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Research leave instruction

Instruction statement

The purpose of this instruction is to describe research leave which is available for the purposes of a professional development.

Applies to continuing academic staff.

Exclusions

Fixed-term and casual academic staff.

Instruction steps and actions

The staff member and manager negotiate appropriate time release to undertake the research professional development activity in line with the work unit's goals and needs. Managers need to take the criteria for approving research leave and the requirements of the role and work area into consideration when deciding to provide research leave.

Provisions

Research leave enables researchers to be temporarily freed from their teaching and administrative responsibilities, for a consolidated period of time (ie between one and six months within a 12 month period), during which they will engage in activities directly relevant to their research careers and to RMIT's research objectives.

In order to maximise the benefit received from research leave, the following principles should be applied:

- Every School would normally have academic staff taking research leave each year as a strategy to build their research capability and outputs.
- Appropriate budget will need to be allocated to research leave by the School and/or College to cover costs such as backfill of teaching duties and/or travel for collaborative projects if required. Research leave may also be funded from external funding.
- Research Leave would normally be allocated over and above normal research workloads to relieve academic staff from their teaching and administrative responsibilities. It should be for a consolidated period of time in order to concentrate on developing or producing research outcomes.
- Research Leave should not be used for the completion of a PhD or other study-related activity.
- Research leave should be allocated to academic staff for the purposes of engaging in activities directly relevant to their research careers and to RMIT's research objectives. This could include completion of an externally funded research project, preparation of results for publishing, preparation of an external funding application e.g. ARC, DECRA, intensive work on a collaborative research project, particularly with international partners or participation on a peak body.
- The research outcomes delivered from a period of Research Leave should be in addition to the outcomes expected from the staff member's annual research workload allocation.
- A period of no less than 30 and no more than 182 days within a 12 month period is the ideal length for research leave, either taken in a block allocated to the one semester or shorter periods split across the year eg 2 days per week for 6 months.
- Staff workplans should capture research leave arrangements, both the year prior to the leave being taken to trigger any necessary workload and timetabling arrangements and the year the leave is taken to reflect the staff member's career development.
- ESS is to be used to approve research leave and record the leave for management reporting and compliance purposes. A drop down box is available specifically for research leave.
- Research Leave should be applied for at least six months prior to the start date of the proposed leave.

Eligibility

Continuing academic staff, if they:

- have been employed by RMIT for at least 3 years
- have demonstrated that they have met or are close to achieving documented School levels of 'expected' research performance in the current and previous year, in line with the RMIT University academic expectations.
- complete the Research Leave Application form and demonstrate how they will use the research leave for the benefit of themselves and the University. The Application Form should include details on the proposed research, expected outcomes and the benefits and be submitted to the Dean/Head of School for approval
- agree to provide a detailed report on the outcomes of the research leave within two months of return from leave. The format of this report will be negotiated with the Dean/Head of School
- have successfully delivered outcomes from previous research leave granted
- have not received research leave during the 3 calendar years prior to their current application
- have applied for the research leave through ESS.

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Related policy

- [Professional development policy](#)

Supporting documents

- [Research leave application form \(DOC 132KB, 5p\)](#)

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