

# OUTSIDE STUDIES PROGRAM (OSPRO) POLICY AND PROCEDURE



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## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This policy and procedure outlines the purpose, requirements and conditions of the Outside Studies Program (OSPRO) at CQUniversity.

## 2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy and procedure applies to eligible CQUniversity continuing and fixed-term employees.
- 2.2 This policy and procedure is not applicable to support other activities, such as the completion of a stage of doctoral studies or to undertake formal coursework. Employees should refer to the relevant policy documents for available support options (e.g. [Staff Study Support Procedure](#)).

## 3 POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 OSPRO is a professional development option available to University employees, which provides opportunities to develop capabilities appropriate for meeting organisational needs and the individual's professional goals.

- 3.2 The University recognises the need for employees to have the opportunity to develop capabilities appropriate for meeting the University's strategic needs and the individual's professional goals. This may be in order to keep abreast of developments, to use facilities, or to access other resources not available in the University. To assist with this, the University may authorise periods of OSPRO, under the conditions set out in this policy and procedure and subject to the financial and other limitations of the University.
- 3.3 The University regards participation in OSPRO as building on employee capabilities to meet the University's future needs and opportunities. OSPRO is an opportunity, rather than an entitlement, and it is on this basis that the University authorises salary and financial assistance.
- 3.4 In general, approved purposes for OSPRO include activities which advance and support the University's core business (engagement, learning and teaching, research and innovation and enterprise). For example, OSPRO can be used to develop capabilities around advanced scholarship and innovation in one or more of these core business areas, as relevant to the staff member's duties.
- 3.5 Continuing outcomes after a period of OSPRO is completed, will be monitored through the performance review process.

## 4 PROCEDURE

### Eligibility

- 4.1 Continuing and fixed-term, full-time and part-time employees may apply to undertake OSPRO, provided probationary requirements have been satisfied and subject to other provisions of this policy and procedure.
- 4.2 OSPRO will only be granted to professional employees where there is a direct benefit in terms of their current position description.
- 4.3 Part-time employees must take OSPRO at the fraction at which they are employed (ie part-time service will not be converted to full-time equivalence or vice versa).
- 4.4 Employees will be eligible to apply for OSPRO after having been employed for a minimum of three years with the University as at the date of the commencement of the OSPRO period, or equivalent fractional service. Long service leave and leave without pay absences will not count.
- 4.5 Following an OSPRO, employees will only be eligible to commence a subsequent OSPRO after a further three years of employment from the date of submission of an approved report for their previous OSPRO.

### Time release and financial support available

- 4.6 OSPRO can be taken for a minimum of three months, and a maximum of six months.
- 4.7 The University will provide financial assistance towards travel and living expenses by way of an allowance:
- Financial assistance is a contribution towards the cost of undertaking OSPRO. There is no expectation that the full cost incurred by the employee in undertaking an OSPRO will be covered. Employees working from their home campus will receive time-release only.
  - Employees should consider all funding sources available to support OSPRO, including industry support.
  - Employees may apply for less than the relevant amount listed.
  - A single travel grant may be paid to assist in the coverage of spouse and dependants' travel.

	3 months allowance	4 months allowance	5 months allowance	6 months allowance	Spouse and dependant travel grant
Working from home campus	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Within Australia and New Zealand	\$4,000	\$5,000	\$6,000	\$7,000	\$500
Overseas	\$7,000	\$8,000	\$9,000	\$10,000	\$2,000

- 4.8 An allowance will be provided to cover travel and living expenses only. It may not be used to purchase equipment or resources. Employees may be supported from the business area or Division funds for such purchases. Employees can attend conferences during OSPRO with the direct costs associated with the conference to be supported from other funding sources. Any allowance paid will be additional to the current salary entitlements.
- 4.9 Employees should seek their own taxation advice in relation to the finances of their proposed OSPRO. Approved allowances will be budgeted and paid from the relevant business area or Division funds. Any part of the allowance allocated for 'living expenses' or 'spouse and dependant travel grant' will be paid directly to the employee through the University's payroll and will be treated as salary for income taxation purposes. However, the University may consider paying the allowance in a way other than salary, upon receipt of written advice from the employee's accountant/taxation advisor. Deductions against the income will be a personal taxation matter for the individual. Employees should retain all receipts and other evidence of expenditure incurred for personal taxation purposes.
- 4.10 Higher duties allowance will not be paid to employees during OSPRO. Employees on OSPRO will continue to receive their normal salary entitlements.
- 4.11 Employees undertaking OSPRO in an industry placement cannot receive salary from industry for their work. Employees wishing to be paid for industry-based work should refer to the [Secondment and Exchange Procedure](#) for further details on professional development opportunities.
- 4.12 Employees may wish to give consideration to combining a number of professional development opportunities in the one timeframe, such as combining OSPRO with a period of secondment to make the most of the opportunities available.
- 4.13 OSPRO funding will be considered through the OSPRO Committee as an amount determined from year to year. Following the OSPRO approval process, approved allowances will be reported to the business area or Division to be allocated through their normal annual budget process.

## Leave, insurance and taxation

- 4.14 There are insurance, taxation and risk issues relating to extended periods of travel. These matters are within the scope of the [Travel Policy and Procedure](#).
- 4.15 Annual or long service leave may be taken in conjunction with OSPRO. Employees wishing to take any type of leave in conjunction with OSPRO must outline the proposed dates as part of their OSPRO application. If the OSPRO application is approved, it will be the employee's responsibility to ensure a leave application is submitted via the University's Human Resource System (EMPower) following receipt of the OSPRO approval letter.
- 4.15 The University strongly discourages travellers requesting recreational leave or other personal leave in conjunction with University funded travel (including those funded by research funding) and will endeavour to avoid the approval of travel incurring fringe benefits tax.
- 4.16 Travellers undertaking travel for OSPRO must complete a [Task/Activity Risk Assessment](#) in consultation with the University's Safety and Wellbeing Unit. This risk assessment must be approved by the Safety and Wellbeing Unit prior to travel and a copy submitted with the travel request.

## Applications

- 4.17 A call for applications will be issued annually, and will include the timeline for the submission and consideration of applications. Applicants will use the [OSPRO Application Kit](#) to make their application.
- 4.18 An application for OSPRO should be considered to be comparable in quality to that expected for a peer reviewed publication or major grant application, with a particular focus on the outcomes from the proposed investment of resources.

- 4.19 Proposals will be considered in relation to the University's strategic priorities, proposed contributions to the University's core business (engagement, learning and teaching, research and innovation, and enterprise), the requirements of the University's academic programs, and the scholarly performance and development needs of the individual.
- 4.20 OSPRO is expected to contribute to the professional development of employees in ways that will enhance their capability to contribute to the core business of the University.
- 4.21 Applicants must consult with their line supervisor about their intention to apply and to seek advice on the appropriateness and timeliness of such an application.
- 4.22 All OSPRO related travel will be in accordance with the [Travel Policy and Procedure](#).
- 4.23 Applications must provide:
- a comprehensive plan in line with the applicant's current position, institutional needs, and professional goals
  - contain specific argument in support of undertaking a proposed OSPRO at:
    - a particular organisation
    - an organisation overseas, or
    - an organisation where a previous OSPRO has been undertaken by the applicant, and
  - be submitted by completing the OSPRO Application Form, contained in the [OSPRO Application Kit](#).
- 4.24 If the applicant is proposing to commence an OSPRO which will conclude within 12 months of an expected or notified retirement age, resignation, redundancy or expiry of a fixed-term appointment, the applicant must demonstrate that there will be sufficient benefits to the University in the time from return to ceasing employment to justify approval of the application.

## Criteria

- 4.25 The OSPRO Committee will consider:
- the benefit of the proposed OSPRO to the University's strategic goals of engagement, learning and teaching, research and innovation and enterprise as well as the applicant's professional goals
  - the proposed measurable outcomes must be appropriate and achievable and the applicant must have sufficient plans for dissemination of their OSPRO report to the University and wider community as appropriate
  - the ability of the applicant to benefit from the proposed period of OSPRO, based on evidence of performance to date, and a proven record in the achievement of goals, targets and work tasks
  - the evidence, from previous OSPRO reports and subsequent performance, of benefit to the applicant and the University, of any previous participation in an OSPRO or other related University programs
  - the appropriateness of the arrangements made to cover the applicant's work duties and responsibilities
  - whether an OSPRO concluding within 12 months of an expected or notified retirement age, resignation, redundancy or expiry of a fixed-term appointment will bring commensurate benefits for the University
  - whether sufficient documentation from the host organisation/s has been included with the application, and
  - the proposed location/s.

## Approval

- 4.26 Applications will be submitted to the applicant's line supervisor for consideration of employee management issues. Line supervisors will forward the applications to the Dean/Director/Head of business area, along with the reasons for the support or non-support of each application. The Dean/Director/Head of business area will forward the applications to their relevant Vice-President.

- 4.27 The relevant Vice-President will consider the applications with regard to the value of proposal and its intended outcomes, whether it supports the directions of the business area, and its contributions to the University's strategic directions, and rank the applications accordingly. They may wish to seek advice from the business area management group as part of their deliberation process.
- 4.28 The relevant Vice-President will provide the ranked applications for their area to the OSPRO Committee Secretary for collation ([PACDirector@cqu.edu.au](mailto:PACDirector@cqu.edu.au)).
- 4.29 The Committee Secretary will provide the collated applications and summarised report to the Committee.
- 4.30 The Committee, comprising the Vice-President (Academic), Vice-President (Research) and Deputy Vice-President (Educational Strategy and Innovation), will meet to consider the ranked applications within the context of the University's strategic directions, budget considerations, and from a whole of University perspective. Other relevant Deputy Vice-Presidents may be called to the Committee if applications are received from other business areas not currently represented.
- 4.31 The Committee will determine whether each application is approved or not by simple majority. Where the vote is tied, the Vice-President (Academic) will hold the casting vote.
- 4.32 The Committee Secretary will provide a summary report of approved OSPRO applications to the University Management Committee, Corporate Budget Team, Payroll Unit, Safety and Wellbeing Unit and relevant business areas for noting. It is the business area's responsibility to ensure they budget for the approved amount for their relevant employee.
- 4.33 The Committee Secretary will arrange for applicants to receive written notification advising of the outcome of their application, and if successful, the amount of time and financial support to be provided.
- 4.34 The Committee Secretary will maintain a record of OSPRO applications, and the location and purpose of each OSPRO.

### **Variation to approved application**

- 4.35 Any changes to the approved OSPRO prior to commencement, must immediately be submitted in writing to and approved by the employee's Vice-President, following endorsement by the relevant Dean/Director/Head of business area. The changes must then be provided to the OSPRO Committee Secretary ([PACDirector@cqu.edu.au](mailto:PACDirector@cqu.edu.au)) who will submit to the OSPRO Committee for final approval. The employee will be notified of the outcome by the Committee Secretary.
- 4.36 Details of any subsequent changes once the OSPRO has commenced must be forwarded immediately to the employee's Vice-President for approval, following endorsement by the relevant Dean/Director/Head of business area. The changes must then be provided to the OSPRO Committee Secretary for the OSPRO Committee to note.
- 4.37 Where an employee needs to significantly defer an approved OSPRO (e.g. from one year to another), a new application must be submitted. New applications may not be automatically approved.

### **Suspension of University related duties**

- 4.38 Employees will discharge all teaching and administrative responsibilities, higher degree supervision and other duties to the satisfaction of their line supervisor prior to commencing OSPRO.
- 4.39 Where the employee is a member of a University Committee/s, the employee is responsible for notifying the relevant Committee Secretaries of planned absence and, if appropriate, assist in the sourcing of a replacement committee member. The Dean/Director/Head of business area may approve continuing membership of University Committees in special circumstances.

### **Sickness during OSPRO**

- 4.40 If an employee becomes ill or injured during OSPRO, they may apply to the Dean/Director/Head of business area for recognition of that part of the OSPRO that was lost, or for a short extension of the OSPRO.

- 4.41 The OSPRO Committee may, on the recommendation of the Dean/Director/Head of business area and relevant Vice-President, authorise an extension of the period of detached duty, if that authorisation would assist the employee carry out an important part of the planned OSPRO. Any additional costs incurred in such an extension would be the responsibility of the business area or Division concerned.
- 4.42 There will be no transferability of time between OSPRO applications – that is, the time lost on one OSPRO cannot be credited to the next OSPRO.
- 4.43 The Committee Secretary will inform the Corporate Budget Team, Payroll Unit, and Safety and Wellbeing Unit as soon as possible, of any action taken under this provision.

### **Return to the University and reporting**

- 4.44 Employees must return from OSPRO and associated leave in sufficient time to carry out normal teaching and course planning administration requirements of the business area.
- 4.45 A Dean/Director/Head of business area may, however, in special circumstances, approve a later return which must be copied to the OSPRO Committee Secretary.
- 4.46 Upon completion of a period of OSPRO the employee must submit a report using the [OSPRO Reporting Template](#). The report must provide details of the actual period of the OSPRO, the impact and outcomes of the activities undertaken, the benefits that have accrued to the University and employee, and any action taken and scheduled according to the original dissemination plan.
- 4.47 Copies of the report must be submitted to the employee's line supervisor, Dean/Director/Head of business area, Vice-President and the OSPRO Committee Secretary within two months of return. If the report is not submitted within this timeframe, eligibility for subsequent periods of OSPRO will not commence until and when an acceptable report is received.
- 4.48 Upon return to the University, the employee must action the dissemination plan provided in their OSPRO application. This should include a presentation to interested University employees and the wider community as appropriate.
- 4.49 OSPRO reports will be submitted by the OSPRO Committee to any relevant University committees, e.g. Research Committee.

### **Conditions**

- 4.50 Employees will return to their position within the University following OSPRO, and any approved leave immediately following it, for a period equal to the length of the OSPRO. Long service leave does not count unless specifically authorised by the Vice-Chancellor and President.
- 4.51 Employees who do not complete the required post-OSPRO employment must pay the University an amount equal to the sum of the salary received for the non-acquitted period of the OSPRO and a proportionate part of the financial assistance received.
- 4.52 As well as any other rights it may have, to the extent permitted by law, the University may deduct from any money otherwise payable to the employee the amount payable under these provisions, unless the Vice-Chancellor and President permits an alternative method of payment.
- 4.53 If the activities and actions detailed in the approved OSPRO application are not undertaken during the OSPRO, the employee must repay to the University a proportionate part of the financial assistance provided.
- 4.54 The [Paid Outside Work Procedure](#) and [Intellectual Property and Moral Rights Policy](#) will apply to any outside work or research undertaken while on OSPRO.
- 4.55 After a first OSPRO and subsequently, the University can reasonably expect that such efforts will be evidenced by publications, teaching achievements or other relevant material. In the absence of such evidence, the University is entitled to conclude that further investments in OSPRO are unlikely to stimulate genuine development effort in these staff members.

## Appeals

- 4.56 Where disputes arise concerning the eligibility, financial assistance or reporting requirements, the Vice-President (Global Development) or, in their absence, another Vice-President not involved in the process will be the arbiter of such disputes.
- 4.57 Applicants whose application has been refused by the Vice-President, and the applicant believes that there has been a procedural irregularity, may appeal to the Vice-Chancellor and President, who will determine the matter.

## 5 RESPONSIBILITIES

### Compliance, monitoring and review

- 5.1 The Director, People and Culture is responsible for implementing, monitoring, reviewing and ensuring compliance with this policy and procedure.
- 5.2 The OSPRO Committee Secretary is responsible for ensuring this policy and procedure is followed, or escalated to the OSPRO Committee if required.

### Reporting

- 5.3 No additional reporting is required.

### Records management

- 5.4 Employees must manage records in accordance with the [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#). This includes retaining these records in a recognised University recordkeeping information system.
- 5.5 University records must be retained for the minimum periods specified in the relevant [Retention and Disposal Schedule](#). Before disposing of any records, approval must be sought from the Records and Privacy Team (email [records@cqu.edu.au](mailto:records@cqu.edu.au)).

## 6 DEFINITIONS

- 6.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

## 7 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Intellectual Property and Moral Rights Policy](#)

[Outside Studies Program \(OSPRO\) Application Kit](#)

[Outside Studies Program \(OSPRO\) Reporting Template](#)

[Paid Outside Work Procedure](#)

[Secondment and Exchange Procedure](#)

[Travel Policy and Procedure](#)

## 8 FEEDBACK

- 8.1 Feedback about this document can be emailed to [policy@cqu.edu.au](mailto:policy@cqu.edu.au).

## 9 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Delegated Approval Authority	N/A
Advisory Committee	University Management Committee
Required Consultation	Joint Consultative Committee
Administrator	Director People and Culture
Next Review Date	26/11/2024

Approval and Amendment History	Details
Original Approval Authority and Date	23/10/1993
Amendment Authority and Date	Academic Board 1/3/1999; Executive of Council 12/3/1999; Chancellor's Committee 31/5/2007 (including that the approval authority is now the Vice-Chancellor and President); Vice-Chancellor and President 21/7/2009 – updated to reflect current staff titles; updates approved Director, Human Resources 29/6/2010; Vice-Chancellor and President 3/9/2012; Vice-Chancellor and President 30/4/2014; Vice-Chancellor and President 4/07/2018; Director, People and Culture 16/07/2018; Director People and Culture 26/11/2021.
Notes	This document consolidated and replaced the Outside Studies Program (OSPRO) Procedure and Outside Studies Program (OSPRO) Principles (30/04/2014).