

Academic Studies Program Procedures

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Description	These procedures have been established to provide a framework for the Academic Studies Program (ASP) for eligible academic staff who apply for time away from normal duties to conduct sustained activities to further their development as scholars, researchers, teachers and/or practitioners.

Related documents

[Academic Studies Program Policy](#)
[Academic Studies Program Variation Form](#)
[Academic Studies Program Website](#)
[Academic Portfolio](#)
[Travel Policy](#)
[Absence on Official University Business Policy](#)
[Consultancy and Commercial Research Policy](#)
[General Claim](#)

[\[Introduction\]](#) [\[Scope\]](#) [\[Eligibility\]](#) [\[Criteria\]](#) [\[Types of activity undertaken on ASP\]](#) [\[Application\]](#) [\[Financial Assistance\]](#) [\[Variations to approved ASPs\]](#) [\[Reporting\]](#) [\[Resignation or Retirement\]](#) [\[Delegated Authorities\]](#)
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1. INTRODUCTION

Academic Studies Program (ASP) Policy provides eligible academic staff with an opportunity to apply for time away from normal duties to engage in scholarly activity. These procedures provide a framework for the implementation of the program.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all continuing academic staff in full and part-time positions. It does not apply to staff on probation, research only academic appointments, clinical title holders, casual academic staff, adjunct, visiting and honorary appointees of the University. The application of the policy to staff on fixed-term contracts is covered in [section 3.4](#).

Definitions of terms used in this policy are set out in [Appendix A](#).

3. ELIGIBILITY

3.1 Service Requirement

An academic staff member must have worked with the University for at least three years to be eligible to apply for ASP. A staff member may negotiate alternative arrangements at the time of appointment; or on any subsequent reappointment to the University.

3.2 Prior Service

Recognition of prior service with another Australian University will be negotiated with the staff member at the time of appointment and will be set out in the letter of offer.

3.3 Eligibility to apply

A continuing and confirmed member of staff member may apply for a period of ASP, provided:

- They have served at least three years of continuous service¹ since appointment; and
- They have served at least three years of continuous service since completion of a previous period of ASP.

Staff who are on part-time appointments are eligible to apply after three years of continuous service, and will be paid at their normal part-time rate for the period of their ASP.

ASP periods and periods of leave without pay of greater than one month will not count in the minimum 3 year eligibility threshold; neither will the service of an academic who has been appointed full-time to a fully funded research position for more than 6 months, eg ARC Fellowship.

Periods of service of staff who have 'bought out' of teaching in accordance with the Workload Allocation Guidelines² will count for these purposes during the period of the buyout. However, the relevant Dean, in consultation with the Head of School, will consider this factor in determining the timing or amount of ASP granted to a staff member who has 'bought out' of teaching for more than twelve months.

ASP is not an entitlement, and is only granted according to criteria set out in this policy to eligible staff. There is no accrual or carry forward of periods of ASP.

3.4 Fixed Term Staff

Fixed term staff are generally not eligible. In exceptional circumstances, fixed term staff may receive approval from the Group Pro Vice Chancellor. Exceptional circumstances may include the appointment of a staff member on consecutive fixed term appointments for several years, or staff who are on 5-year contracts. Upon return from an ASP, fixed term staff must be able to remain with the University for at least the same period as the program within the terms of their engagement with the University.

3.5 Academic Managers

Academic Managers and Group Pro Vice Chancellors are not eligible to take ASP detachment during their period of office. However, periods of service in these roles counts towards the periods of service required elsewhere in this policy for eligibility to apply for ASP.

In exceptional circumstances, Academic Managers may receive approval from the Group Pro Vice Chancellor to undertake ASP during their period of office.

Heads of School will be able to access 6 months ASP at the end of a 3-year appointment and 10 months at the end of a 5-year appointment subject to satisfactory performance in their role as Head of School and program approval from the Group Pro Vice Chancellor. An individual's further employment plans will also be taken into consideration in approval of ASP.

¹ Approved breaks in service such as industry exchanges, leave without salary, will count as a "pause" in relation to counting as continuous service; ie, the 3 years will include service that occurred prior to the approved break and that served after the break.

² Under Academic Work@Griffith, an individual can only buy-out teaching down to 10% and only via competitive grant funding. See Workload Allocation Guidelines 4(c).

4. CRITERIA

ASP will be granted with due regard to the different circumstances and career trajectories of individual academics. In considering applications for ASP from staff eligible to apply, the following issues will be taken into account in deciding whether a period of ASP will be granted.

4.1 Merit of individual ASP applications

The staff member must demonstrate that significant benefits will accrue to the University from the activities proposed to be undertaken during the period of ASP through the enhancement of the individual's contributions to research and scholarship.

Individual applications for ASP will be assessed according to the following merit-based criteria:

- the quality and academic merit of the program, including its impact on research, the scholarship of teaching, and on the relevant academic discipline;
- the extent to which the proposed program delivers tangible outcomes and benefits related to the University's strategic objectives in research, including raising the University's profile, and the scholarship of learning and teaching;
- the value of the program in enhancing the staff member's knowledge, skills, professional experience and performance within their academic discipline;
- the results of the staff member's performance review for the past two years (a staff member who has not received a satisfactory evaluation under the Academic Staff Review Policy and Procedures will not receive approval to undertake ASP);
- evidence of the staff member's past record of performance and productivity in innovation and excellence in research and/or the scholarship of teaching;
- the outcomes of any previous period of ASP (where relevant).

4.2 School operational requirements and planning

Heads of School should develop three to five year plans for School ASP in consultation with individual academic staff. Planning assists the University to ensure that it is able to provide opportunities for ASP to staff while also meeting operational requirements. A School ASP plan will assist Heads of School to determine which staff may be given priority in making recommendations in each ASP round. While all staff are entitled to fair and equitable consideration in the development of an ASP plan, the inclusion of a period of ASP for a staff member in a plan is not a guarantee that the staff member's application for ASP will be approved.

In developing an ASP plan, the Head of School will take account of:

- the operational needs of the School/Department (eg, to cover teaching with full time staff);
- the available budget of the School/Department, and
- the need to support the research strategy and strategic teaching and learning objectives of the School/Department.

4.3 Duration and timing

In the light of the flexibility of the University's teaching arrangements (eg summer semester), a period of ASP will normally not exceed six months. It will not impact on more than 50% of the staff member's annual teaching load and will normally be for one semester.

In circumstances where an applicant seeks an ASP greater than 6 months, a special case will need to be prepared by the applicant. Each case will be considered on its merits and will require the support of the Group Pro Vice Chancellor prior to being considered by the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) for approval. All decisions of the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) will be final.

While it is desirable for the program to be continuous, the program may be split into more than one period if that is in the interests of the School.

4.4 Leave taken in conjunction with ASP

If approved, a staff member may take ASP in conjunction with leave.

A period of ASP may be combined with other forms of absence on official University business, or with forms of personal leave (for example, long service leave, recreation leave). A significant period of personal leave combined with an ASP may affect any travel grant provided from School operating grant funds.

50% of an annual recreation leave entitlement must be taken as part of the ASP period itself. Recreation leave above this 50% may be combined with a period of ASP in any one calendar year.

5. TYPES OF ACTIVITY UNDERTAKEN ON ASP

The proposed program of activities will assist academic staff to undertake innovative research or to advance the scholarship of teaching, and in either case contribute to the advancement of the University's strategic objectives. It is a strong expectation that the agreed outcomes of an ASP will result in significant benefits to both the individual and the University.

A program of activities may include:

- research and authorship, including textbooks;
- progress towards or completion of a formal relevant research higher degree;
- research or other scholarly activities which will improve teaching and learning in line with University objectives;
- establishment of international collaborative research partnerships; and
- practice as an artist or performer.

This list is indicative rather than exhaustive and should not limit the types of programs proposed.

6. APPLICATIONS FOR ASP

6.1 Making application to undertake an ASP

The University will conduct an annual round of applications for ASP.

Each year, Human Resources will call for applications for ASP that will commence in the following year (January - December). Applications must be received in accordance with the published time lines.

Applications must be made on the [official on-line application form](#) and must address the criteria set out in this policy. An up-to-date Academic Portfolio must be submitted with the ASP application. The staff member is responsible for providing all information requested on the application and any additional information. The application should include details of any previous ASP applications together with the relevant report on outcomes.

6.2 Decisions about ASP

The Head of School considers applications and makes recommendations on the program and financial assistance, in line with the School ASP plan, to the Dean (Academic) by September each year. The relevant Dean is the decision-maker on applications. Before making a recommendation, the Head of School may negotiate details of an application and counsel applicants as to ways of improving the quality of their applications. The Head of School will inform applicants of her/his recommendation to the relevant Dean at this time.

Human Resources will ensure that all applicants are advised of the outcome of their application once this has been determined by the relevant Dean.

6.3 Review of decision - unsuccessful applicants

If a staff member disagrees with the recommendation of the Head of School about their application, they may make a submission outlining the reasons for disagreement to the relevant Dean within 10 working days of being notified of the recommendation. Should the staff member disagree with the Dean's decision, the staff member may request a review of the Dean's decision by the Group Pro Vice Chancellor. A staff member must seek a review within 10 days of being notified of the relevant Dean's decision.

7. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Staff members participating in ASP will continue to receive their usual salary. The relevant Group meets this cost.

In addition, subject to approval by the Head of School and relevant Dean, a staff member may access the following forms of financial assistance:

- travel grant;
- funds from research accounts;
- funds from consultancy accounts;
- funds for expenses relating to absence on official University business where this is taken in conjunction with the period of ASP; and
- earnings from outside sources.

Financial assistance relating to additional costs associated with care of dependants as a direct result of an ASP detachment may be provided.

Staff are required to complete the University Travel Diary while undertaking ASP and associated official absences. The diary provides a format to record activities undertaken and expenses incurred while travelling. The diary can also be used to record the activities undertaken in the course of the ASP or other official absence, and those which were of a private nature thus facilitating claims for reimbursement from the University where appropriate and assisting in personal taxation matters.

Further details on financial arrangements in respect of the travel grant, interstate and overseas travel, essential costs for carers, use of funds from other University sources, and earnings from outside sources are outlined in Appendix B.

8. VARIATIONS TO APPROVED ASPS

8.1 Variations by a Staff Member

8.1.1 Changes to approved ASP program

Staff members must advise their Head of School of any variations to the approved program as early as possible. Minor changes will not require approval unless they have funding implications of more than 5% or involve leave. Major variations affecting the purpose, objectives and outcomes of the program, or the location at which all or part of the ASP is to be spent, require the approval of the Head of School and relevant Dean, and should be submitted on the ASP Variation Form.

8.1.2 Variations due to sickness or injury

A staff member who becomes sick or injured during ASP must notify the Head of School of the period of the incapacity and provide a medical certificate in accordance with the University's sick leave policy.

Where the staff member's incapacity prevents her/him from completing the ASP as scheduled, the relevant Dean may approve an extension if it is convenient in terms of the operational requirements of the School, terminate the ASP, or authorise other action.

8.1.3 Cancellation or postponement

A staff member must advise the Head of School if they are unable, for personal reasons, to proceed with an approved program. The relevant Dean on the recommendation of the Head of School will determine whether the commencement of the ASP can be postponed. If the period of the postponement is more than a year, the detachment will be cancelled and the staff member will need to reapply in a future ASP round.

8.2 Variations by the University

It would be unusual for the University to alter an approved ASP. However, the relevant Dean may require that a staff member return from a period of ASP under the following circumstances:

- to assist with urgent University matters; or
- where it is found that the activities or actions of a staff member are not in the best interests of or are damaging to the reputation of the University.

Where a staff member has been required to return from ASP to assist with urgent University matters, he/she will be expected to return to duty on a specified date. At the discretion of the relevant Dean, the staff member may:

- continue his/her approved program or a revised version of that program from an agreed date with an extension equal to the period of the program lost due to return to the University; or
- be provided with full credit for the remainder of the ASP if the staff member is unable to continue the program.

8.3 Compensation for financial losses incurred may be provided by the University where deemed to be appropriate, as determined by the Group Pro Vice Chancellor.

9. REPORTING

9.1 Reports upon return from ASP

A staff member who has returned from a period of ASP is required to submit reports to demonstrate accountability for the activities undertaken and the funding provided from University and other sources. The reporting process is linked to the Academic Staff Review Policy and Procedures. Two reports are required as shown below.

Report	Timelines for submission	Submit to	Approval Authority
Report on ASP outcomes	within 6 weeks of return	Supervisor under the Academic Staff Review Policy and Procedures	Relevant Dean after consideration of the Head of School recommendation
Accountability and financial statement	within 6 weeks of return	Supervisor under the Academic Staff Review Policy and Procedures or Head of School where Supervisor is not financial delegate.	Relevant Dean after consideration of the Head of School recommendation

9.2 Report on ASP Outcomes

The purpose of this report is to ensure that the activities proposed during the ASP have been undertaken and to demonstrate how the activities contributed to the actual and anticipated outcomes of the ASP. The report will focus on the tangible benefits of the program in advancing the University's strategic objectives in research, teaching and scholarship.

The following headings must be used when compiling an ASP Report:

- the title of the proposed ASP activity and summary of the purpose and agreed objectives of the ASP program;
- the extent to which agreed objectives have been achieved;
- the work performed and the locations of the work;

- any activities undertaken on related forms of official absence (eg conference participation,);
- the actual outcomes achieved during ASP (identify conference papers, publications etc);
- outcomes still to be achieved and time lines; and
- other Academic achievements and anticipated benefits to the University and the individual.

9.3 Accountability and Financial Statement

The purpose of this report is to account for financial assistance, income received and any variations from the authorised program. The following should be addressed:

- an explanation of any variations (indicating where approvals have or have not been granted) in terms of the types of leave taken;
- an explanation of any variations (indicating where approvals have or have not been granted) from the authorised program;
- income received during the period of ASP including the amounts, source, purpose and the arrangement for distribution of net revenues in accordance with the University's Consultancy, Private Practice and Contract Research Policy; and
- the amount of financial assistance provided by the University including funds accessed from consultancy and research account, for conferences and/or other expenses, and for travel.

9.4 Late or non-submission of reports

The relevant Dean may approve an extension for submission of the reports of up to four weeks. Submission of reports will be an important factor in determining future ASP applications by a staff member.

Non-submission of reports will result in an unsatisfactory evaluation under the Academic Review Scheme and action must be taken in accordance with the procedures of the Scheme.

9.5 Unsatisfactory reports

A report may be deemed to be unsatisfactory in two circumstances:

- the report is of a poor quality or lacks sufficient detail; and/or
- significant outcomes of the ASP were not achieved.

Where a report is of a poor quality or lacks sufficient detail, the staff member will be required to re-write the report within 10 working days.

Where the outcomes of the ASP are not achieved, the staff member will be expected to provide reasons. Where the reasons provided do not sufficiently justify the lack of progress, the report may be declared unsatisfactory. An unsatisfactory report may result in an unsatisfactory evaluation in the staff member's performance review under the Academic Review Scheme and action must be taken in accordance with the procedures of the Scheme.

10. RESIGNATION OR RETIREMENT

After a period of ASP, a participating staff member will remain with the University for a period at least equal to the length of the ASP, or financial recompense will be required.

If a staff member resigns or retires during the period of the ASP or during the subsequent period of required service, the relevant Group PVC, after considering recommendations made by the Dean, can require that all or part of the financial assistance and salary paid during the period of the ASP, be repaid to the University. The amount repaid will be in proportion to the time served upon return from the period of the ASP or, if the resignation/retirement occurs during the period of ASP, the full amount of financial assistance provided.

The staff member is responsible for ensuring that the relevant amount is repaid to the University prior to the effective date of resignation or retirement.

11. DELEGATED AUTHORITIES

Head of School

- Responsible for operational planning for ASPs, including consultation with other Schools/Centres
- Recommend ASPs to Dean
- Recommend financial assistance to Dean
- Recommend the taking of leave in conjunction with an ASP to Dean
- Recommend changes to ASP

Relevant Dean

- Approval of ASPs of 6 months or less duration for eligible staff
- Approval of financial assistance
- Approval of the taking of leave in conjunction with an ASP
- Approval of changes to ASP
- Approval of ASP Report

Group Pro Vice Chancellor

- Resolving appeals against ASP decisions by relevant Deans
- Recommend approval of ASP for periods of greater than 6 months
- Approval of ASP for academic managers during their period of office
- Approval of ASPs for fixed term contract staff in exceptional circumstances

Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic)

- Approval of all ASP applications for periods greater than 6 months

Director, Human Resources

- Responsible for administering and coordinating annual ASP rounds.

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS

"**Research only academic staff**" - are academic staff appointed as a Professorial Research Fellow, Principal Research Fellow, Senior Research Fellow, Research Fellow Grade 2 or Research Fellow Grade 1.

"**Carer**" - is a person who provides the primary care - physical, emotional, financial - for a member of family, and on whom the other person(s) depend for this support.

APPENDIX B: FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

1) Travel Grant

A staff member may apply for a travel grant as part of their application for ASP.

A staff member may apply for a travel grant for interstate/intrastate or overseas travel for themselves.

The travel grant will normally include the following costs:

- the most direct form of air travel that provides the best value to the University to a location or locations integral to the program;
- financial assistance relating to additional costs associated with care of dependants as a direct result of an ASP detachment may be provided;
- airport taxes;
- passenger service charges; and
- visas.

2) Interstate and Intrastate Travel

Where an ASP is within Australia, a travel grant may be available for one or more journeys interstate or intrastate. The maximum travel grant for all journeys related to the ASP is up to the cost of one direct return economy airfare Brisbane-Perth. The actual amount paid by the University, where the travel costs are less than this amount, will be the fare that represents best value for the University on the day of booking via the University's travel agent(s).

3) Overseas Travel

The maximum travel grant(s) payable for any ASP will be the best feasible round-the-world fare of the day from the University travel agent. The actual amount paid by the University, where the travel costs are less than this amount, will be based on obtaining competitive quotes from approved, reputable travel agents. The lower fare will be the fare funded by the University.

4) Other Costs

In circumstances where ASP applicants would incur additional costs associated with meeting carer's responsibilities to fully undertake the ASP, the University will consider meeting these costs where not to do so would disadvantage the staff member. Such costs will be determined on the basis of evidence to support the need and the actual cost of the care required. There will be a cap set at \$5000³ as the maximum amount for other costs met by the University. This may include travel and accommodation and/or child care for parents where no other child care option is available; respite care for dependants with a disability or medical condition, or associated travel and accommodation costs. Supporting documentation may be required.⁴

5) Considerations in Determining the Level of Travel Grant

Travel grants may be reduced where financial assistance is received through sources external to the University.

No University funds from any source may be accessed for use when staff are on recreation, long service leave or leave without pay during the period of their ASP.

A travel grant will be reduced in accordance with any Fringe Benefits Tax costs incurred by the University where:

- the staff member combines the ASP with personal leave;
- a travel grant has contributed to the cost of the travel to the location of the personal leave; and
- the period of the personal leave taken in conjunction with the period of ASP represents a significant component of the total time spent away from home base.

6) Funds from Other University Sources

³ This cap will be reviewed annually and adjusted to reflect CPI changes.

⁴ Approved costs will be paid in the form of an allowance in the staff member's pay preceding the date of travel. This allowance is not taxed at time of payment however is taxable at the applicable marginal tax rate and it is the staff member's responsibility to meet the relevant tax obligations.

Research funds may be used for specific research portions of the trip where access to funds is in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant laid down by the funding body.

For Consultancy or Research funds to be used whilst on ASP there must be specific approval in the research/consultancy budget application or separate support and approval by the Head of School. Such funds may be used only for appropriate academic-related expenses.

These funds must not be used for any items where funds have already been provided from another source such as the travel grant ie 'double dipping'. Staff will be subject to misconduct charges where they arrange to be paid more than once for the same item of expenditure.

7) Absence on Official University Business Policy - Conference or Special Duties Funds

Staff should advise for periods of Absence on Official University Business to be undertaken in conjunction with ASP at the time of applying for the ASP. Where this is not possible, the staff member should advise Absence on Official University Business as a variation to the approved ASP.

Staff members may seek approval from the Head of School for the payment of expenses related to the Absence on Official University Business segment of the detachment.

These funds must not be used for any items where funds have already been provided from another source such as the travel grant ie 'double dipping'. Staff will be subject to misconduct charges where they arrange to be paid more than once for the same item of expenditure.

8) Earnings from Outside Sources

Staff wishing to undertake work for outside bodies while on ASP, for example, from visiting professorships, lectureships or similar appointments or invitations, or consultancies, must do so in accordance with the University Consultancy, Private Practice and Contract Research Policy. Any work undertaken during the period of ASP must be relevant to the program.