Outside Studies Program (Higher Education) Policy

Policy Code: HR1535

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Purpose

1. The (OSP) is designed to support the continual professional development of academic staff in order to assist the University (FedUni) to attain its objectives.

2. OSP is designed to give members of the academic staff of the University the opportunity to undertake research, creative and professional activity or the scholarship of teaching in areas of identified strategic importance to the University and to the professional development of the employee, which cannot normally be undertaken within the employee’s duties at the University.

3. OSP provides an employee with the opportunity, uninterrupted by teaching or other duties:
   i. to undertake professional development relevant to research, teaching, the supervision of postgraduate students and/or professional or creative activity; and
   ii. to do one of more of the following:
      • engage in research;
      • engage in the scholarship of teaching;
      • maintain and improve professional and vocational knowledge;
      • engage in creative or performing arts practice;
      • obtain experience in the work for which the employee is preparing students; and/or
      • gain academic leadership and management experience.

Scope

This policy applies to all academic staff of the University who hold continuing or fixed term appointments.
Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Staff:</th>
<th>refers to the University staff who are employed at Academic Levels A to E.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OSP:</td>
<td>Outside Studies Program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Supervisor:</td>
<td>is the senior academic staff member to whom the member of academic staff reports.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Policy Statement

Principles

This policy is based on principles of:

a. recruitment, retention and development of high performing academic staff who contribute to the University’s mission;

b. fairness and flexibility in workplace arrangements;

c. organisational productivity and performance;

d. commitment to transparency of process, based on merit and equal opportunity for all academic staff; and

e. recognition of diversity in the ways in which academic staff contribute to the University’s mission and the wide variety of academic work which is appropriate to that mission.

Eligibility

1. The following employees shall be eligible to participate in the OSP:

a. Continuing academic staff who have been employees of the University for three (3) or more years prior to the commencement date of the session for which application is being made, or who have been granted equivalent credit from another approved institution.  
   NOTE: Academic staff appointed to a continuing position shall be eligible only after satisfactorily completing their Final Probationary Review.

b. Academic staff who have been employed on a fixed-term appointment of more than three (3) years prior to the commencement date of the session for which application is being made, or whose combined continuous fixed-term employment exceeds three (3) years.  
   NOTE: The granting of OSP shall be conditional upon the employee satisfactorily completing their Final Probationary Review and being able to fulfil the requisite period of after-service prior to the expiration of their fixed-term appointment.

c. A Dean shall be eligible to undertake OSP subject to the approval of a proposed program by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

2. Eligibility to participate in the OSP is subject to satisfactory performance, as determined through the University’s performance management process.

3. OSP is normally a co-operative venture whereby employees assume additional teaching, administration or other responsibilities to enable other members of their Faculty to have a period free of normal academic duties.

4. Any eligible employee with at least two (2) years’ service since the last day of return from an OSP, for which they have submitted a final report, may submit an application for an OSP and receive conditional approval. The OSP shall not commence, however, until at least three (3) years have elapsed since completing the last OSP.

5. As appropriate, on taking up an appointment, an employee may apply to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for credit for OSP purposes, arising from immediate previous full-time employment in an Australian university or in an approved tertiary institution. Credit may be given where an employee can establish that...
service with the previous institution contributed to an eligibility for OSP but that such credit was not availed of by accepting an appointment with the University. Written proof that such credit has been granted must be submitted with the application.

Conditions

The OSP may be undertaken in Australia or overseas for a period of up to six (6) months, normally no longer than one (1) semester. In special circumstances, a longer period may be approved.

An employee who is granted OSP shall, prior to departure or leave, complete a written undertaking to return to the service of the University, for a period equal to the duration of leave. In the event of that period of after-service not being completed due to the employee's departure from the University during the course of an OSP or during the prescribed period of after-service, FedUni shall be reimbursed on a pro rata basis an amount to the value of the grant funding provided and of any salary paid in advance and representing service not completed.

An employee shall not make any significant changes to an approved OSP without first obtaining written approval from the Dean and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

Unless an employee has had leave approved in addition to an OSP, the employee shall resume duty at the University, immediately following the end of the term of absence allowed under an approved OSP.

An employee shall, within two (2) months of resuming duty; submit a satisfactory report and statements of external grants, earnings and expenditure to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) through their supervising officer and Dean. This documentation will be maintained by office of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

Financial Support

Staff proceeding on an OSP may apply for a grant towards the substantiated costs of undertaking the Outside Studies Program up to the maximum amount detailed in the section titled Grant Funding - Item 1 of the Outside Studies Program (Higher Education) Procedure.

The number of applications approved in a calendar year shall be limited by the funds available, and depend upon the nature of the applications received.

Responsibility

The Director, Human Resources is responsible for developing, reviewing and overseeing the policy, procedure and forms for the Outside Studies Program.

Legislative Context

Nil.

Associated Documents

- Outside Studies Program (Higher Education) Procedure.

Implementation

The Outside Studies Program (Higher Education) Policy will be implemented throughout the University via:
1. an Announcement Notice under ‘FedNews’ on the ‘FedUni’ website and through the University Policy - ‘Recently Approved Documents’ and ‘Policy Search’ webpages to alert the University-wide community of the approved Policy;

2. inclusion on the University's online Policy Library; and

3. a memorandum from the Director, Human Resources to all Deans.