

# Professional Development Program for Professional Staff Policy

## Section 1 - Policy Principles

(1) The Professional Development Program for Professional Staff (PDP-PS) supports professional staff to undertake professional development programs. Such programs are expected to enhance the vocational knowledge and skills of the staff member on a personal level, with respect to current and future employment at QUT and to be aligned with the strategic priorities of QUT and the staff member's faculty/division.

(2) The broad objectives of professional development programs are to enable staff periodically to work outside the University in order to:

- a. maintain and improve professional and vocational knowledge;
- b. obtain practical experience in the workplace in activities not available in the University;
- c. where appropriate, undertake specialised project work as approved by the University; and
- d. attend conferences and make study visits.

(3) PDP-PS is a benefit that may be offered to eligible staff when circumstances permit. As such it should not be regarded by staff as an entitlement. The staff member's organisational area will make the initial determination of the suitability of a program and make a recommendation for approval based on:

- a. the nature of the project proposed;
- b. available resources, including funding available to supplement central funding;
- c. the staff member's capacity to benefit from the proposed project; and
- d. the relative merit of the application with respect to QUT's strategic objectives.

## Section 2 - Administration of the Professional Development Program (Professional Staff)

(4) The program is coordinated at the University level to ensure that professional staff at all levels and from all organisational areas have access to appropriate development opportunities.

### Reporting

(5) The Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar reports to the Vice-Chancellor and President annually.

## Section 3 - Programs

### Duration

(6) A PDP-PS shall not normally exceed six months. In exceptional circumstances, up to 12 months leave may be

granted at the Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar discretion.

## Timing

(7) Details relating to the timing of rounds for PDP-PS applications are available on the [Human Resources](#) website.

## Location of Program

(8) A PDP-PS should normally be undertaken at a location other than QUT. The appropriate location is one which will provide most benefit to both the staff member and the University.

## Approval

(9) Applications are approved by the Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar.

(10) Each application must be endorsed by the staff member's Executive Dean/Head of Division (or nominee) prior to submission to the Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar for approval.

## PDP-PS for Study Programs

(11) Approval for staff to take full-time or part-time leave to progress or complete an approved course of study will be determined at faculty or divisional level ([Study Assistance Scheme for Professional and Academic Staff Policy](#)).

(12) Staff may apply for PDP-PS assistance where a period of study leave forms part of the total program (for example, a program which combines a period of full-time study with visits/tours of, or research within, an external organisation) and the staff member is seeking financial support through the PDP-PS scheme.

(13) In these cases, staff must have completed at least half of their academic program at the time of application, and approval for PDP-PS assistance is granted on the understanding that study progress will be satisfactory prior to the commencement of leave.

## Section 4 - Eligibility

(14) All professional staff employed on an ongoing or fixed-term basis under the Enterprise Agreement (Professional Staff) and who have completed 12 months continuous service, are eligible to apply for a PDP-PS.

(15) A member of professional staff will not normally be granted PDP-PS leave more frequently than every two years.

## Section 5 - Salary and Employment Conditions

(16) A staff member's normal salary and conditions of employment accrue during any period of paid PDP-PS. For absences of three months or more, normal recreation leave accruals should be taken during the PDP-PS. If accrued leave cannot be taken during the PDP-PS, staff members must seek approval from the Head of School/Head of Department/Section for the leave to be taken at a later date.

### Leave Without Pay to undertake PDP-PS

(17) A professional staff member, who applies for, and is granted leave without pay to participate in a PDP-PS, will continue to accrue normal leave credits and service credits for salary progression purposes during the period of leave. The University does not continue to pay superannuation payments during periods of absence on leave without pay ([Superannuation Policy](#)).

## Conditions of PDP-PS Leave

(18) Participation in a PDP-PS is based upon the following terms and conditions:

- a. During the period of PDP-PS leave, the staff member pursues the approved program. All substantial program changes must have prior approval of the Executive Dean/Head of Division (or nominee).
- b. A staff member shall give an undertaking to return to duty at the University on the expiry of the approved period of absence for a subsequent period equal to the length of the absence. If this undertaking is not fulfilled, the Vice-Chancellor and President may require the staff member to refund a portion or whole of the funds provided during the program.
- c. Within one month of return from a PDP-PS the staff member shall provide a documented statement of all external income received during the program.
- d. Within one month of return from a PDP-PS, the staff member will make every effort to share outcomes and information from the program with colleagues.

## Section 6 - Financial Assistance

(19) Financial assistance is available from central funds to contribute towards the cost of PDP-PS. The extent of this financial assistance will be determined annually by the Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar. Within this maximum amount, funds will be allocated taking into account the merit of the program, the total anticipated or actual costs to be incurred, and the extent of the financial contribution from the staff members' organisational area. Information on the level of assistance normally available can be found on the [Human Resources](#) website.

(20) If air travel is necessary, staff are expected to use the most economical airfare which meets their needs, to use QUT's approved travel service providers, and to comply with [Travel Policy](#).

(21) A staff member undertaking a PDP-PS shall be paid full salary, less any normal deductions, for the duration of the program. In exceptional circumstances, a lump sum of net salary for half of the period of the PDP-PS may be granted at the discretion of the Vice-President (Administration) and University Registrar.

### External Income

(22) Staff members are encouraged to seek allowances, scholarships, grants, salaries or other income from external sources to offset costs associated with an approved PDP-PS.

(23) A staff member who receives an entitlement from an external source while on PDP-PS leave is normally expected to use this entitlement towards travel, accommodation and incidental expenses incurred, and/or to assist their organisational area to back-fill their position if necessary. External income in excess of the full cost of the program may be retained by the staff member.

(24) If leave without pay is approved, the staff member will be permitted to retain all remuneration received from external sources. Depending on the circumstances, a return airfare and a contribution towards other expenses may be provided by the University.

## Section 7 - Application Procedure

(25) PDP-PS should be planned through the normal PPR process and discussed with the staff member's head of section/Head of Department/Head of School. The head of section/Head of Department/Head of School should at that time determine the relevance of the program, arrangements that might be made to cover the applicant's commitments during the period of professional development leave and the availability of funding from the

organisational area in support of the program. Applicants are required to submit their application for PDP-PS to their Executive Dean/Head of Division (or nominee) for endorsement prior to lodging an application.

(26) All applications are to be submitted on the PDP-PS application form and in accordance with the [Professional Development Support](#) guidelines and process.

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Current
<b>Effective Date</b>	25th February 2013
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<b>Approval Date</b>	25th February 2013
<b>Expiry Date</b>	Not Applicable
<b>Policy Owner</b>	Gillian Bromley Vice-President (People) and Chief People Officer
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