

## ACADEMIC STUDY LEAVE (ASL) GUIDELINES

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### 1. Introduction

These guidelines are to be read in conjunction with the Academic Study Leave (ALS) policy, the relevant industrial instrument and other related documents.

ASL provides academic staff with the opportunity to:

- a) Participate in sustained research and/or creative activity relevant to the research of the School and University;
- b) Develop research by partnering with government, industry, professional organisations and other learning institutions and the wider community;
- c) Complete or progress towards an additional qualification relevant to the staff member's role and development towards achieving University goals;
- d) Maintain and improve scholarship in the staff member's discipline area, particularly the application of knowledge to teaching and/or research; and
- e) Maintain and improve professional networks locally and internationally and extend the internationalisation of teaching and/or research programs.

### 2. Financial Assistance

Requests for financial assistance must be identified in the ASL Application Form, and will be considered in relation to resources available. Where available, the preference is for the University preferred suppliers to be utilised.

During the ASL period, academic staff are paid at their substantive salary. Excluding salary received from the University, details of any other known earnings, or other financial benefits to be received during ASL must be declared at the time of making application.

ASL is subject to normal University audit procedures and all University funds must be appropriately acquitted. Funds advanced but not expended must be refunded within one month of return, and any other University funds must be appropriately recorded and acquitted by the approved process and in accordance with associated policies.

### **3. Timeframe and School's Assessment prior to ASL Committee**

For details of the timeframes for ASL, including service on return to the University, refer to the Academic Study Leave Policy.

The following outlines the steps involved by the School prior to committee assessment:

- i. Application forms are to be submitted by the nominated closing date to the Dean or nominee.
- ii. Application forms received after the nominated closing date will not be considered for that period, but may be held or resubmitted for consideration in the following ASL round.
- iii. The Associate Dean (Discipline) will assess applications against the eligibility criteria. Where applications are assessed as meeting the requirements of the eligibility criteria, the Associate Dean (Discipline) will finalise the ASL Application form by completing the relevant sections and commenting on the proposal and the value of the program to the Work Unit.
- iv. Finalised applications will be provided to the relevant School ASL Committee for consideration. The School ASL Committee will determine which if any of the applications should be recommended to the Dean for approval.
- v. The Dean will make the final determination on ASL applications.
- vi. The Dean will notify applicants of the Committee's determination as soon as practicable.
- vii. Approved ASL applications will be forwarded to the Payroll area for processing and recording.

### **4. Applicant's Responsibility when preparing an ASL Proposal**

It is the responsibility of the academic staff member to prove and demonstrate within their ASL application:

- the suitability and rationale of their proposal;
- necessary detailed advice to support their claim;
- the required approval from any Ethics Committee or Regulatory Body;
- suitable evidence substantiating information provided; and
- eligibility to apply for ASL.

Applicants are encouraged to consult with the Dean of School or other senior academic colleagues that are in a position to offer sound advice on the feasibility of the proposed ASL program well in advance of compiling their application.

Applications that are assessed as being incomplete or inconsistent with University policy, eligibility criteria and application form requirements will not be accepted.

### **5. ASL Committee Composition**

The Dean or nominee shall determine and establish an ASL Committee for each School for the purpose of approving or rejecting eligible applications.

The ASL Committee will comprise:

- Associate Dean (Research) (Chair);
- All relevant Associate Deans (*Discipline*);
- Two (2) academic staff (ALEVC or ALEVD) who are not applicants, elected by the academic staff of the School; and
- An Associate Dean from another School.

## **6. Role of ASL Committee**

The ASL Committee will consider each eligible application on its merits in relation to, but not limited to the:

- nature of the proposed program and its adherence to the purpose of ASL;
- needs of the School's/Centre's operational plan;
- potential benefits to the individual's Work Unit;
- available funding and resources;
- need for professional development of the employee;
- previous grants of ASL that the employee has taken; and
- application supporting the standing and reputation of the University.

A committee member must disclose any real or perceived conflict of interest prior to participating in an ASL assessment process.

The ASL Committee is not obliged to seek out additional information on behalf of the applicant. They may at their discretion require the applicant to provide more detailed information.

An application under consideration is not an indication that it will automatically be approved.

An application under consideration may be varied; this includes but is not limited to, requests for financial assistance or length of ASL. Only requests for financial assistance contained within the ASL application form will be considered.

Formally approved ASL programs can only be varied with approval of the Dean of School.

All decisions are final. Applicants will be notified of the outcomes as soon as possible.

## **7. ASL Conditions**

For further details of the conditions, refer to the Academic Study Leave Policy.

## **8. Action Required at the Conclusion of ASL**

At the conclusion of ASL, the employee shall prepare a comprehensive ASL report for the Dean. The report is required within one (1) month of completing ASL.

The report should contain:

- an overview of the ASL program and outcomes;
- major objectives of the ASL program;
- description of the ASL program;
- evaluation of ASL against outcomes;
- a statement of benefits achieved or expected (e.g. Book, Research);
- copy of itinerary details; and
- a financial statement of claimed expenses (must be attached).

Failure to provide an acceptable report and/or financial statement within the one (1) month period will result in service for future ASL programs not being recognised until a suitable report or statement is provided, and/or any other action considered appropriate by the Dean.

## **9. Application Procedures – How to complete the ASL Form**

Applications for ASL must be of a demonstrably high quality.

The following is provided to assist an individual in the completion and submission of an ASL application form:

- (i) Read and familiarise yourself with the associated clauses and requirements in the relevant ECU industrial instrument, ASL Policy and related guidelines.
- (ii) Seek clarification and assistance where required.
- (iii) Consult with other senior academic staff and key stakeholders at organisations that are to be part of the program (i.e. study visits) well in advance of submitting your ASL application.
- (iv) Seek advice and input from peers or other senior academic staff on the quality of your ASL application and the proposed benefits of the program.
- (v) Complete all sections of the ASL Application Form, and for areas where it is not applicable, mark as N/A.
- (vi) In a clear and succinct manner, identify the purpose and benefits of the proposed ASL program.
- (vii) Provide full itinerary details of the ASL program.
- (viii) Provide a detailed estimate of financial assistance required, and state any paid or unpaid work.
- (ix) Provide sufficient detail of all your work commitments and how these will be adequately covered during the ASL period.
- (x) Check details and review your application with peers and other senior academic staff, and attach any supporting documentation (e.g. curriculum vitae), copies of evidence (e.g. conference and/or performance invitations), and where required evidence of approvals from the Ethics Committee or other regulatory approvals.
- (xi) Submit your completed application form to the Dean of School or nominee by the nominated closing date.

The ASL application form must be completed in:

- Arial, font size of 11; and
- In single line spacing.

Please note specific word counts apply to some areas of the ASL Application Form and these are strictly applied. Applications received that are not on the approved University ASL Application Form will be assessed as non-compliant.