Outside Studies Program Policy

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The University provides an Outside Studies Program (OSP) to assist Academic staff in their professional growth and career development, as well as contributing to the overall success of the University. It is the intent to align an OSP with the strategic direction of the University, in order that Academic staff can make a significant contribution to the objectives set out in the Strategic Plan.

Section 2 - Scope

Eligibility

(2) Continuing and Fixed Term Academic staff may apply to undertake an initial period of an OSP that will be between 4 and 24 weeks in duration, provided that probationary requirements and other provisions of this Policy are satisfied. Executive Deans will consider a minimum period of three years tenure before a staff member is eligible to apply for an OSP, except in the case of Contingent-Continuing employment, where the recommended timeline is as follows:

a. within the first three years for new starters;
b. within the first three years for current contingent continuing employment with a 2026 end date;
c. within the first five years for current contingent continuing employment with a 2024 or 2025 end date; or
d. for current contingent continuing employment with an end date of 2023 or earlier, an OSP will remain consistent with this Policy and supporting procedures available to all academics.

(3) Academic Staff who have taken an OSP, will not be eligible to reapply for a subsequent OSP within three years.

Section 3 - Principles

(4) The University seeks to recognise staff who embody the University's values. Successful OSP candidates will include those who demonstrate integrity, and behave in ways that are collaborative, inclusive, entrepreneurial, and drive innovation.

(5) Non-traditional patterns of achievement will be taken into account in the OSP process, such as may be demonstrated by part-time staff, women, Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander staff, people with disabilities and people from non-English speaking backgrounds. Particular consideration will be given to the impact that career breaks and part-time employment have had on applicants with carer responsibilities, and accomplishments determined relative to opportunity.

(6) The participation of Academic staff in an OSP is not an entitlement but is based on the needs of the University, the nature of the proposed program and the capacity of the staff member to make effective use of the OSP period.

(7) An OSP provides for Academic staff, while being paid their substantive salary, to contribute substantially to the goals of the University Strategic Plan by:

a. pursuing sustained research activities in another tertiary institution or research organisation;
b. developing innovative learning and teaching programs that lead to significant national or international opportunities for enhanced course viability and reputation at the University of Canberra; and/or
c. development of industry partnerships, translational research and industry or government placements to expand professional experience relevant to the academic discipline, share industry experience and knowledge to enhance the quality of University programs.

(8) An OSP provides Academic staff with the opportunity to develop new, or strengthen existing national and international research collaborations especially in areas of strategic research focus and with the intention of achieving collaborative research outputs.

(9) Evidence of a successful period of OSP will be measured by:

a. successful publication of research articles in high impact journals;
b. success in achieving competitive grant income or other forms of research income;
c. development of a sustained research partnership/collaboration as evidenced by activities such as joint publications, joint research income and joint PhD supervision; and
d. development of strategic learning and teaching initiatives that lead to significant and sustained programs of enhanced course viability and reputation.

(10) The set period of absence for an OSP is up to 24 weeks. In exceptional cases a maximum period of up to 48 weeks of OSP may be granted, dependent upon the strategic nature of the proposed research program, the benefits accruing to the University, and its affordability.

Section 4 - Responsibilities

Applicants

(11) A staff member who has an Outside Studies Program (OSP) approved must transition all teaching, administrative and examination responsibilities, higher degree supervision and other duties as agreed with the Executive Dean before commencing the OSP.

(12) The OSP recipient will act in accordance with all other University policies and expectations during their course of their OSP, including obligations for management and expense of University funds.

(13) Within three months of return to the University after an OSP, a staff member will submit the following to their Executive Dean:

a. a short summary which gives an overview of the OSP outcomes;
b. a statement of the major objectives as set out in the original application (or in any subsequently approved modifications) and an evaluation of the extent to which the objectives of the program were achieved;
c. an assessment of the academic benefit(s) gained by the staff member and a statement of how this will impact on future education or research performance;
d. a statement of collaborations developed with other institutions or individuals and how these collaborations will be sustained;
e. a list of actual or expected publications, collaborative research projects developed, innovative learning and teaching programs developed, successful or submitted funding applications and joint HDR supervision opportunities developed.

(14) Within six months of return to the University after an OSP, a staff member must present a seminar to the staff of

their Faculty.

Executive Deans

(15) Executive Deans are responsible for assessing and determining the outcome of proposals by Academic staff within their Faculty to undertake OSPs, with reference to the following:

a. the University's strategic vision and objectives, including encouraging development of strategic research focus areas;
b. needs of the Faculty;
c. needs of the staff member, especially for those on a Contingent-Continuing high performance track, and those in the early stages of their academic career;
d. merit of the proposed program in terms of its intended and measurable outcomes and strategies to achieve those outcomes;
e. capacity of the staff member to undertake the program and, on return, to enhance their contribution to the work of the University as a result of the program; and
f. the successful completion of previous OSPs, where applicable, including evidence of a sustained research activity and contribution to the University strategy.

(16) The Performance Expectations for Academic Staff (PEAS), including that:

a. Assistant Professors/Academic Level B/C staff are expected to undertake research programs or develop learning and teaching initiatives that significantly extend their discipline or profession; and
b. Associate Professors/Professors/Academic Level D/E staff are expected to undertake research or learning and teaching programs that bring national and international distinction to the University and their discipline or profession.

Section 5 - Procedures

(17) Refer Outside Studies Program Procedure.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	18th April 2023
Review Date	18th April 2024
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	18th April 2023
Expiry Date	13th September 2026
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