

## Secondment of Staff to Other Institutions Policy and Procedures

<b>Approving authority</b>	Executive Group
<b>Approval date</b>	
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<b>Description</b>	This document provides a summary regarding secondments for general staff at Griffith University.

### Related documents

[Fixed Term Part Time Appointment with Supplemented Superannuation Procedure](#)

[Industry Exchange Fellowships](#)

[Recruitment and Selection Policy](#)

[Recruitment and Selection Procedures](#)

[Academic Studies Program Policy](#)

[\[Rationale\]](#) [\[Definitions\]](#) [\[Policy\]](#) [\[Procedures\]](#)

## 1. RATIONALE

Universities throughout Australia have for many years used a set of guidelines prepared by Universities Australia (formerly AVCC) covering the secondment of staff to other universities within Australia and overseas and to non-university employers. These guidelines have been of immense assistance in being able to negotiate a standard set of conditions but do not take into account many of the local issues which are of importance to staff members prepared to accept secondment from the University. The guidelines listed below are an attempt to amalgamate local conditions and those already available in such documents as the Universities Australia guidelines.

## 2. DEFINITIONS

"**Head of Element**" means the Vice President (Corporate Services); the Vice President (Global); the Directors of the University Colleges; the Heads of Elements and the Directors of Offices within Corporate Services.

## 3. POLICY

### 3.1 Why Secondment?

Griffith University is often requested to second staff members to other universities, institutions, government departments, overseas aid bodies and other non-university employees to undertake special assignments that cannot be covered in the normal system of leave and detachment policies. The requests received have come either by way of an official request to the University or by moves initiated by a staff member in consultation with another employer. The latter method, whilst commencing as an unofficial consultation, then develops into an official request to the University. This University has endeavoured to meet the many requests

made but it is recognised that first responsibility is to the overall teaching program and secondment of staff must bring with it a minimum of disruption to the University's teaching, research, and administrative programs.

There are a number of advantages in seconding a staff member to another institution:

- The member has a new experience which they may not have gained in their home institution and general morale may increase.
- In terms of financial constraints to tertiary institutions, the ability to change jobs is limited.
- There is an ability for both institutions to obtain 'new blood' and have access to different ideas by secondment and replacement during the 'static' state.
- The wages bill may be temporarily reduced, and this may be desirable when coping with reduced student numbers in some specific area.
- The member has the ability to move into a new intellectual environment and gain access to new ideas, with the added possibility of moving to a research-type post during which time publications should improve in quantity and quality.
- Secondment can supplement the Academic Studies Program (ASP) without the corresponding loss of experience if temporary help is available.

### **3.2 Types of Secondment**

There are a number of reasons why a staff member is seconded to another institution. They include:

- To assist with a teaching program where the member has particular expertise not available in the host institution.
- To carry out a particular research program that is of benefit to the seconded member, the host institution and ultimately to the home institution.
- To assist with some administrative or academic planning where the expertise required cannot be adequately met by a staff member of the host institution.
- To give other assistance as may be required by the host institution and approved by the home institution.

### **3.3 Period of Secondment**

Secondments will normally be for periods ranging from three months or one semester up to two years or four semesters. It is important in the case of academic staff that the period of secondment should fall within the teaching program of the University so that there is minimum disruption to the teaching and research activities of the University. Any extension to the original period of secondment must be approved by the same process as detailed in this document. The staff member departing on secondment may depart earlier than the proposed date by taking accumulated recreation leave. Such arrangements would be at the discretion of the Head of Element who has authority to approve such leave.

### **3.4 Direct Costs on the Host Institution**

#### *Secondments within Australia Salary*

This is a readily identifiable cost which can be assessed and reimbursed to the home university. It would be normal practice for the home university to continue to be the paying authority of the staff member on secondment and claims to be made on the host institution for the reimbursement of costs. For long periods of secondment it may be necessary to make alternative arrangements whereby the host institution assumes full responsibility of paying authority for the term of secondment. Such secondment would normally be handled as leave without salary. The salary level of the member would continue as if they remained in the employment of the University with normal increments on the appropriate salary scale.

### **3.5 Upward Adjustments beyond the Control of the Home Institution**

It may be necessary to include a clause in the contract to indemnify the home institution against liability for upward adjustments, especially in salary and salary-related costs.

### **3.6 Superannuation**

Under normal secondment procedures where Griffith University remains the paying authority, the staff member would continue to pay their contribution and the University would recover its share of the payment from the host institution. In the case of leave without salary or where the host institution becomes the paying authority, the seconded member would need to make suitable arrangements so that payment to their superannuation policy is not interrupted. The University would continue to make payments which would be reimbursed by the seconded member. (Refer to the Leave without Salary policy in the Leave section of the Staff Handbook).

### **3.7 Miscellaneous**

Costs such as payroll tax, workers' compensation, leave loading and provision for long service leave would be paid by Griffith University and reimbursed by the host institution on a regular invoice system e.g. monthly or three monthly.

### **3.8 Recruitment Expenses**

Where a staff member is to be replaced during the term of their secondment and a temporary appointment made, it would be necessary to advise the host institution of the costs involved at the time of initial negotiations. If such costs are considerable it is the responsibility of the host institution to make a contribution towards recruitment of a temporary staff member. The costs are likely to be highly variable as it may be possible to rearrange the duties of other staff members to cope with a short-term secondment. For periods up to one year it may be possible to:

- temporarily upgrade another staff member;
- provide a fractional appointment;
- provide a fixed-term appointment;
- second a staff member from another institution or use the services of an academic member on study leave from another institution.

For periods beyond one year it may be necessary to employ a staff member on a fixed-term appointment and more expensive recruitment beyond the local catchment area may be warranted. Such costs should be shared by both institutions.

### **3.9 Sick Leave and Recreation Leave**

Recreation and sick leave entitlements would continue to apply as per the relevant policies of the Staff Handbook (Refer Leave section). It may be necessary for a seconded member to take their recreation leave in accordance with local policy of the host institution and this situation would be handled on an individual basis by the seconded member.

### **3.10 Long Service Leave**

Reference should be made to the Long Service Leave policy contained in the Leave section of the Staff Handbook. The staff member would continue to accrue long service leave and provision would be made to have funds reimbursed from the host institution. The standard entitlement is equal to 2.5% of salary. Universities Australia revised guidelines on long service leave would need to be incorporated into the provisions for secondment.

### **3.11 Entitlement to ASP**

Under normal circumstances an academic staff member on secondment would not be required to use their accumulated entitlement in order to proceed on the secondment term. Each situation would be assessed at the time when the secondment contract is finalised.

Secondments do not accrue ASP unless it is negotiated as a specific term of the secondment. Staff would normally return to their home institution for a period equal to the secondment before being permitted to proceed on ASP.

For further information refer to the ASP Policy in the leave section of the staff handbook.

### **3.12 Cost of Removal, Accommodation and Travel**

Such costs would be borne by the host institution and suitable arrangements would be made on an individual basis by the seconded member.

### **3.13 Prior Visits to the Host Institution**

If it is necessary for the seconded member to visit the host institution prior to secondment, this must be done with the approval of the Head of Element concerned and all expenses are to be borne by the host institution.

### **3.14 Administrative Costs**

Where the home institution remains as the paymaster for the seconded member, there are hidden administrative costs that the home institution must bear. Experience has indicated that these costs are difficult to identify and are unlikely to be considered by the host institution when the secondment contract is made.

### **3.15 Secondments Overseas**

In addition to the matters for consideration outlined above, there may be a more complex set of conditions which apply to overseas secondments and such details as education allowances, allowances for children, annual leave entitlements, clothing, equipment etc may need to be considered. The length of secondment may be of a longer term than for secondment within Australia and it is envisaged that each case would be examined on its merits and the resulting secondment contract would need to reflect the additional conditions necessary.

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## **4. PROCEDURES**

### **Secondment of Staff to Other Institutions**

- 1) Initiation of secondment undertaken by staff member or Initiation of secondment formally received from another institution
- 2) Has the Head of Element been advised/consulted on the details of the invitation and the possible ramifications to the Element and the University?
- 3) NO = Consultation undertaken
- 4) YES
- 5) Head of Element seeks advice of the Deputy/Pro Vice Chancellor on:
  - whether the request should be considered;
  - whether further investigation and discussion is needed;
  - the level of such examination;
  - an assessment of the University demands during the period of the proposed secondment; and
  - any budgetary implications.
- 6) Following the outcome of these deliberations the Head of Element will make recommendations to the Deputy/Pro Vice Chancellor who will report to Council.
- 7) Once finalised, the member will be formally seconded by the University to the other institution by an appropriate letter of secondment from Human Resources.