Professional Employee Development Procedure

1 Purpose

To set out the processes for Professional Employee development programs.

2 Scope

This procedure applies to all eligible continuing, fixed-term, and contingent-funded Professional Employees.

3 Procedure Overview

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

- Professional Development Leave Program
- Employee Exchange Program.

4 Procedures

4.1 Professional Development Leave Program

The Professional Development Leave (PDL) Program provides an opportunity to encourage the enhancement and development of professional Employees' professional knowledge, skills and abilities through activities undertaken outside the University.

4.1.1 Eligibility

All continuing, fixed-term, and contingent-funded Professional Employees will be eligible to apply for PDL which can be taken after a minimum qualifying period of three years continuous service (excluding casual appointments). A minimum period of three years will normally intervene between periods of PDL.

4.1.2 Duration

The maximum period of PDL will be six months and the minimum period two months.

4.1.3 Location

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PDL will normally be taken outside of the University. The appropriate location is that which will provide most benefit to both the Employee and the University. Justification for the location for PDL should be provided. In the case of an overseas location, the application should indicate why the advantages to be gained by the Employee and University cannot be gained at an Australian location.

4.1.4 Salary and outside earnings

Employees participating in an approved PDL program will normally continue to be paid at their current FTE, classification level, and incremental step. However, in instances where an Employee has had part-time service during the qualifying period, the Employee will be paid during the period of leave at the same average part-time rate as served during the qualifying period.

Alternatively, the Delegate may also elect to approve PDL on half-pay, depending on the benefits the University will derive from the programme and the resources available.

Employees intending to undertake outside employment whilst on PDL must complete an Application for Approval to Undertake Outside Employment form and receive the prior approval of the Delegate.

4.1.5 Financial assistance

The University will provide a contribution towards an Employee's PDL program, but such financial assistance is not expected nor intended to cover all the costs incurred. Employees undertaking PDL 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.

Financial assistance will be provided to a maximum of $4000 per Employee. Additionally, for an Employee travelling away from their home with a dependent partner and/or children*, a further amount of PDL financial assistance of $100 per week for an accompanying dependent partner and $50 per week for each accompanying dependent child (for the actual period of absence from home up to a maximum of 16 weeks) is available, capped at a maximum of $2400 per PDL program.

*A dependent partner/child will be determined in accordance with the Australian Taxation Office definition.

All payments made are subject to taxation and will be reported on the Employee's annual payment summary as a component of gross salary.

Employees applying for PDL will be required to submit a budget estimating the expected Expenditure to be incurred during the period of PDL along with justification for the scale of Expenditure. All travel arrangements and quotations are to be made directly by the Employee.

4.1.6 Insurance

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

4.1.7 WorkCover

WorkCover Insurance may apply if an Employee is injured on PDL. All circumstances of the injury would be considered by WorkCover upon receipt of a claim.

4.1.8 Leave accruals

Employees undertaking PDL will accrue annual leave at the same rate as other services. However, the annual leave accrued during the PDL program must be taken by the Employee during the period of the PDL, except where it would cause substantial hardship and where prior approval to defer the leave has been approved by a Delegate.

4.1.9 How to apply

Applications are required one year in advance of the anticipated period of PDL.

Applications must be discussed with the Employee's Supervisor in the first instance. The Employee and Supervisor will consider the details of the proposed program including:

- the nature and purpose of the program, e.g., specific activities, dates, locations, outcomes/benefits expected from PDL;
- how the program meets the needs of the individual work area and the strategic or operational plans within the individual work area;
- what arrangements may be needed to cover the Employee's commitments during the period of PDL including budgetary and workforce planning considerations;
- the merit of the application with respect to the individual work area's current and future needs;
- the merit of the application with respect the University's current and future needs;
- the Employee's capacity to make effective use of such an opportunity;
- the Employee's ability to benefit from the program and to provide Information to others within the University; and
- financial and budget details (e.g., remuneration details, including income expected, travel costs, assistance required).

Consideration of proposals which involve a period of time overseas shall be based on the

normal criteria together with the evidence that appropriate and satisfactory opportunities are not available in Australia.

The Supervisor will make a recommendation to the Category 4 Delegate and offer an opinion as to the relevance of the program, the benefits to both the Employee and the individual work area and any staffing and budgetary considerations necessary to cover the applicant's work commitments.

The Category 4 Delegate will then consider the application and the recommendations of the Supervisor. If the Category 4 Delegate is satisfied that the work of the area can be carried out in a satisfactory manner in the Employee's absence, the application will be forwarded onto the Category 3 Delegate for approval or otherwise, and forwarded to the People Portfolio for processing.

4.1.10 Service on return

Approvals granted will be subject to a commitment by the Employee not to retire or resign (other than on the grounds of ill health) within a period equal to twice the duration of the approved leave to a maximum of twelve months, following the period of PDL. 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.

In instances where resignation or retirement occurs within the specified periods outlined above, the Employee may be required to repay to the University on a pro-rata basis the PDL financial assistance and up to half of any salary paid during the period of PDL. The amount repaid will be in proportion to the time served upon return from the period of Professional Development Leave.

4.1.11 Report on PDL

An Employee must provide a formal report to the Category 3 Delegate at the conclusion of the program. The report must indicate the extent to which the program conformed with the stated objectives.

Reports will be used in considering the eligibility of the employee for any future PDL.

4.2 Employee Exchange Program

The Employee Exchange Program (EEP) is available to enhance an Employee's career and professional development in relation to innovative ideas and methods of their particular discipline through an exchange program with an outside organisation.

4.2.1 Eligibility

All continuing, fixed-term Professional Employees appointed for more than 12 months, and contingent-funded Professional Employees appointed for more than 12 months, are eligible to

apply for EEP.

An exchange will normally be approved only if the exchangees have similar areas of expertise and experience or other arrangements are possible to cover the position's workload.

Initial arrangements for exchange will normally be undertaken by the University Employee interested in an exchange, in consultation with the Delegate.

4.2.2 Location

An exchange may be arranged within Australia or overseas.

4.2.3 Duration

The period of absence from the University on exchange will be up to a maximum of six months.

4.2.4 Leave entitlements

Leave entitlements remain unchanged.

4.2.5 Accommodation and travel

Accommodation and travel arrangements, including visas, are the private responsibility of exchangees. Refer to 4.2.7 for financial assistance details.

The Employee will be responsible for arranging any visas or work permits through the appropriate agency.

4.2.6 Salary and financial assistance

While an Employee is on exchange, the University will be responsible for the Employee's salary but not for the salary or associated costs of the Employee coming to the University on exchange.

4.2.7 How to apply

All applications for exchange must be forwarded to the Category 2 Delegate via the Category 4 Delegate or above and include the following details:

- proposed arrangements in detail
- basic Information concerning the exchangee: name, qualifications, position in other organisation, areas of expertise
- how the Employee's workload will be handled during the exchange

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- complete details of all financial arrangements and work responsibilities for both exchangees
- benefits expected to accrue to the exchangees and the University from the exchange.

The Category 4 Delegate or above will discuss the application with the Employee and indicate the recommendation that will be made to the Category 2 Delegate.

The Category 2 Delegate's Decision will be conveyed to the People Portfolio for processing.

4.3 Delegations

Position	Delegation
Category 2 Delegate	• Approve Employee exchange.
Category 3 Delegate	• Approve professional development leave.

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	Chief People Officer
Policy Type	University Procedure
Policy Suite	Professional Development Policy
Subordinate Schedules	

Approved Date	15/4/2024
Effective Date	15/4/2024
Review Date	15/4/2029
Relevant Legislation	
Policy Exceptions	Policy Exceptions Register
Related Policies	Travel Policy
Related Procedures	
Related forms, publications and websites	
Definitions	**Terms defined in the Definitions Dictionary**

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.

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.

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.

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.

Procedure

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	An operational instruction that sets out the process to operationalise a Policy. University The term 'University' or 'UniSQ' means the University of Southern Queensland.
	Definitions that relate to this procedure only
	Supervisor Any person responsible for leading the activities of others. In the context of this Procedure, a Supervisor includes Employees at any classification level or title who have responsibilities for leading, managing or supervising work teams and/or individual Employees.
Keywords	PDL, development, leave, exchange, work in another organisation
Record No	13/411PL

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