



## Policy Document

## Special Studies Program

For the definitions of terms used in this policy document refer to the [Delegations of Authority](#)

### 1. Policy

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A Special Studies Program (SSP) is a period of release from normal duties to allow academic staff to undertake a planned program of academic activity and development.

Applications from eligible staff will be called twice a year and will be assessed by a Faculty Committee chaired by the Dean (or nominee). The Dean has the authority to approve SSP, based on the recommendations of the Faculty committee, for all Departments within their Faculty.<sup>1</sup>

Applications will be considered in light of the criteria as specified in section 8 of the SSP procedures document.

### 2. Principles

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The University is committed to providing all staff with the opportunity to maintain and enhance their professional skills in line with achieving the University goals.

This policy outlines the provisions for academic staff to undertake a structured program of research and scholarly work in one of the following categories:

- individual or collaborative research/scholarship
- maintaining/achieving currency in their academic discipline
- establishing links with other institutions and organisations through consultation and joint projects with leaders in the field
- undertaking a major scholarly activity, for example writing for publication, developing and producing creative works, preparation for an exhibition
- investigating and developing new and innovative ways to enhance teaching and student learning
- acquiring new skills and knowledge applicable to their teaching and research
- consolidation and writing up of existing research

SSP 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.

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<sup>1</sup> In exceptional circumstances periods of SSP of greater than 6 months, but less than 12 months may be considered. Such periods are approved by the Provost and DVC

### 3. Eligibility

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All academic teaching and research staff with continuing appointments or fixed-term appointments exceeding three years are eligible to apply for SSP. Research-only staff are not eligible to apply.

Staff members should have satisfactorily completed probation and should normally have completed confirmation and served for a period of three years before an application for SSP will be approved.

Academic staff with fixed term appointments of three years or less become eligible to apply for SSP when they have completed three years service and are reappointed to an academic position without a break in service.

Eligibility for SSP accrues at the rate of six months for three years of academic service and, under special circumstances, can accrue up to a maximum of twelve months for six years service. SSP eligibility does not accrue during a period of absence on SSP or Leave Without Pay.

Where a staff member has held an appointment in another Australian higher education institution immediately prior to taking up an appointment at this University, some credit for eligibility may be granted, subject to the following provisions:

- a) no more than two months has elapsed between the cessation of employment with the releasing institution and commencement of work at this University
- b) the category of previous employment was one for which the staff member would be eligible for SSP at this University
- c) the staff member must have completed their probation and normally have completed their confirmation and served for a period of three years at this University, and
- d) the maximum SSP eligibility awarded in recognition of eligible prior service is six months.

Normally no more than 6 months SSP can be taken at one time, and at least three years must lapse after a period of SSP is taken before eligibility can be considered again.

# Administration

## Background/Context

This policy replaces the SSP policy that was originally approved in 1994 and is designed to assist the University to maintain this important academic activity. This updated policy clarifies the responsibilities of academic staff undertaking SSP and provides a fair and equitable process for dealing with applications.

### 1 Authority/consultation

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This policy has been developed by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Employee Relations) in conjunction with: the Academic Staffing Committee, the Pro-Vice-Chancellors (College); the HR Director's Unit; Deans; College Administration Managers; Financial Services, Remuneration Services; the HR Services Team Managers; and the Industrial Relations Office.

### 2 Management responsibility

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Deans

### 3 Implementation responsibility

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Deans

### 4 Dates

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#### **Approval**

By Professor Ann Brewer  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Infrastructure)

Date 10 October 2006

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Date of Effect:**

Date: At Faculty discretion, but no later than September 2005

#### **Proposed Date of Review:**

Date 10 October 2007

## 5 References

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### A Policies, procedures etc which will be superseded by this document

- Special Studies Program (Study Leave) Policy and Procedures June 1994

### B Relevant industrial awards/agreements

- NA

### C Other related policies/references

- [University Outside Earnings Policy](#)
- [University Intellectual Property Rule](#)
- [Special Studies Program – Procedures document](#)
- [Special Studies Program – application form](#)