



UNIVERSITY OF
CANBERRA
AUSTRALIA'S CAPITAL UNIVERSITY

OUTSIDE STUDIES PROGRAM (OSP) FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ's)

Questions raised at the information sessions for OSP.

1. *How will OSP work with the two semester and winter term academic year starting in 2010?*

OSP is to be scheduled for periods covering semester one or two which may encroach on the winter term. OSP is not intended to be scheduled so as to either begin or end in the winter term and ceasing mid way through a semester.

2. *Why is there only one affiliation stated in the policy?*

Although one affiliation is explicitly stated in the policy, if the purpose of OSP requires more than one affiliation the application will be approved provided that there is a clear statement on how each additional affiliation will contribute to the achievement of the overall objective of an individual's OSP.

3. *Is the letter of affiliation and acceptance required at the time of submitting the OSP application?*

Ideally yes, however if the Dean accepts the application pending the letter of affiliation the Committee will accept the recommendation of the Dean.

4. *Can I be located in my office and travel away from Canberra as required?*

It is intended that an OSP is to be undertaken offsite; that is, you will not be located at the University or using your office. OSP is similar to a sabbatical to enable you to further advance your skills and expertise. It is therefore expected that you cease all university-related duties whilst on OSP. Some exceptions may be made with the approval of the Vice-Chancellor.

5. *How does it work when there is a number of staff from one Faculty/Discipline each seeking to go on OSP at the one time?*

Your Dean is required to provide recommendation and rank all OSP applications in the Faculty. The Dean is also required to consider aspects such as cost, impact and the overall benefit of the OSP for the discipline/faculty and wider university. The OSP committee will review all applications in line with the eligibility and criteria as outlined in the policy and provide a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor.

6. *What are the criteria used by the Dean in assessing applications?*

The Dean will assess each application on its merits and in accordance with the criteria outlined in the OSP policy. Each applicant will need to provide details of the OSP application in terms of the research activity or learning and teaching activity to be undertaken.

7. *What are the Committee's criteria for assessment?*

The Committee will review all applications both recommended and not recommended by the Dean. The Committee will ensure all applications are eligible and adhere to the criteria as outlined in the policy for consideration. The Committee is required to provide the Vice-Chancellor a report detailing the successful, unsuccessful and deferred applications.

8. *What happens if an application is not recommended by the Dean due to staffing or funding considerations?*

All applications are to be referred to the Committee. The Committee will assess each application and provide a report detailing the successful, unsuccessful and deferred applications. The Chair will consult with the Dean should matters such as this arise. The Vice-Chancellor will make the final determination.

9. *What if your Dean has already stated that there is no funding; should you still apply?*

All eligible academic staff may apply for OSP. The process for consideration and recommendation of an OSP application must be in accordance with the OSP policy and procedures.

10. *Can you apply if you are T-P track?*

Yes.

11. *Do you apply in line with the Strategic Plan?*

As outlined in the policy there are criteria for consideration. Your Dean will consider your application against these criteria; applications should address the University's mission and strategic direction, therefore it is advisable to align your OSP objectives with one or more of the 2008 – 2012 University strategic plan objectives.

12. *What consideration is given where you are responsible for HDR students?*

OSP is like a sabbatical to further advance your skills and expertise, therefore all university related duties will cease whilst on OSP. In the case of HDR students, their supervision in most instances will transfer to the secondary supervisor of the supervisory panel for the period you will be absent.

13. *Is the application to be submitted electronically or in hard copy?*

Either form is acceptable. Note that the application must go to the Dean first for recommendation; it is advisable to confirm with your Dean how they would like to receive the application

14. *What is the role of the Committee?*

As outlined in the policy and procedures the Committee is to consider the recommendations of the Deans and make recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor. The Committee will also ensure all applications meet the eligibility criteria.

15. *How are we going to accommodate the winter term?*

OSP is not to start or finish mid way through semester one or two; however OSP may be taken during the winter term. See FAQ #1 above.

16. *Can you take 48 weeks OSP at half pay?*

The maximum period for OSP is 48 weeks. This maximum will only apply to a staff member who has completed 7 years continuous service and has not previously been on OSP. An OSP is normally for 24 weeks at full pay upon the completion of 3 ½ years service initially and the completion of 3 years service thereafter (pending the satisfactory completion and submission of all previous OSP obligations). Only in exceptional circumstances, with prior approval by the Vice-Chancellor, may an OSP be taken at half pay for an extended period.

17. *What does this clause 31 of the policy mean?*

“In considering an applicant’s track record, the Committee will take into consideration the impact of a period of sustained Leadership duties (e.g. Head of Discipline or Associate Dean)”?

Recognition will be given by the Dean and on recommendation to the OSP Committee when considering an application from an academic who has been unable to access OSP due to leadership responsibilities and who has been unable to commit the appropriate time required to sustain a high research capacity or teaching load due to their leadership responsibilities.

18. *How is the 3 ½ years service at the University ascertained?*

The 3 ½ years is measured from the start of one’s initial appointment to the University up until the date in which the OSP is to commence.

19. *How do you create an itinerary; how much detail is required?*

The itinerary should provide the Dean and the Committee sufficient information to know where OSP will be undertaken. An understanding of the itinerary will assist in the preparation of a more accurate budget for OSP purposes. It can be noted that the cost of airfares may only be an estimate.

20. *What is the definition of an early career academic?*

As a guide, Early Career Researchers (ECR) are defined as those who are within five years of the start of their research careers when they submit their applications. This normally means that one may have been awarded a PhD or equivalent research doctorate within five years (see ARC 2009). Hence an early career academic would be one who fits the definition above but may also be someone who has just registered for and beginning work on a PhD programme.

21. *Section 10 of the application form seeks information on the current or anticipated learning and teaching or research supervision responsibilities during the approved absence of leave, asks for the academic to nominate who will provide cover during the absence if OSP is approved?*

Here it would be useful to indicate how a unit that a staff member is responsible for will be taught. This will be a matter for discussion between the staff member and their respective Dean and Discipline Heads. See also FAQ 12 above.

22. Do you have to state exactly where you are going to be whilst on OSP; that is does the University need to know where you are working from?

No the University doesn't need to know where you are physically working from day-to-day; but you must have an approved affiliation and if seeking funding for expenses such as travel, evidence of such expenses will have to be provided in the financial report.

23. Can you combine OSP and long service leave or recreation leave?

Yes, subject to your Dean's approval. Noting that OSP or LSL or recreation leave should ideally not commence or cease mid way through a semester (i.e. the teaching period). You may also need to check Fringe Benefit Tax obligations when combining such leave with OSP.

24. What if you fall ill whilst on OSP?

In the event that you fall ill you will have to apply for sick leave by writing to the Chair of the OSP Committee for the leave to be approved. (A medical certificate will be required if the period of absence is for 3 days or more). Should the period of sick leave affect the period of OSP, only the Chair may approve changes to the dates and period of OSP in consultation with the respective Dean.

25. What if I already have LSL approved; should I retract it and await the approval of the OSP application?

No, this is not necessary; however ensure your Dean is made aware of the dates of the LSL so that this may be considered when reviewing your OSP application. It is the Deans discretion as to whether the LSL is to be postponed to another date.

28. Can I use contents of my PDR to support my application for OSP?

Yes by all means. These will help supplement and provide evidence of proposed programmes and affiliations.