

Special Studies Program Policy - Academic Staff

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) The Special Studies Program (SSP) is designed to give academic staff of Charles Sturt University (the University) the opportunity to undertake research/creative work, professional activity or the scholarship of teaching in areas of identified strategic importance to the the University and to the professional development of the employee, which cannot normally be undertaken within the employee's duties at the the University.

(2) SSP provides an employee with the opportunity, uninterrupted by teaching or other duties:

- a. to undertake professional development relevant to research/creative works, teaching, professional activity, the supervision of postgraduate students; and
- b. to do one or more of the following:
 - i. engage in research/creative activity, including doctoral studies;
 - ii. engage in the scholarship of teaching;
 - iii. maintain and improve professional and vocational knowledge;
 - iv. practise as an artist or performer;
 - v. obtain experience in the work for which the employee is preparing students; and/or
 - vi. gain academic leadership and management experience.

Principles

(3) This Policy is based on principles of:

- a. recruitment, retention and development of high performing academic staff who contribute to the 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 the University's mission and the wide variety of academic work which is appropriate to that mission.

Scope

(4) This Policy applies to all academic staff of Charles Sturt University who hold continuing or fixed term appointments.

Section 2 - Glossary

(5) For the purpose of this Policy:

- a. Academic staff - refers to Charles Sturt University staff who are employed at Academic Levels A to E, including those in positions as Heads of School.

- b. The supervisor - is normally the Head of School for Level A, B, C and D employees, and normally the Executive Dean of Faculty for Level E employees and Heads of School.

Section 3 - Policy

Part A - Eligibility

(6) Academic staff must meet the following criteria to be eligible to participate in the SSP:

- a. Continuing academic staff must have been employed at the the University for three or more years prior to the commencement date of SSP, or have been granted equivalent credit from another approved institution.
- b. Fixed-term academic staff must be employed on a fixed-term appointment of more than three years prior to the commencement date of SSP, or have combined continuous fixed-term employment exceeding three years.
- c. Academic staff must have satisfactorily completed their final probationary review prior to commencing SSP and this report has been forwarded to the Division of Human Resources.

(7) Academic staff must meet performance requirements, as determined through the performance management process prior to commencing SSP.

(8) Academic staff will not commence a new period of SSP until at least three years have elapsed since completing the last SSP.

(9) As appropriate, on commencing an appointment, academic staff may apply to the Executive Dean for credit for SSP 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 SSP but that such credit was not availed of by accepting an appointment with the the University. A written statement that such credit has been granted must be submitted with the application.

Part B - Responsibilities

(10) The Executive Director, Human Resources is responsible for developing, reviewing and overseeing the policy, procedure, guidelines and forms for the Special Studies Program, monitoring usage of SSP and expenditure, and providing an annual report to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic).

(11) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is responsible for approving the procedure, guidelines and forms for the Special Studies Program.

(12) The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for approving the Special Studies Program Policy .

(13) The Executive Dean is responsible for final approval of SSP applications. The Executive Dean is responsible for appointing a committee to oversee the first stage of approval for SSP applications.

Part C - Conditions

(14) The SSP may be undertaken in Australia or overseas for a period of up to 26 weeks.

(15) SSP normally involves relief from teaching and associated duties. A member of staff undertaking SSP would not normally be expected to undertake teaching duties in more than one session in the calendar year in which SSP is taken.

(16) SSP normally involves a co-operative arrangement whereby members of staff assume additional teaching,

administrative or other duties in order to enable a colleague to have a period free from such duties. The approval of an SSP is subject to approval by the Head of School and Executive Dean of appropriate arrangements to cover the duties from which the member of staff has been freed in order to undertake an SSP.

(17) An employee will not make any changes to an approved period of SSP without first obtaining written approval from his/her supervisor.

(18) Unless an employee has had other leave approved in addition to an SSP, he/she will resume duty at the the University, immediately following the end of the term of absence allowed under an approved SSP.

(19) If asked to do so, employees absent on an approved SSP will assist the the University during their absence, as far as practicable, to purchase material, interview candidates for appointment, and make inquiries and investigations on behalf of the the University.

(20) An employee who is granted SSP will complete a written undertaking to return to the service of the the University, for a period equal to the duration of SSP. In the event of that period of after-service not being completed due to the employee's departure from the the University, he/she will reimburse the the University 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.

(21) An employee will, within two months of resuming duty; submit a satisfactory report and a reconciled budget (statements of external grants, earnings and expenditure) to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) through his/her supervising officer and the Executive Dean of the Faculty. This documentation will be maintained by the Division of Human Resources.

Part D - Financial Support

(22) Staff proceeding on an SSP may apply for a travel grant towards the substantiated costs of undertaking the Special Studies Program.

(23) The number of applications approved in a calendar year will be limited by the funds available, and determined by the Executive Dean taking into account the nature of the applications received and the capacity of the Faculty to maintain the normal teaching/administration of the School.

Section 4 - Procedures

(24) Refer to the Special Studies Program Procedure - Academic Staff .

Section 5 - Guidelines

(25) Nil.

Status and Details

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