

FACULTY OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH – SPECIAL STUDIES PROGRAM PROVISIONS 2023

1 Purpose and application

- (1) These provisions:
 - (a) give effect, within the Faculty of Medicine and Health, to the [Special Studies Program Policy 2015](#) (“the policy”) and the [Special Studies Program Procedures 2015](#) (“the procedures”);
 - (b) provide for the Faculty to support eligible academic staff to apply for, and benefit from, the University’s Special Studies Program (“SSP”); and
 - (c) specify the process of making applications.
- (2) These provisions apply to all academic staff within the Faculty of Medicine and Health who are eligible to apply for SSP, including staff in Schools, Centres, Institutes and Clinical Schools.

2 Commencement

- (1) These provisions commence on 16 May 2023.

3 Definitions

- (1) Words and phrases used in these provisions and not otherwise defined in this document have the meanings they have in policy and procedures.
- (2) In these provisions:

complete application

means an application containing all of:

- a signed [Special Studies Program application \(Academic\) form](#);
- a submitted [Expression of Interest form](#);
- a letter of support from the relevant school; and
- copies of reports from all previous SSP.

Faculty SSPC

means the Faculty of Medicine and Health Special Studies Program Committee, which is established consistently with clause 12 of the policy and has the Terms of Reference set out in Schedule One to these provisions.

- local endorser** means, as determined by each school, one of:
- the Head of School and Dean;
 - the School SSPC; or
 - an individual assigned that role by the Head of School and Dean.
- school** means a school, clinical school, centre, institute or other equivalent organisational unit with the Faculty.
- School SSPC** means a Special Studies Program Committee convened by a school which considers and makes recommendations about SSP Expressions of Interest to the Faculty SSPC.

4 General Principles

- (1) Applications for SSP will be decided by the Executive Dean, on the recommendation of the Faculty SSPC.
- (2) There will be up to two rounds of SSP applications each year. The Faculty SSPC will publish the timetable to submit [expressions of interest in SSP](#) on the intranet.
- (3) Applications for SSP will be considered against the following broad criteria, as detailed in Schedules Two and Three to these provisions:
 - (a) the merit of the applicant and of the application;
 - (b) the feasibility of making arrangements for the applicant's teaching, research and leadership duties during their proposed absence;
 - (c) the availability of finances to sustain the absence of eligible applicants; and
 - (d) the extent to which the proposed project meets the strategic goals of the School, Faculty and University.
- (4) If there is a second round of applications, the process will be the same as the main round except that the timing for each step will be as published in the call for expressions of interest.

5 Commencing the process

- (1) Early each year, the Faculty General Manager will, by email to all School Managers and Head of School and Deans in the Faculty:
 - (a) commence the main round of applications by calling for submissions of expressions of interest in SSP for the next calendar year; and
 - (b) provide the timetable for the process required by these provisions, including due dates for submission and consideration of expressions of interest and applications.

Note: The timetable will be published on the [Faculty sharepoint](#).



- (2) If the Executive Dean considers that a second round of SSP applications is appropriate, they will:
 - (a) determine the timetable for the process, including due dates for submission and consideration of expressions of interest and application; and
 - (b) arrange for the Faculty General Manager to call for expressions of interest and to provide the timetable to School Managers and Head of School and Deans.

6 Expressions of interest

- (1) A staff member who wishes to apply for SSP must complete an Expression of Interest by the advertised due date.
- (2) Expressions of interest must:
 - (a) be submitted [online](#);
 - (b) include written support from your Head of School and Dean. The Head of School and Dean must be given a minimum of three weeks to review the proposal;
 - (c) include the form [Special Studies Program application \(Academic\)](#); and
 - (d) attach the report(s) from any previous period of SSP.
- (3) Expressions of interest must address:
 - (a) the work proposed to be undertaking including:
 - (i) where (location and institution if applicable);
 - (ii) when;
 - (iii) key collaborators, outlining their international standing;
 - (iv) why the skills and experience cannot be obtained locally;
 - (v) the strategic gain for FMH and the University;
 - (vi) expected academic outputs including grants, publications, new skills or expertise or new collaborations or partnerships;
 - (vii) for teaching focussed staff; scholarly outputs, teaching innovations and skills developed and the teaching areas to which these relate;
 - (b) the academic merit of the proposal, including:
 - (i) how the proposed activities will accelerate the applicant's research outputs;
 - (ii) what new skills, collaborations, or networks the applicant will develop;
 - (iii) why the proposed host site is the most appropriate place for the work (include ranking of the host site if available);
 - (c) the feasibility of the proposal, including why the proposed timing is optimal for the applicant's discipline;



- (d) the strategic alignment of the proposal, including:
 - (i) proposed benefits to the discipline, school or faculty (such as new partnership, collaborations, skills and knowledge for sharing or reflection);
 - (ii) how the application aligns with the University and Faculty strategy and values;
- (e) details of previous SSP, including:
 - (i) how previous SSP met its objectives;
 - (ii) how new skills, knowledge or networks were shared within the Faculty; and
 - (iii) benefits which extended beyond the applicant such as fellow academics.
- (4) Expressions of interest may address either or both issues relative to opportunity or personal circumstances which may be relevant.
- (5) Local endorsers may work with applicants to refine their SSP proposal. This may involve a cycle of feedback improvement and application resubmission, provided that the deadlines in the published timetable are met.
- (6) Applicants may make a confidential submission to their Head of School and Dean setting out any matters relative to the opportunity or personal circumstances they would like taken into consideration when the application is assessed.
- (7) By the specified timetable deadline, the Head of School and Dean will:
 - (a) assess the applicant's proposal and determine which to endorse to proceed; and
 - (b) inform unsuccessful applicants of the outcome and provide appropriate support.

7 Assessment by Head of School and Dean

- (1) The Head of School and Dean will evaluate each complete application using:
 - (a) the expression of interest;
 - (b) the eligibility criteria outlined in the [policy](#);
 - (c) the criteria specified in Schedule Two; and
 - (d) the additional criteria specified in Schedule Three.
- (2) If there are multiple applications and not all eligible applicants can be absent, the Head of School and Dean will rank the applications.
- (3) The Head of School and Dean will:
 - (a) decide which of the complete applications to recommend to the Faculty SSPC;
 - (b) prepare a report, providing reasons for recommending or not recommending each application; and
 - (c) arrange to have the applications and the report provided to the Deputy Executive Dean Academic and the Faculty SSPC before the relevant published deadline.

8 Final consideration and determination of applications

- (1) The Faculty SSPC will evaluate the applications on the basis of:
 - (a) the criteria in Schedules Two and Three; and
 - (b) the reports received from Head of School and Deans.
- (2) The Faculty SSPC will make recommendations to the Executive Dean about which applications should be approved.
- (3) The Executive Dean will determine which applications are approved and will inform the Deputy Executive Dean Academic.
- (4) The Deputy Executive Dean Academic will:
 - (a) inform the applicants and their Heads of School and Deans about which applications have been approved; and
 - (b) complete any necessary documents for Human Resources and the office of the Provost.

9 Expectations of staff before undertaking SSP

- (1) Applicants must:
 - (a) engage with the expression of interest process in good faith, and with respect for fellow academics;
 - (b) respond appropriately to feedback on their expression of interest application;
 - (c) work diligently to plan a successful SSP period;
 - (d) wherever possible, take SSP in the semester where their teaching load is lightest;
 - (e) assist with arrangements for covering their responsibilities when they propose to be absent, including but not limited to:
 - (i) providing up-to-date unit of study outlines;
 - (ii) providing teaching materials that are implementation-ready;
 - (iii) assisting with induction and orientation of the academic staff member who will assume responsibility for their unit of study;
 - (iv) assist in the recruitment and appointment of casual staff to cover their absence, if required to do so;
 - (v) providing marking rubrics and guidelines;
 - (vi) ordering unit texts in advance through the bookshop;
 - (vii) ordering necessary library resources; and
 - (viii) providing an appropriate hand-over to those undertaking their roles and responsibilities.
 - (f) comply with the requirements of University policy when arranging and undertaking travel and SSP activities.

Note: See in particular [Travel Policy 2018](#); [Travel Procedures 2018](#); [Work Health and Safety Policy 2016](#); [Work Health and Safety Procedures 2016](#); [Reasonable and Non-Allowable Expense Procedures 2022](#).

10 Expectations of staff during SSP

- (1) Staff who are supervising higher degree by research or honours students are expected to maintain these activities while on SSP, and to arrange for a local auxiliary or co-supervisor to be available for on-the-ground support of their students.
- (2) Staff on SSP must:
 - (a) inform the Deputy Executive Dean Academic and their Head of School and Dean as soon as possible of any unexpected changes to SSP plans, and
 - (b) respond in a timely manner to requests from their discipline, school or Faculty.

11 Expectations of staff after SSP

On return from SSP, staff are expected to:

- (1) share new knowledge, skills or networks with their colleagues;
- (2) make a presentation to their School or other relevant organisational unit within two months of their return to normal duties;
- (3) complete the SSP Post-leave Report form and submit to fmh.executive-services@sydney.edu.au within one month of return to regular duties for consideration by Faculty SSPC; and
- (4) comply with the reporting requirements specified in the University policy and procedures.

NOTES

Faculty of Medicine and Health – Special Studies Program Provisions 2023

Date adopted: 16 May 2023

Date commenced: 16 May 2023

Policy Approver: Professor Robyn Ward

Executive Dean, Faculty of Medicine and Health

Rescinded documents:

Related documents: [Special Studies Program Policy 2015](#)

[Special Studies Program Procedures 2015](#)

[Travel Policy 2018](#)

[Travel Procedures 2018](#)

[Work Health and Safety Policy 2016](#)

[Work Health and Safety Procedures 2016](#)

[Reasonable and Non-Allowable Expense Procedures 2022](#)

AMENDMENT HISTORY

Provision Amendment

Commencing

SCHEDULE ONE

**FACULTY OF MEDICINE AND HEALTH SPECIAL STUDIES
PROGRAM COMMITTEE**

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Role

- (1) The Faculty SSP Committee will support the Executive Dean in assessing applicants for SSP, using the criteria specified in the:
 - (a) [Special Studies Program Policy 2015](#);
 - (b) [Special Studies Program Procedures 2015](#); and
 - (c) [Faculty of Medicine and Health – Special Studies Program Provisions 2023](#).
- (2) In relation to each round of applications, the Committee will:
 - (a) assess and rank applications;
 - (b) provide a report to the Faculty Leadership Group on the outcomes, including reasons for the ranking and decisions;
 - (c) provide feedback to the applicants and their Head of School and Deans;
 - (d) provide feedback, advice or training to the Faculty Leadership Group about SSP, including information for dissemination through the Head of School and Deans.

Membership

- (1) The Committee will consist of:
 - (a) Deputy Executive Dean Academic, who will chair the committee;
 - (b) Associate Dean Research or nominee;
 - (c) Associate Dean Education, or nominee (where teaching focussed applications are being considered);
 - (d) Head, Executive Services;
 - (e) Faculty Finance Officer, or nominee.

Meetings

- (1) The Committee will meet as required, in accordance with the timetable published on the [Faculty sharepoint](#).
- (2) Quorum for a meeting is two members.
- (3) The Committee may meet in person or by electronic means.
- (4) The Chair will have a casting vote in the event of deadlock. The Chair will have a second vote in the case of equality of votes for the purposes of breaking the deadlock.

SCHEDULE TWO

CONSIDERATIONS IN ASSESSING EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

Eligibility

- (1) Does the applicant meet the requirements of the [Special Studies Program Policy 2015](#)?

Merit of the application

- (1) Are the aims and deliverables:
 - (a) clearly articulated; and
 - (b) able to be delivered in the proposed time frame;
- (2) Will the proposed activities accelerate the applicant's research or educational outputs?
- (3) Will the applicant develop new skills, knowledge or networks?
- (4) Are the host site(s) the best place for the applicant to undertake the activities?
- (5) What is the ranking of the host site(s), if applicable?

Feasibility

- (1) Is the proposed timing optimal for the applicant's organisational unit?
- (2) Is the SSP proposed to be taken within the semester in which the applicant has the least teaching load?
- (3) Is the SSP able to be completed within a semester?
- (4) Is funding available?
- (5) Can the organisational unit sustain the applicant's absence as proposed?

Strategic and values alignment

- (1) Is the proposed activity consistent with Faculty and University strategy and values?
- (2) Will it generate outcomes of benefit beyond the individual: to the discipline, school, Faculty or University?

SCHEDULE THREE

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS BY HEAD OF SCHOOL AND DEANS

- (1) Head of School and Deans will take into account the following criteria *in addition* to those specified in Schedule Two.
- (2) **Eligibility:** Has the applicant met the minimum performance criteria for academic staff planning and development requirements, as required by the [Performance Planning and Development Policy 2012](#):
 - (a) in the year in which they apply for SSP?; and
 - (b) in the proceeding two years?
- (3) **Merit of the applicant:** Has the applicant met all University requirements for mandatory training, including research, financial and work health and safety requirements, and completion of Declaration of External Interests within the last 12 months?

Merit of the proposal:

- (1) What is the calibre of:
 - (a) the proposed host site(s); and
 - (b) proposed collaborator(s)?
- (2) What is the assessment of the local endorser?

Feasibility:

- (1) What arrangements are proposed to cover:
 - (a) higher degree by research and honours supervision;
 - (b) teaching; and
 - (c) leadership or administrative responsibilities?
- (2) Have these been specified and confirmed?
- (3) Is there adequate funding available to applicant's organisational unit to support the proposed absence?
- (4) Have appropriate invitations and arrangements with host site(s) been put in place?
- (5) Is the proposed budget appropriate?