

Professional Development Procedure - Academic Employee Schemes

Section 1 - Purpose

(1) This procedure supports the [Professional Development Policy](#) by setting out the conditions and principles for centrally coordinated professional development schemes targeted to Charles Sturt University's academic employees, specifically the:

- a. coursework masters support scheme, and
- b. special studies program.

Scope

(2) This procedure applies to all academic employees of Charles Sturt University with continuing or fixed-term appointments, subject to the eligibility requirements for the individual scheme.

(3) The First Nations staff study support scheme and First Nations academic staff leadership development scheme are also available to First Nations Australian academic employees (see the [Professional Development Procedure - First Nations Employee Schemes](#)).

Section 2 - Policy

(4) See the [Professional Development Policy](#).

Section 3 - Procedure

Part A - Coursework masters support scheme

Scheme details

(5) The coursework masters support scheme assists academic employees to obtain a master's degree. The scheme is designed to support the continuing professional development of academic employees in order to assist the University to attain its goals.

(6) Faculties and participating divisions or organisational units will pay the tuition fees for a maximum of 64 credit points of subjects towards a full-fee paying Charles Sturt University coursework master's course. The academic employee will be responsible for the remaining subject tuition fees and other course costs.

Eligibility

(7) The coursework masters support scheme is open to academic employees of Charles Sturt University who:

- a. are employed at academic levels A and B,
- b. hold a continuing full-time or part-time appointment,
- c. are satisfactorily engaged with and are meeting the requirements of their probation review or Performance Planning Development and Review (PPDR),
- d. are accepted as a full-fee paying student in coursework master's degree at Charles Sturt University that is related to their current position, and
- e. have had the need for professional development identified in the conditions of employment, probation review or their PPDR review.

(8) An academic employee who already holds a postgraduate qualification is eligible to apply for this scheme if they meet the criteria and are undertaking further postgraduate study in a field that relates directly to their current position.

Approved courses of study

(9) Coursework master's support may be approved for Charles Sturt University master's courses, where the course can be demonstrated to relate directly to the employee's current position within the University.

(10) The scheme does not provide support for:

- a. study that is not directly related to the employee's current position,
- b. undergraduate or research by higher degree courses,
- c. Commonwealth supported student places (e.g. HECS-HELP),
- d. study of subjects delivered by the University's industry partners,
- e. study through other universities, or
- f. study leave.

Applications for coursework master's support

(11) Applications for the coursework master's support scheme must:

- a. be submitted to the academic employee's manager using the relevant forms on the [Division of People and Culture website](#) at least four weeks before the start of the academic session or as soon as an offer of admission is received,
- b. include a copy of the offer of admission, and
- c. include a completed residual benefit tax declaration.

(12) The approval process for an application requires:

- a. a statement from the manager stating their support for the application, with reference to:
 - i. the direct relevance of the course to the employee's current position,
 - ii. the potential for enhancing individual performance/capability for the employee's current position, and
 - iii. the potential for enhancing the capability of the school/faculty and/or the University.
- b. approval from the appropriate [delegated officer](#),
- c. review and approval from the Executive Director, People and Culture, and
- d. submission to the Accounts Receivable Department, Division of Finance, who will make arrangements with the faculty for the payment of fees.

(13) Copies of the application and approvals must be kept by the faculty/division and the Organisational Development

Office of the Division of People and Culture.

(14) If the application is not approved, the Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor will:

- a. advise the applicant in writing within seven days of receipt of the application, and
- b. return the application (with the recommendation and non-approval comments), admission offer and original residual benefits declaration to the applicant.

Renewal of support

(15) To continue receiving support for coursework master's fees the employee must complete the [coursework masters support scheme renewal form](#) and submit it no later than four weeks before the start of the next academic session.

- a. The Executive Director, People and Culture reviews and confirms the completed renewal of financial support.
- b. The Division of People and Culture keeps a record of the endorsed application and forwards a copy to the Division of Finance, and
- c. the Manager, Revenue and Payables will make arrangements with the faculty to pay the full amount of fees due for the academic session.

Cancellation of support

(16) A manager may determine that an academic employee is making unsatisfactory progress in the coursework masters. If so, the manager and Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor will interview the employee and provide a written recommendation to the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), who will determine whether the support is to be discontinued.

(17) If support is discontinued:

- a. the Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor will notify (in writing) the employee and the Executive Director, People and Culture, and
- b. the Executive Director, People and Culture (or delegate) will record the relevant details about the withdrawal of support on the application form stored in the Organisational Development Office and will notify the Manager, Revenue and Payables of the action.

Conditions

(18) Approval of financial support will remain in force while the employee is enrolled in the course until the 64 credit point allocation is exhausted, unless the employee becomes ineligible to receive support (e.g. leaves the University or transfers to another course) or the support is cancelled.

(19) Employees must provide a copy of their results to their manager and report on their academic progress and professional development outcomes at probationary or PPDR meetings.

(20) If an employee takes leave of absence or withdraws from the course or a subject, they must notify in writing their manager, Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor and the Executive Director, People and Culture. If applicable, the manager and Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor will make a recommendation regarding the employee's ongoing eligibility for the scheme.

Part B - Special studies program

Scheme details

(21) The special studies program provides academic employees with an opportunity to undertake approved

professional, scholarly or research activity uninterrupted by teaching or other normal duties.

(22) The special studies program allows academic employees to be released from their teaching or other normal duties and, in some instances, to access financial support for travel.

Eligibility

(23) To be eligible to apply for a special studies program, the academic employee must:

- a. be employed in a continuing position or a fixed-term appointment of more than three years,
- b. have been employed with the University in an academic role for at least four years before starting the special study program period,
- c. have satisfactorily completed a final probationary review and all relevant compliance modules,
- d. have satisfactorily completed and met the requirements of the Performance Planning Development and Review and have identified the special study program in their development plan,
- e. have complied with the Charles Sturt University leave conditions and not have accumulated excess annual leave, and
- f. not have taken a special study program grant in the previous three years.

(24) Applications from academic employees who do not meet the criteria at clause 23b or d may be accepted in exceptional circumstances, as determined by the Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor (e.g. where their confirmation of appointment has been approved earlier than the standard probation period, or the study program is of particular value to the organisational unit or the University).

Approved courses of study

(25) Eligible study program activities may be:

- a. professional learning and development,
- b. research or creative work,
- c. doctoral studies,
- d. scholarship of teaching,
- e. professional activity, including maintenance and improvement of professional and vocational knowledge,
- f. practice as an artist or performer,
- g. experience in the work for which the academic is preparing students, or
- h. academic leadership and management experience.

(26) Study program activities will generally not be approved if the dominant purpose is to enable the applicant to visit a number of tertiary institutions for briefings about their specialisation or attend a conference/congress, including as an office-bearer or invited speaker.

Applications for special studies program

(27) The Division of People and Culture will call for applications for the [special studies program](#) for the following calendar year.

(28) Applicants must discuss the application with their manager and the application must include an assessment by the manager that states:

- a. the applicant's contribution to the University, including:
 - i. the applicant's teaching, research, publication record, artistic productions, consultancies, professional

activities, scholarly activities and academic leadership roles, and

- ii. outcomes from any previous special studies program, including final reports,
- b. evidence that the intention to apply for the special studies program and the proposed outcomes were discussed during a prior PPDR meeting,
- c. the extent to which the proposed study program activity supports strategic objectives of the organisational unit and the University, and
- d. capacity of the organisational unit to function effectively through the academic's absence.

(29) Completed application forms are to be submitted to the manager and then forwarded to the relevant Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor by the closing date.

(30) Applications for the special studies program will be considered by a Special Studies Program Committee convened by the Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor consisting of:

- a. Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor (chair),
- b. two academic employees of the faculty/division, at least one of whom will be a member of the professoriate, and
- c. a member of the professoriate external to the faculty/division.

(31) The Special Studies Program Committee will consider:

- a. the manager's assessment,
- b. the degree that the application focuses on the strategic objectives of the faculty and the University,
- c. the people and/or institutions to be visited, the location(s) of the people and institutions, either in Australia or overseas, and the appropriateness of the locations, people and institutions for the proposed program, and
- d. the degree to which the proposed activity meets the eligibility requirements.

(32) The Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor will make the final approvals on the recommendation of the Special Studies Program Committee, and will:

- a. advise (in writing) all applicants of the outcome and provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants, and
- b. provide the Division of People and Culture and Travel and Expense (if applicable) with details of each successful applicant, the approved travel grant (if applicable) and the special studies program period.

(33) At least two months prior to the proposed start of the study program, the successful applicant must submit:

- a. their acceptance of the offer and any associated conditions,
- b. as applicable, evidence that necessary arrangements have been made with the host institutions, corporations or individuals,
- c. as applicable, evidence of ethics approval for research that involves humans or animals,
- d. as applicable, a leave application for any other leave to be taken before or after the study program period, and
- e. as applicable, a travel request for any travel related to the study program.

(34) Any subsequent changes to the approved application must have additional approval from the Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor.

(35) The number of applications approved each year is at the discretion of the faculty/division, and will be dependent on:

- a. availability of and approval to use supplementary funding from non-operational funding sources, such as an

individual's faculty research support funds,

- b. the capacity to maintain normal teaching/administration function in the organisational unit,
- c. the operational funding allocated annually by each Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor (each faculty/division may determine not to fund the special studies program), and
- d. alignment with faculty/division and University strategic directions.

(36) Normally, no more than one application per discipline will be granted in a teaching session.

Use of special studies program entitlements

(37) The maximum period for a special studies program is one teaching session.

(38) The period of leave may be negotiated by the academic employee and the school/organisational unit, under the condition that:

- a. the period of leave must not require release from teaching commitments in more than one teaching session, and
- b. only under exceptional circumstances can a special studies program period be taken in broken periods.

(39) Study program activities may be undertaken in Australia or overseas, subject to the [Travel Policy](#) and relevant travel advice.

(40) A travel grant may be approved for the sole purpose of supporting the personal and professional costs of the academic employee over the special study program period, predominantly for travel and the costs of associated activities. In exceptional circumstances, application can be made for additional expenses. Approval is at the discretion of the Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor.

Conditions

(41) The following conditions apply to academic employees on the special studies program:

- a. The University reserves the right to request that the academic employee conducts University business activities during their period of leave (e.g. interviewing candidates for appointment or making inquiries and investigations on behalf of the University).
- b. Unless approved for consecutive leave, the academic employee will resume duty at the University immediately after the special studies program period ends.
- c. Within two months of completing the special study program period, the academic employee will:
 - i. submit a report on the special study program activities, and
 - ii. submit an acquittal of the funded amount to the Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor, including statements for all external grants, earnings and expenses.
- d. If a special studies program report is not received, the Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor will allow the academic employee a further month to submit the report, after which the employee will be in breach of this procedure and may be subject to disciplinary action.
- e. The special studies program can be taken consecutively with an approved period of annual leave, with approval from the Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor.
- f. The special studies program is normally not undertaken immediately before or after a research centre fellowship.
- g. No changes can be made to the period of the special study program without written approval from the employee's manager and/or Executive Director/Pro Vice-Chancellor.

(42) The following conditions apply to financial support/travel grants:

- a. The academic employee must agree, in writing, to return to the University for a period at least equal to the special studies program period. If this period is not completed, the employee will reimburse the University on a pro-rata basis for any funding provided.
- b. Only costs substantiated at the time of application will qualify for the travel grant.
- c. Where the study program period or period of travel is shortened, the employee must reimburse the University for any funding provided in advance.
- d. Financial support may be reduced, or approved at a pro-rata rate for employees on part-time appointments, at the discretion of the Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor.
- e. If the employee is paid and/or receives any allowances from sources outside the University, the special studies program travel grant will be reduced, in advance or retrospectively, at the discretion of the Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor.
- f. Approved grants form part of taxable income during the financial year payment is received. The grant will appear as an allowance on the recipient's annual income statement. The University strongly recommends recipients seek independent financial advice regarding record-keeping and taxation implications of the grant.

(43) If an academic employee decides to cancel the approved special studies program activity, their manager, Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor and Travel and Expense should be notified by the employee as soon as possible.

Part C - Responsibilities

(44) The Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is responsible for:

- a. approving application and renewal forms for the coursework masters support scheme, and
- b. deciding whether to discontinue coursework masters support for poor academic progress.

(45) The Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor is responsible for:

- a. approving faculty/divisional budgets to support the schemes under this procedure,
- b. approving the applications for the coursework masters support scheme for academic employees,
- c. appointment of a Special Studies Program Committee,
- d. approving the applications and monitoring the allocation and acquittal of the travel grants for the special studies scheme, and
- e. providing an annual report on the special studies scheme to the Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) with a copy to the Executive Director, People and Culture.

(46) The Executive Director, People and Culture is responsible for developing, reviewing and overseeing the processes and forms for the schemes under this procedure.

(47) The Division of People and Culture is responsible for entering the period spent on the special studies program into the individual's record on the Ascender database.

(48) The Special Studies Program Committees are responsible for making recommendations to the Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor regarding applications to participate in special studies program, and:

- a. ensuring applicants meet the eligibility criteria as specified in this procedure,
- b. ensuring that the manager/supervisor has confirmed that the organisational unit can accommodate the period of absence,
- c. assessing the applications and ranking them in order of merit,

- d. reviewing the applications and adjusting the special studies program period and the amount of the travel grant if required,
- e. assessing the need for any additional conditions,
- f. reviewing the post-special studies program reports, and
- g. making recommendations to the Executive Dean/Pro Vice-Chancellor on the quality of the post-special studies program reports and on strategies to distribute the reports within the University.

Section 4 - Guidelines

(49) Nil.

Section 5 - Glossary

(50) For the purpose of this procedure:

- a. Academic employee - refers to Charles Sturt University employees who are employed at academic levels A to E.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	25th February 2025
Review Date	31st August 2025
Approval Authority	University Secretary
Approval Date	25th February 2025
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Unit Head	Maria Crisante Executive Director, People and Culture
Author	Katie Powell Manager, Organisational Development +61 2 69334214
Enquiries Contact	Division of People and Culture +61 2 63384884