Higher Degree Support for Academic Staff Procedures

1. STRATEGIC PLAN THEME AND COMPLIANCE OBLIGATION SUPPORTED

Staff Performance and Development Policy

Strategic Plan Theme: People and Culture

2. PROCEDURAL DETAILS

2.1. The University may offer support to further a staff member's development where it meets the strategic and operational goals of the University; however, it is expected that individual academic staff will also invest in furthering their own qualifications and careers.

2.2. The purpose of Higher Degree Support (HDS) is to provide for a period of support while a staff member is undertaking a higher degree by research.

2.3. HDS is not a form of leave but rather a component of academic work that a staff member is engaged in at the University and is subject to supervision and accountability requirements.

2.4. Eligibility

2.4.1. A continuing or fixed-term academic staff member may apply for up to 1,000 paid hours free from regular duties over a three-year period to undertake a doctoral degree to completion.

2.4.2. A continuing and fixed-term academic staff member may apply for up to 400 paid hours free from regular duties over a two-year period to undertake a masters degree by research to completion.

2.4.3. Ongoing HDS is subject to the University being satisfied with evidence of appropriate progress, compliance with the terms of the HDS agreement and performance in other aspects of a staff member's role.

2.5. Application and approval

2.5.1. An application for HDS may be made at any time. To apply for HDS, a staff member will submit their completed HDS application form and HDS plan to their Head of School/Area for consideration and approval. The HDS plan will include:

a. details of the higher degree by research;

b. suitability of the qualification for the staff member and relevance to the University, Faculty and the staff member's role;

c. the amount and timing of HDS being sought;

d. details of a staff member's commitment to, and investment in, the completion of the program;

e. a proposed timeline for undertaking the qualification to completion, with major milestones; and

f. a letter of support from the primary supervisor.

2.5.2. Staff may enrol in a program at Curtin or at an institution other than Curtin.

2.5.3. The Head of School/Area will consider the staff member's performance over time in their current role, the operational requirements of the School or Faculty, and the HDS plan, and may subsequently approve the application. Approval of the allocation and timing of any HDS is at the discretion of the Head of School/Area.

2.5.4. The allocation of HDS may take various forms, depending on what will best facilitate the effective completion of the requirements of the qualification. This can include a percentage as a research allocation within the academic workload management system or blocks of time.

2.6. Salary

2.6.1. Staff will be paid their ordinary pay during approved periods of HDS.

2.7. HDS agreement

2.7.1. Successful applicants will sign an HDS agreement with the University that sets out the terms of the HDS, including:

a. how ongoing progress will be assessed;

b. any ongoing support to be granted;

c. the requirement to demonstrate satisfactory progress and achievement of milestones towards completion of the qualification;

d. an acknowledgement that progression towards completing the qualification in accordance with the agreed plan (used as the basis of granting HDS) is an integral part of the staff member achieving satisfactory performance in their role; and

e. an acknowledgement that where the staff member resigns within 12 months of completion of the qualification, the University may require the staff member to refund and repay to the University all or part of the salary paid during periods of HDS.

2.8. Variations to agreement

2.8.1. The Head of School/Area may, at their discretion, agree to vary the terms of the HDS agreement should a staff member experience difficulty in meeting obligations and timelines, providing the staff member communicates to the Head of School or Area any difficulties and their proposed remediation as soon as possible.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

In addition to any responsibilities set out in section 2.

3.1 Heads of School/Area are responsible for:

a. considering and approving HDS applications;

b. ensuring that an approved HDS supports and aligns with the strategic direction and operational needs of the University as well as the needs of the individual staff member;

c. managing HDS in a manner that is consistent with the University's values;

d. considering and approving variations to HDS agreements; and

e. ensuring HDS is recorded in the academic workload management system (where appropriate).

3.2 Staff members are responsible for:

a. abiding by the terms of the HDS agreement;

b. communicating with their Head of School/Area if they are experiencing difficulty in meeting obligations and timelines under the HDS agreement; and

c. remaining in the employ of Curtin for 12 months after the completion of the qualification unless otherwise agreed by the University.

4. SCOPE OF PROCEDURES

These procedures apply to continuing and fixed-term academic staff, and do not apply to casual academic staff.

5. DEFINITIONS

(Note: Commonly defined terms are located in the *Curtin Common Definitions*. Any defined terms below are specific to this document)

Doctoral degree
The degree of Doctor of Philosophy or any other doctoral degree as defined by AQF Level 10 – Doctoral Degree.

Masters degree by Research
The degree of Masters by Research, as defined by AQF level 9 – Masters Degree (Research).

6. SCHEDULES

Nil

7. RELATED DOCUMENTS/LINKS/FORMS

Higher Degree Support Application Form and Agreement

Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)

Policy Compliance Officer	Tina Osman, Program Manager, Academic Leadership Development, People and Culture
Policy Manager	Provost
Approval Authority	Provost
Review Date	1st April 2022

REVISION HISTORY

Version	Approved/ Amended/ Rescinded	Date	Committee / Board / Executive Manager	Approval / Resolution Number	Key Changes and Notes
New	Approved	26/07/2013	Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Academic	EM1318	Unconditional
	Administratively Updated	05/02/2014	Director, Legal and Compliance Services		Updated Policy Contact
	Administratively Updated	04/03/2014	Director, Legal and Compliance Services		Updated Policy Manager, title change from Deputy Vice-Chancellor to Provost and Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor
	Administratively Updated	06/10/2015	Director, Legal and Compliance Services	EC 76/15	Executive Manager Title Changes
	Administratively Updated	09/05/2016	Director, Legal and Compliance Services		Policy Contact Title Change
	Approved	12/07/2018	Provost	EM1814	Unconditional