

# Outside Studies Program (Higher Education) Procedure

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## Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to describe how to apply for the Outside Studies Program (OSP) and how to select and approve OSP applications based on their merit.

## Scope

This procedure applies to academic staff who are applying for OSP, and staff involved in selecting or approving applications for OSP.

## Definitions

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

## Actions

### Application and Advertising

1. The relevant Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) shall advise academic staff in February and July respectively for the Autumn and Spring semesters (teaching periods 1 and 3) of the following year for the purposes of:
  - a. specifying the budget allocation for the scheme;
  - b. re-stating the scheme's objectives;
  - c. advising that applications are to be submitted on the prescribed Application Form and accompanied by all documentation required by the guidelines; and
  - d. specifying the closing date for applications.
2. Applications shall close in **April and September** respectively for the Autumn and Spring semesters of the following year.
3. An employee seeking a period of OSP shall complete the prescribed Application Form and submit it to the Dean. The form, along with all relevant supporting materials, must reach the Dean by the advertised closing date.

## Selection

### Eligibility

Eligible academic staff, as specified in the Eligibility section of the [Outside Studies Program \(Higher Education\) Policy](#), who apply for OSP will have their applications competitively considered by the School OSP Committee chaired by the Dean of School against the objectives and priorities of the School and the University.

## Membership of the University Outside Studies Program Committee

The membership of the School OSP Committee will be as follows:

- a. Dean (Chair);
- b. Two (2) academic staff members of the School, nominated by the Dean, at least one (1) of whom shall be a professor or associate professor; and
- c. A member of the professoriate external to the School, approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

**NOTE:** The Dean and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) shall consult to ensure that the Committee includes appropriate gender representation.

## Terms of Reference

1. The terms of reference of the School OSP Committees shall be to:
  - a. make recommendations to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) regarding applications to participate in OSP;
  - b. evaluate application for OSP and rank them in order of merit;
  - c. recommend to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic);
  - d. funding and any approval conditions to govern participation in the OSP; and
  - e. review OSP reports and make recommendations to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) on their adequacy and promulgation within the University.

2. The Dean and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) shall consult to provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants, on request, and/or to seek further clarification or resubmission of an application.

## Selection Criteria

1. An OSP proposal will be considered in relation to the following:
  - a. **the needs of the University.**

Applicants will be expected to show how their particular OSP proposal will assist the University and the School to achieve the strategic objectives of the University and School;
  - b. the potential professional development benefit expected to accrue from the OSP;
  - c. an assessment of the applicant's contribution to the University and the School, the extent to which the applicant's OSP proposal supports the University's and School's priorities and the capacity of the University to cover the applicant's workload.

In making this assessment, the School OSP Committee shall consider as appropriate:

    - the applicant's teaching, research, publication record, artistic productions, consultancies, professional activities, scholarly activities and academic leadership roles;
    - the applicant's capacity to obtain benefit from the proposed OSP as evidenced, *inter alia*, by demonstrable academic or administrative developments resulting from any previous OSP;
    - the applicant's professional development needs; and
    - the location(s) of the proposed OSP, which may be undertaken either in Australia or overseas. An OSP application should indicate why the location chosen is the most appropriate for the proposed program and how such a program would be of demonstrable benefit to the University;
  - d. **the duration of the OSP.**

An OSP may be for any period up to a maximum of six (6) months, normally including no more than one (1) teaching semester. The amount of financial support will be proportionately adjusted for lesser periods of leave. In special circumstances, a longer period may be approved; and
  - e. the length of time since the applicant's last OSP and evidence of productive outcomes from that leave, including a final report.
2. As the main function of OSP is to support the continual professional development of academic staff and provide a period uninterrupted by teaching and other duties, the following activities will not normally be supported:
  - a. visiting a number of tertiary institutions for briefings about the applicant's specialisation; or
  - b. attending a conference or congress, including as an office-bearer or invited speaker.

## Financial Support

### Annual Budget

The funds available for OSP places will be determined in advance as part of the annual operating budget of the University. This funding will be provided through an OSP levy on each School proportionate to their academic staff numbers.

The number of applications approved in a calendar year shall be limited by the funds available, depend upon the nature of the applications received and generally reflect each School's levy.

### Grant Funding

1. 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 as detailed in Notional Rates for Outside Studies Program Grants

for 2015. Additionally, a School may augment, from non-operating grant sources, the approved grant up to a further 25% of the approved amount.

**NOTE:** The grant amounts and School supplementation are adjusted with salary indexation.

2. In determining the amount of the grant, the following procedure shall apply:
  - a. Normally, no quantum of costs other than those substantiated at the time of application will qualify for the grant; it is recognised that the documentation details may vary between conditional and final approval stages.
  - b. Documentation should clearly identify supporting information relating to the person(s) and/or institution(s) to be visited, and should specifically relate to the needs of the OSP.
  - c. On returning to duty, the employee shall submit a substantiated statement of expenses to the Dean and to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).
  - d. To be eligible for a grant for a spouse and/or each dependent child, any such persons must accompany the employee for a continuous period of at least six (6) weeks during the OSP.
  - e. The term "spouse" shall include a partner where the employee certifies to FedUni that the partnership meets each of the following conditions for a *bona fide de facto* relationship, namely:
    - the relationship is publicly known and deemed to be permanent; and
    - the partners maintain a common household.
  - f. The term "dependent child" shall normally mean a child under 18 years of age who is wholly dependent on the employee.
  - g. If an employee receives remuneration by way of salary and/or allowances from sources outside FedUni in excess of 25% of his/her substantive salary, the grant payable in connection with the OSP to the employee and family may be reduced, in advance or retrospectively, at the discretion of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).
3. The grant shall be paid up to two (2) months prior to the commencement of the OSP.
4. An employee, on submission of a detailed statement of earnings and expenditure on return from an OSP, may apply to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for an adjustment of any grant withheld.
5. An OSP may be taken consecutively with an approved period of leave, namely annual leave, long service leave or special leave with or without pay. Leave must be approved by the employee's supervisor before the OSP commences, and submitted to People and Culture.
6. During the period of the OSP, an employee shall, subject to normal deductions, receive the amount of full salary, including any increments due. At the request of the employee to People and Culture, half of this amount will be payable as salary in fortnightly instalments, and half as an allowance. The allowance will be paid, on request, as a lump sum in advance, up to two (2) months prior to the commencement of the OSP.

## Living Away From Home Allowance

1. Employees may qualify to salary sacrifice amounts related to additional food and accommodation costs while away from their usual place of residence for work-related reasons such as professional development. Under FBT legislation, the Living Away From Home Allowance (LAFHA) is a fringe benefit; it is not an additional payment.
2. To request the Living Away from Home Allowance, the applicant needs to contact Financial Services who will calculate the fortnightly amount to be salary packaged based on the Australian Taxation Office's guidelines for reasonable food amounts for the number of adults and children living away from home and the amount stated on the rental agreement or invoice for accommodation.
3. Employees then need to complete and submit the "Salary Packaging Agreement and Authority" documentation.
- 4.

## Approval

1. When recommending applications to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), the School OSP Committee shall verify that:
  - a. applications have been submitted in the required format;
  - b. applicants meet the eligibility requirements [as specified in the Eligibility section of the [Outside Studies Program \(Higher Education\) Policy](#)] and selection criteria [as specified in the Selection Criteria section of the [Outside Studies Program \(Higher Education\) Procedure](#)];
  - c. proposed absences of employees on an OSP in any semester will not exceed the limit set by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) which would not normally be more than two employees per School per Teaching Period; and
  - d. appropriate finance is available (through OSP annual budgetary allocations or from School sources).
2. The role of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) in the approval procedure, in consultation with the Dean, involves:
  - a. determining conditional approvals;
  - b. advising successful and unsuccessful applicants;
  - c. providing final approval, and
  - d. providing feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

## Conditions of Approval

1. When the School OSP Committee has made its recommendations for OSP approval, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Schools and Programs) shall determine conditional approvals.
2. At any time after receiving conditional approval, and normally no later than two (2) months prior to the proposed start of the OSP, the employee shall submit to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Schools and Programs) the following documentation:
  - a. evidence that all necessary arrangements have been made with the host institutions, corporations or individuals necessary to achieve the objectives of the OSP;
  - b. details of the person(s) accompanying the applicant during the period of the OSP, as well as substantiated costs and other *bona fide* expenses that need to be taken into account when finally confirming the grant funding;
  - c. certification in respect of spouse or dependent's grants, and
  - d. a signed undertaking by the employee to return to the University after the OSP, in accordance with the conditions specified in the Conditions section of the [Outside Studies Program \(Higher Education\) Policy](#).
3. When the material required, specified under Item 2 above, has been verified, the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor shall determine final approval and notify the employee accordingly.
4. If an employee wants to change the approved arrangements for an OSP, then he/she must first gain approval from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Schools and Programs) on the recommendation of the Dean of School.
5. If, for any reason, an employee decides to cancel his/her approved OSP, then he/she shall notify the Dean of School and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Schools and Programs) as soon as possible.

## Outside Studies Program Report, Abstract and Financial Statement

1. An employee shall, within two (2) months of resuming duty, submit a satisfactory report and statements of external grants, earnings and expenditures to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) through his/her Dean.  
**NOTE:** This report and its abstract should be sufficiently detailed and informative to form the basis of an assessment of outcomes.
2. If an OSP report is not received three (3) months after the employee has resumed duty following the OSP leave, the employee will be notified by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) that, unless a report is received within a further one (1) month (i.e. four months after the employee resumed duty) and, in the absence of any

substantial unforeseen circumstances, the employee may be considered to be in breach of the policy and may be subject to disciplinary action.

**NOTE:** The Dean is responsible to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for monitoring and reporting on OSP by members of academic staff of the School.

## Notional Rates for Outside Studies Program Grants for 2020

	Teaching Period 3 – 2021 & Teaching Period 1 - 2022	
	Max Grant	School Supplement
Employee	\$6,250	\$1,562
Spouse	\$3,124	\$781
Each Dependent child	\$1,563	\$391
Examples		
Employee & spouse	\$9,375	\$2,344
Employee, spouse & 1 child	\$10,938	\$2,735
Employee, spouse & 2 children	\$12,501	\$3,125
Employee, spouse & 3 children	\$14,062	\$3,516
Employee & 1 child	\$7,814	\$1,953
Employee & 2 children	\$9,377	\$2,344

## Responsibilities

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

## Policy Base

- [Outside Studies Program \(Higher Education\) Policy](#).

## Forms/Record Keeping

Title	Location	Responsible Officer	Minimum Retention Period
<i>Outside Studies Program (Higher Education) Application Form</i>	Personal File	Director, People and Culture	5 years
<i>Salary Packaging Agreement and Authority</i>	Personal File	Director, People and Culture	5 years

### Forms.

- [Outside Studies Program Application Form](#) (DOCX 139.9kb)
- [Outside Studies Program Salary Packaging Agreement](#) (DOCX 150.6kb)

## Implementation

The [Outside Studies Program \(Higher Education\) Procedure](#) 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 Procedure;
2. inclusion on the University's online Policy Library;and
3. a memorandum from the Director, People and Culture to all Deans.