



Procedure: Outside Studies Program (OSP)

Purpose

To provide an overview of major processes in relation to the Outside Studies Program (OSP).

Procedure

About OSP

1. The purpose of the Outside Studies Program (OSP) is to provide academic staff with a significant period of release from normal duties to undertake a planned program of work that will enhance their personal scholarly development, the University's international reputation and extend the body of knowledge in their academic discipline.
2. OSP is not leave, and is to be considered as academic work being done while away from the ANU campus for significant periods of time. As such, OSP is considered as work that the employee is engaged in as an employee on behalf of ANU, noting that this may still take the form of individual research renewal, and/or development.
3. Participation in OSP is not an entitlement. Applications will be assessed on the needs of the College, the quality of the proposal submitted by the staff member, and the capacity of the staff member to make effective use of the opportunity.
4. Applications that facilitate the release of staff with significant teaching responsibilities and/or facilitate the enhanced development of female and/or early career academic staff are encouraged.
5. The College Dean may in special cases where past heavy teaching or administrative loads have prevented a high performing staff member being able to access OSP for a significant period of time, recommend to the Vice-Chancellor that OSP on such terms of conditions as are considered appropriate be approved.

OSP absences with other leave

6. Absences on OSP are at the discretion of the College, and are normally more than two months and up to six months duration, with a maximum of twelve months in special cases. Timing of absences must take into account teaching, research and supervisory commitments. The College may approve an application that involves a number of separate periods over, say, one or two years to facilitate release over this period. For the purposes

of clause 10 a further application could be considered three years after the end of the last of any such separate applications approved.

7. Application can be made for categories of leave to be taken in conjunction with an outside studies program. This can take the form of fieldwork, annual leave, long service leave, study leave, leave without pay, release exclusively for research, release from teaching, conference leave and consultancies. Relevant dates for leave categories should be separately attached to the OSP Application coversheet.

8. Leave for short-term development and other purposes less than two months may be accessed under other provisions including conference leave, fieldwork provisions or release for teaching or release for research provisions. Such short-term development absences are not regarded as OSP.

9. In considering the grant of OSP the delegate should also review the leave record of the staff member and ensure that adequate plans are in place to clear excess leave, either as part of the OSP and /or separately as appropriate.

Eligibility

10. All academic staff, except casual and sessional staff, may apply for OSP provided that staff on fixed term contracts or continuing (contingent funded) contracts linked to external grants are permitted by the terms of the grant to take the proposed leave of absence from ANU and any grant funds continue to be used for the purposes of the grant.

11. Approval of OSP will not normally be granted unless the staff member has completed at least three years' continuous service with ANU or two years where prior service with another institution has been formally recognised. Subsequent applications may be considered three years after the staff member has returned from a period of OSP, provided that the staff member has submitted a satisfactory written report for the previous OSP period.

12. In addition, OSP candidates must be performing at the "meeting expectations" rating under their current Performance and Development Review (PDR), have the support of the Head of Department and the approval of the College Dean or Research School Director, and undertake to return to the University for an equivalent period at the end of the program.

The application

13. A proposal for OSP must be derived from agreed development needs included in the agreed PDR for the staff member under the Career and Performance Development Process policy.

14. The planned program of work is to be designed in conjunction with the staff member's supervisor so as to facilitate:

- establishment and/or growth of strong and enduring research networks
- deep exchange and development of ideas in a new environment with academic colleagues outside ANU
- scholarly innovation or change as new ideas are bought back and introduced into ANU
- the development of scholarship of teaching and research through contact with leading academics and/or professionals at other institutions or locations
- access to resources, such as experimental facilities, library or archival collections, not available at ANU.

15. Typically OSP is likely to involve travel outside the Australian Capital Territory, but OSP may be approved for relevant work to be undertaken locally.

16. The substantive written case for OSP (attached to the OSP Application Coversheet) must be submitted with at least six months' notice, to allow proper planning for the periods of impending leave. Colleges will normally call for applications on a bi-annual cycle and assess applications on a College-wide basis, which may include a College Committee that is advisory to the College Dean. Each application is to provide adequate detail to enable it to be assessed according to the merit of the application and the benefit that it will bring to ANU. It should also include a brief outline of how the requested financial assistance is to be spent to support the OSP.

Travel and living expenses

17. A staff member may be provided with financial support for travel and/or living expenses of up to \$5,500 for an overseas program or up to \$2,500 for OSP outside the Canberra region but within Australia.

18. The local budget centre may provide additional payment where there is an agreed case in special circumstances. Where the additional payment results in total OSP financial support exceeding \$10,000 for any one employee, such additional payment shall be referred to the College Dean, Chief Financial Officer and Director, Human Resource for approval.

19. Travel and living expenses may be managed in the following ways:

- Reimbursement of direct travel and accommodation costs for the employee (original receipts must be submitted); or
- ANU to pay for direct travel and accommodation costs for the employee (original invoices must be submitted); or
- Pre approved direct travel and accommodation costs for the employee paid via ANU purchase card (original invoices must be submitted); or

- Payment of a taxable OSP Allowance up to \$2500 (domestic but outside Canberra) or \$5500 (international)
- to receive a tax-free travel allowance as per the ATO per diems for travel destinations to the lower of the per diem for the time spent or OSP allowance of \$2500 or \$5500

20. OR a combination of the above, so long as the total paid does not exceed the individual's OSP financial support entitlement.

21. Managers and staff should be aware of the University's [procedures regarding private travel on business trips](#) and note that where an employee elects to access OSP funding by way of reimbursement or direct payment of airfares, Fringe Benefit Tax implications may arise if the employee is also undertaking private travel on the OSP trip.

22. OSP Allowance can be salary packaged (together with other remuneration) as a tax effective Living Away From Home Allowance (or LAFHA) via [SmartSalary](#) where certain criteria are satisfied:

- in order to access the LAFHA salary packaging option through [SmartSalary](#), the staff member must be living away from their usual place of residence for ANU work purposes (ie the OSP). The individual must intend on returning to reside at their usual place of residence at the conclusion of the OSP
- the LAFHA that can be salary packaged through [SmartSalary](#) can include reasonable accommodation and reasonable additional meal costs. Please refer to the [SmartSalary](#) website for further information. Employees are reminded of the need to seek financial advice when considering salary packaging options.

23. The staff member's salary and salary-related costs continue to be paid by the relevant College.

24. Upon acceptance of an OSP proposal, the application and coversheet should be forwarded to the College HR Office. Payment of the travel and living expenses will be no earlier than 4 weeks prior to the commencement of OSP. Reimbursement of expenses will be paid through ANU Finance into the staff member's ANU payroll default bank account.

25. The financial assistance provided must be used as specified in the OSP application or must be refunded to the budget centre.

Outside Earnings while on OSP

26. Full disclosure of any proposed outside activities, including the delivery of course/teaching programs which are relatable to the OSP application, must be made in the application for such leave if the activities are known in advance or as soon as the opportunity is known to the staff member. Where the staff member is proposing to deliver a

course/teaching program which is not related to their OSP application, the proposed activity must also be declared under the 52 day consultancy rule policy and procedure.

27. Unless prior approval for outside activities is obtained, the University may cancel the OSP and require a return of all or part of salary and grant support.

28. However, the University recognises that the cost to staff members taking OSP, especially overseas, can be very considerable, especially when accompanied by their family. The University also recognises the desirability of encouraging the taking up of prestigious visiting appointments and the giving of prestigious lectures and lecture series. As a consequence in determining whether some return to the University of any outside earnings is required, the University will take into account:

- the return in terms of research and recognition to the staff member and the University of the proposed program
- a realistic appraisal of the overall travel, personal and living costs
- the length of the program and whether it involves a one-off visit or a continuing commitment
- the desirability of encouraging the taking up of prestigious, research-oriented visiting appointments, and the giving of prestigious lectures.

Worker's compensation

29. While a staff member is on approved OSP and is receiving their normal salary, they are covered by ANU's workers' compensation policy and should notify the ANU should any injury or illness occur while actually undertaking their approved OSP work. Annual leave, long service leave, leave without pay and other types of unpaid leave taken consecutively before, during, or after approved OSP are not covered by ANU's workers' compensation policy and staff should consider their own insurance options during these periods.

Reporting requirements

30. A written report will be provided to the supervisor and the College Dean/Research School Director on the outcome of the period of OSP within three months of the return from OSP. The Report must also outline how the financial support provided was actually spent. In addition the staff member may be required to conduct a seminar or workshop for other staff at the discretion of their Dean/Director.

31. Where travel and living costs have been funded by way of payment or reimbursement of travel costs a [travel diary](#) must also be provided.

32. Reports are seen as an integral part of the program and are placed on the employee's personnel file. Future applications for outside studies programs are dependent on reports having been submitted from previous programs.

33. The report may be used as a support to the application form as the record of travel and also to detail any changes to the program from the initial proposal.
34. The staff member and his/her supervisor must also review the outcomes of the OSP as part of their performance review under the [Career development policy](#). This review must be undertaken within three months of the staff member's return from OSP.

Document information

Title	Outside Studies Program (OSP)
Document Type	Procedure
Document Number	ANUP_000632
Version	10
Purpose	To provide an overview of major processes in relation to the Outside Studies Program (OSP).
Audience	Staff-Academic-Research
Category	Administrative
Topic	Travel & Transport
Subtopic	
Effective Date	19 Jun 2019
Review Date	31 Jan 2024
Responsible Officer	Chief People Officer
Approved By	Chief Operating Officer (COO@anu.edu.au)
Contact Area	Human Resources Division (director.hr@anu.edu.au)
Authority	ANU Enterprise Agreement 2017 – 2021
Printed On	9 Jun 2023

Please ensure you have the latest version of this document from the Policy Library website before referencing this.