevant senior teaching or 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

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

- Reasonableness of costs with respect to Program objectives and outcomes;

- Capability to deliver and to achieve the outcomes as evidenced by track record;

- Current stage and progress of doctoral program.

4.6.4 Notification of outcomes

Following the Decision, the applicant and Head of Organisational Unit will be advised of the Decision in writing by the Chief People Officer. 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 Salary and replacement costs

Employees participating in an approved Program will receive their substantive salary, excluding any allowances. 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 University will provide a contribution to the work area towards the replacement costs of the salary and on-costs of the Employee for the period of approved absence from the workplace on the Program, up to a maximum of $25,000 per Employee. The anticipated replacement costs are to be calculated and confirmed by the Head of Organisational Unit as part of the application for the Program.

Any additional funding required over and above Program contributions are to be met by the relevant work area budget.

4.7.2 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.

4.7.3 Additional duties

The University may, if required, request an Employee to carry out essential 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.

4.7.4 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.

4.7.5 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 8 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 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.

4.7.6 Completion of Program reports

An Employee must submit a Program report to their Head of Organisational Unit and People Portfolio within three months of return from the Program. To be deemed acceptable, the report must indicate that the Program met the stated objectives.

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.

5 Delegated Responsibilities

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

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	[Enterprise Agreement](#)
Policy Exceptions	[Policy Exceptions Register](#)
Related Policies	
Related Procedures	[Leave of Absence Procedure](#) [Recognition of Prior Service Procedure](#)
Related forms,	[People Portfolio Website](#)

publications and websites	Outside Employment Application Forms
Definitions	**Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary**
	Decision A determination made by an Employee, contractor or other authorised delegate in the course of their duties on behalf of the University. Delegate (noun) 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. Delegation A formal authority or power granted to Council members, Employees and Council committees to make Decisions on behalf of the University. Employee 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. Higher Degree by Research (HDR) 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. Higher Degree by Research (HDR) Coordinator The HDR Coordinator is responsible for managing and supporting HDR candidates within an organisational unit. For UniSQ Schools, the HDR Coordinator is the Associate Head of School (Research) or nominee/s. For UniSQ Centres, the HDR Coordinator is the Associate Centre Director or nominee/s. For UniSQ Colleges, the HDR Coordinator is the Head of College or nominee/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. **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. **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 Development and Outside Studies Program, PhD program, doctoral support program, doctoral program
Record No	22/515PL