Academic Employee Development Procedure

1 Purpose

To set out the processes for Academic Employee development programs.

2 Scope

This procedure applies to all continuing, fixed-term, and contingent-funded Academic Employees that are eligible to participate in the Academic Professional Development Program and/or the Doctoral Support Program.

3 Procedure Overview

This procedure outlines the opportunities, conditions, and processes of the:

- Academic Professional Development Program
- Doctoral Support Program.

This Procedure aligns with:

- *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021: Standard 3.2 Staffing*

4 Procedures

4.1 Academic Professional Development Program

4.1.1 Purpose

The Academic Professional Development Program (APDP) is a period of release from normal duties for Academic Employees to enable them to improve teaching skills and scholarship, to undertake research, creative work, or clinical innovation, and to make the outcomes public (generally via peer-reviewed outlets), and/or for immediate application to practice within the University. The APDP must align with the University's objectives. The Program is output focused and aims to improve professional and vocational knowledge and skills to assist Employees to establish and renew links with colleagues in appropriate fields outside the University. The goal is to support them to contribute to academic excellence in research and/or

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teaching and enhance their contribution to their organisational unit and the University.

4.1.2 Duration

Eligible Academic Employees may apply for a planned APDP with a duration of two to six months. Applicants are expected to negotiate workload commitments with their Head of Organisational Unit to ensure the Organisational Unit can accommodate the absence.

4.1.3 Categories

Employees seeking to undertake the APDP must apply under at least one of the APDP categories listed below.

Research

Enables an Employee to conduct research and or scholarship which enhances the University's research performance. Applicants on externally funded appointments should provide evidence that the APDP is supported by the external funding agency.

Teaching and learning

Aims to advance learning and teaching within the University by supporting Employees to undertake projects and activities that are of direct strategic and practical benefit to the University in accordance with the University's strategic teaching and learning directions.

Industry

Aims to encourage Academic Employees to build more effective linkages with industry whilst maintaining currency in their discipline. The objective is to provide Employees with the dedicated time to build relationships with industry organisations and partners which enhance the commercialisation of research outputs, improve the quality and currency of curriculum and/or lead to mutually successful collaborations.

4.1.4 Eligibility

All continuing, contingent-funded, and fixed-term Employees in academic positions within the University will be eligible to apply after completing at least three years continuous academic employment prior to the proposed start of the APDP.

Employees on pre-retirement contracts are excluded from APDP.

Normally, a minimum period of three years will be required between APDPs. The University may reduce this to no less than two years, where organisational reasons have required a previously approved application to be deferred.

Employees are not eligible to undertake APDP during a period of probation.

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4.1.5 Criteria for assessing applications

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

- Relevance of activities to be performed and the value of the proposed outcomes to the organisational unit and the University;
- Capability to deliver and to achieve the outcomes as evidenced by track record and, if applicable, evidence of outcomes from previous Programs;
- Reasonableness of costs with respect to Program objectives and proposed outcomes;
- Arrangements to deal with teaching commitments and HDR Student supervision, other administrative arrangements, and committee duties;
- Feedback on the application from the Head of Organisational Unit.

4.1.6 Conditions and entitlements

Financial assistance

The University will provide a contribution towards an Employee's APDP, but such financial assistance is not expected or intended to cover all the costs incurred. Employees undertaking the APDP within Australia will be eligible for financial assistance if they undertake their activities at a location more than 400 kilometres from their regular place of work.

Salary

Employees participating in an approved APDP will receive their substantive salary, excluding any allowances associated with special duties that are discontinued for the duration of the APDP. 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 Head of Organisational Unit will manage any backfill arrangements to cover staff absence from the workplace on the Program within existing budget arrangements in the relevant Division.

Travel

The APDP may be undertaken within Australia or overseas.

All travel undertaken for the purpose of the APDP must comply with the Travel Policy.

Leave accruals

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Employees undertaking APDP will accrue annual leave at the same rate as other service. However, the annual leave accrued during the APDP must be taken by the Employee during the period of the APDP, except where it would cause substantial hardship and where prior approval to defer the leave has been approved by the Head of Organisational Unit.

Insurance

The University maintains a corporate travel Insurance Policy for University Travel and it is the responsibility of the Employee to comply with the Policy.

WorkCover

Employees are covered by WorkCover Insurance while on the APDP and should notify the University as soon as possible if an injury or illness occurs. Employees on annual leave during the APDP are not covered by WorkCover and should consider their own Insurance options during these periods. Liability for workers compensation claims is determined by WorkCover QLD.

4.2 Doctoral Support Program

4.2.1 Purpose

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

4.2.2 Duration

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

4.2.3 Categories

Employees seeking to undertake the Doctoral Support Program must apply under one of the Program categories listed below. Employees may only apply once for each category of the Program.

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.

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.

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.

4.2.4 Eligibility

All continuing, contingent-funded, 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 part-time academic appointment.

4.2.5 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.

4.2.6 Conditions and entitlements

Salary and replacement costs

Employees participating in an approved Doctoral Support Program will receive their substantive salary, excluding any allowances associated with special duties that are discontinued for the duration of the Program.

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.

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

4.3 Application Process

The application process for both the Academic Professional Development Program and Doctoral Support Program is outlined below.

4.3.1 Applications

All Program applications must be made on the approved online form and submitted by the specified closing date.

Applications must contain the following:

- an academic portfolio in the prescribed format
- a Program report (if applicable), signed and approved by the Head of Organisational unit, of the last Program that the Employee undertook.

4.3.2 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 relevant guidelines for further information.

4.3.3 Head of Organisational Unit Statement

Applications must be discussed with the Head of Organisational Unit in the first instance, to confirm the relevance and achievability of the Program's anticipated outcomes. As part of the application process, the Head of Organisational Unit must include a recommendation to support or not support the application with justification. Where multiple applications are received from an organisational unit, the Head will provide feedback and rank the applications according to the relative benefits and achievability of the different applications.

4.3.4 Assessment of Applications

Following the recommendations of the Head of Organisational Unit, all applications (whether recommended by the Head of Organisational Unit or not) will be assessed by a Panel including the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) (Chair) , the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Students and Education) nominee, and the Chair of Academic Board or a nominee.

The Panel may seek the input of other relevant senior teaching and research academic leaders

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in formulating the Decision to approve or otherwise.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) will sign off on the Decision.

4.3.5 Notifications of Outcomes

Following the Decision, the applicant and Head of Organisational Unit will be advised in writing. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research) is responsible for ensuring applicants receive feedback about the reasons for an unsuccessful or revised application.

4.3.6 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.

4.3.7 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.

4.3.8 Variations

Employees are expected to pursue the approved Program.

All variations must be reported to, and receive prior approval of, the Head of Organisational Unit via the online form, except for illness or emergencies where advice should be provided to the Head as soon as possible following the incident. Where personal leave (supported by a medical certificate) of more than two weeks interrupts the Program, the Employee may discuss with the Head of organisational unit to extend the Program by the number of personal leave days taken.

Unauthorised variations or failure to complete the Program may result in the University requiring the Employee to refund a proportion of any financial assistance paid (if applicable).

4.3.9 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 12 months):

- retirement
- resignation from the University (other than on the grounds of ill health)

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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.

4.3.10 Completion Reports

An Employee must submit a Program report to the Head of Organisational Unit within three months of return from the Program using the online form. To be deemed acceptable, the report must indicate that the Program conformed to the stated objectives.

4.4 Delegations

Approver	Level of Delegation
Category 2 Delegate	• Approve Academic Professional Development Program applications • Approve Doctoral Support applications

5 References

Nil.

6 Schedules

This procedure must be read in conjunction with its subordinate schedules as provided in the table below.

7 Procedure Information

Accountable Officer	Chief People Officer
Responsible Officer	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Research)
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Professional Development Policy
Subordinate Schedules	
Approved Date	24/7/2026
Effective Date	24/7/2026

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Review Date	15/4/2029
Relevant Legislation	*Fringe Benefits Tax Assessment Act 1986* Enterprise Agreement
Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	Travel Policy
Related Procedures	Travel Procedure
Related forms, publications and websites	Application Form Academic Development Programs information Completion Report Variation Form
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. Direct Costs Costs incurred in, and directly attributable to, the production of Goods and/or Services that can be reliably measured. 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.

Expenditure

Decreases in economic benefits during the Reporting Period in the form of outflows or depletions of Assets or incurrences of liabilities that result in decreases in equity. This encompasses losses as well as expenses that arise in the ordinary course of business.

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.

Indirect Costs

Costs that are not directly attributable to the production of Goods/Services but are necessarily incurred by the organisation in operational support of the organisational unit producing the product/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.

Insurance

The equitable transfer of the Risk of a loss from one entity to another in exchange for payment. It is a form of Risk Management primarily used to hedge against the Risk of a contingent, uncertain loss. An Insurer, or Insurance carrier, is a company selling the Insurance. The insured, or policyholder, is the person or entity buying the Insurance policy for a premium. The insured receives a contract (called the Insurance policy), which details the conditions and circumstances under which the insured will be financially compensated.

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.

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	Procedure An operational instruction that sets out the process to operationalise a Policy. Semester A period of time during which instruction is provided, learning is undertaken and Assessment is carried out. There are three Semester periods during an Academic Year, known consecutively as Semester 1, Semester 2 and Semester 3. 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	Doctoral support program, Academic Professional Development Program, professional development
Record No	13/222PL

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