

Special Studies Program Policy

Section 1 - Overview

(1) The purpose of this Policy is to define and establish the University's approach to its investment in Special Studies for academic staff. This Policy document should be read in conjunction with the [Special Studies Program Procedures](#) and relevant School workload policy material.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) In accordance with the current [Academic and ELC Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement](#), this Policy applies to academic staff who hold a continuing position (full-time or fractional) at the University, and who have held such a position for at least three years.

Section 3 - Policy

(3) The rationale for the University of New England's (UNE) Special Studies Program (SSP) is to strengthen and develop the University's profile and the priorities embedded within its [Strategic Plan](#) via the professional development of academic staff.

(4) SSP provides academic staff with the opportunity to engage in a special period of study leave for professional development, beyond that provided during their normal employment, including teaching-free periods.

(5) SSP should not be perceived as an entitlement. SSP is intended to provide academic staff with the opportunity to:

- a. undertake a sustained period free from teaching and administrative duties for engagement with professional programs and development activities, research or scholarship to enhance their own research, teaching and administrative/service expertise, aligned with the strategic directions of their School/Faculty and the University; and
- b. develop, maintain and improve professional networks nationally and internationally in order to contribute to the University's [Strategic Plan](#).

(6) The right to apply for SSP is available to academic staff who meet the eligibility requirements provided in the [Special Studies Program \(SSP\) Procedures](#), and is an investment in their professional development, consistent with documented discussions during their annual Performance Planning Development and Review (PPDR) process.

(7) The relevant Dean's endorsement of an application for SSP is based on consideration of the application's academic merit, its alignment with the University's strategic priorities, the applicant's teaching and administrative commitments and PPDR outcomes, and the resource constraints of the School, on advice from the Head of School/Supervisor.

(8) Following endorsement by the relevant Dean, an application for SSP is referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for approval. The decision of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor will be final.

(9) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor may convene an advisory group should s/he require an external view on any specific

SSP applications.

Quality Assurance

(10) The Deputy Vice-Chancellor is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented effectively and consistently across all relevant academic and professional units.

Breaches

(11) While a staff member is on SSP they are required to comply with the University's policies.

(12) Any breach of the University's legislative obligations may result in legal action against the University. A breach by an employee may also result in disciplinary action in accordance with the provisions set out in the relevant [Enterprise Agreement](#) or employment contract.

Section 4 - Definitions Specific to this Policy

(13) Enterprise Agreement - means the [UNE Academic and ELC Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement](#).

(14) Head of School - also means Director of Centre, Head of Cost Centre or equivalent.

(15) Scholarship - means academic study or achievement; learning at a high level.

(16) Staff - means a staff member, who is not a casual employee, and is covered by the [UNE Academic and ELC Teaching Staff Enterprise Agreement](#).

Status and Details

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Effective Date	27th July 2015
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Expiry Date	To Be Advised
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"School" - Is an organisational unit comprising academic staff in related fields of study who are responsible for teaching and research in those academic fields together with support staff. Each School also has lead management for the design and delivery of the courses within its responsibility.