

## **Policy Redesign Project**

*All policies and procedures are being reviewed as part of this project. This document is pending review, but remains in effect until the review is carried out.*

## **Outside Studies Program**

**Establishment:** Council, 27 May 1994

**Last Amended:** 17 June 2020

**Nature of Amendment:** Update to reflect current position titles, academic organisational structure and gender-neutral language

**Date Last Reviewed:**

**Responsible Officer:** Director, People and Culture

These procedures provide additional detail to give practical effect to [clause 67 OUTSIDE STUDIES PROGRAM](#) of the Enterprise Agreement 2019.

### **1. General Principles**

**1.1** The Outside Studies Program (OSP) enables staff to carry out a range of activities consistent with the strategic objectives of the School and/or the University during a period of paid release from normal academic responsibilities, including one or more of the following:

- undertaking research
- gaining experience to improve and enhance professional knowledge
- developing links with external organisations, e.g. industry
- developing teaching or curriculum materials
- undertaking studies for the completion of a higher degree

**1.2** The ultimate authority for the administration of the Outside Studies Program lies with the College Vice-President and Executive Dean/Portfolio Head, who may delegate authority for aspects of the program to a committee, or other staff member(s).

**1.3** The University's Academic Performance Review Scheme should be used as a basis for the staff member and supervisor, normally the College Dean (People and Resources), to identify the potential use of OSP to achieve desired goals.

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**1.4** Although a staff member may be eligible to apply to undertake an OSP, no applicant has a right to take a program, and the University has no obligation to grant the application.

**1.5** Staff undertaking approved programs will continue to be covered for workers compensation (work-related illness or injury only).

## **2. Responsibilities**

**2.1** Each College/Portfolio will:

**2.1.1** determine the process for considering and approving OSP applications;

**2.1.2** publicise the relevant timelines (including deadlines for applications) for consideration of OSP applications by the beginning of each teaching year; and

**2.1.3** determine and manage the financial assistance available to staff members undertaking programs (refer 7).

For academic staff located in Portfolios, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students) will undertake the above responsibilities.

**2.2** A staff member will:

**2.2.1** apply for OSP in accordance with the procedures and timelines established by their College/Portfolio;

**2.2.2** obtain prior approval from the Vice-President and Executive Dean/Portfolio Head for any significant change(s) to their program;

**2.2.3** return to the University following an OSP by the date agreed as part of the approved program and resume all normal duties;

**2.2.4** submit a satisfactory report in accordance with OSP Report Guidelines within two months of return from the program to her/his supervisor.

**2.3** The applicant's supervisor will:

**2.3.1** assess each application in accordance with clause 67.3 and, where applicable, take into account whether the objectives of previous programs were met, before forwarding to the Vice-President and Executive Dean/Portfolio Head (or approving body);

**2.3.2** evaluate each report submitted by the staff member on return from OSP to determine whether the objectives of the program were met, before forwarding it to the Vice-President and Executive Dean/Portfolio Head (or approving body) for noting; and

**2.3.3** if the program objectives have not been met, advise the staff member and take action as necessary.

**2.4** The Vice-President and Executive Dean/Portfolio Head (or approving body) will:

**2.4.1** consider applications in accordance with clause 67.1 and the procedures established under 2.1.1; and

**2.4.2** where an application is not approved, provide written reasons for the non-approval to the staff member concerned.

**2.5** People and Culture will:

**2.5.1** determine the eligibility of staff to apply for OSP and maintain an OSP record for each eligible staff member from which qualifying service can be calculated;

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**2.5.2** facilitate payment of any financial assistance, as appropriate; and

**2.5.3** determine the transfer of prior service as qualifying service, if requested (refer clause 5 below).

### **3. Qualifying Service**

**3.1** A staff member's continuous service at the University will determine the period of OSP available to them, calculated at the rate of 6 weeks of OSP for each 12 months of continuous service, to a maximum of 80 months' qualifying service (40 weeks of OSP). Employment in the University where breaks in service do not exceed two months is regarded as continuous service. Although not breaking continuity of service, the actual period of any such break in service does not count as service.

**3.2** Eligible fractional staff will accrue qualifying service on the same basis as full-time staff.

**3.3** Staff will continue to accrue qualifying service during any period of OSP.

**3.4** Any periods of unpaid leave will not normally count as qualifying service, except in exceptional circumstances approved by the Vice-President and Executive Dean/Portfolio Head.

### **4. Timing and Length of Programs**

**4.1** Outside Studies Programs are granted on the basis of full weeks.

**4.2** Following an initial program, further periods of OSP may be applied for at any interval, provided that the staff member has:

**4.2.1** met the requirements of clause 67.2;

**4.2.2** accumulated the requisite qualifying service;

**4.2.3** met the specified objectives of any previous OSP to the satisfaction of the supervisor; and

**4.2.4** submitted their report from any previous OSP, as required under 2.2.4.

### **5. Transferability of Service**

**5.1** The following provisions apply to the transfer of qualifying service from a prior institution:

**5.1.1** the staff member must accrue entitlements by virtue of the prior service to a scheme comparable to that of Flinders University;

**5.1.2** any period of outside studies taken at the prior institution is taken into account in determining the amount of entitlement to be transferred;

**5.1.3** any entitlement transferred is assessed in terms of the University's formula for determining qualifying service; and

**5.1.4** the break in service between institutions does not exceed two months.

The transferability provisions do not apply to staff who are employed on a casual basis or to staff whose salaries are paid from external funds which make no provisions for outside studies programs.

**5.2** New staff members seeking transfer of qualifying service must do so, in writing, to the Director, People and Culture (or delegate), within 6 months of commencing employment at the University.

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## 6. Financial Support

**6.1** Eligible staff may apply for financial support in the form of a contribution towards travel expenses. This support is not automatic and will not exceed travel expenses necessarily incurred by the staff member. The following amounts provide a guide for the level of financial support, dependent on location and duration of the program, and may require adjustment where support from external sources is offered.

**6.1.1** Programs in Australia (normally outside of South Australia) and New Zealand up to \$2,000

**6.1.2** Overseas Programs (outside Australia and New Zealand) where the period of absence from South Australia is:

**6.1.2.1** up to and including 2 weeks: up to \$2,000

**6.1.2.2** over 2 weeks and up to and including 6 weeks: up to \$2,500

**6.1.2.3** 7 weeks and up to and including 12 weeks: up to \$3,500

**6.1.2.4** over 12 weeks: up to \$4,500

The levels of financial support will be reviewed every 3 years.

**6.2** Colleges/Portfolios may increase the above levels of support, but will not approve contributions in excess of actual travel expenses incurred.

**6.3** Fractional staff are entitled to the same level of financial support as full-time staff.

**6.4** An adjustment may be made to the financial support provided to the staff member if the program is significantly changed.

**6.5** A staff member will be required to refund to the University any money received as financial support if they do not subsequently meet the requirement to return under clause 67.2.1.

**6.6** A staff member who expects to receive financial assistance from sources outside of the University and/or to undertake additional paid work during OSP must comply with the University's Policy on Outside Professional Activities and disclose the details on their OSP application, including, if necessary, verification that it has been formally approved as Outside Professional Activity.

## 7. Payment of Salary and Leave Entitlements / Accruals

**7.1** A staff member will continue to receive normal salary while absent on a program and all leave entitlements will continue to accrue for the duration of the program.

**7.2** A staff member may apply to take a period of long service leave with an OSP.

**7.3** The College Vice-President and Executive Dean/Portfolio Head may authorise the reinstatement of OSP qualifying service if the staff member is unable to undertake part of their program due to illness or unexpected resumption of duty, on production of appropriate supporting documentation.

## 8. Non-Approval of Application

Where an OSP application is not approved, the staff member should first discuss the reason(s) for non-approval with their supervisor. Where appropriate, the staff member may wish to take the matter up with the College Vice-President and Executive Dean/Portfolio Head, with whom the final decision will rest.

### Related Links

[Outside Studies Application Form](#)   [Outside Studies Report Guidelines](#)