



Special Studies Program (SSP) Procedure

Aim

This procedure prescribes the responsibilities and actions required for eligible staff members to make an application and undertake a period of Special Studies in lieu of normal duties to further their scholarship, research, teaching, professional practice and development consistent with clause 5.7 of the [University of Adelaide Enterprise Agreement](#) and the [Workforce Management Policy](#).

1 Objectives

- 1.1 To ensure that all Special Studies Program (SSP) applications are completed and considered in accordance with this procedure.

2 Scope and application

2.1 Inclusions

All continuing and fixed-term academic staff at Level A and above are eligible to participate in the SSP following a minimum of 3 years of service, provided that:

- their contract of employment extends beyond the period of special studies for at least a period equal to the duration of the special studies, and
- they are not subject to a misconduct or serious misconduct process.

2.2 Exclusions

This procedure does not apply to professional or casual academic staff.

2.3 Application

Calculation and accrual of Special Studies Days is applied in accordance with Clause 5.7.2 of the [University of Adelaide Enterprise Agreement](#).

Some forms of external funding gained while on SSP activity may be subject to the [University's Practice of a Discipline Outside the University by Academic Staff procedure](#).

3 Process: Funding and SSP Committee

Person Responsible	Actions
3.1 Executive Dean	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Allocate funds for the SSP, based on the Faculty's budget commitments for the relevant year and within University's expectations. b) Appoint a Faculty SSP Committee (which may be the Faculty Research Committee) with responsibility for; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • managing SSP in the Faculty within the limits of the funds available; • assessing the SSP applications from within the Faculty against the criteria set out in section 4.5; • making recommendations regarding which applications should be approved and receive financial support; and • allocating funds based on the priorities of the Faculty.

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4 Process: SSP Application

Person Responsible		Actions
4.1	Associate Director, Shared Services (or delegate)	a) Advertise for applications in Staff News (in March each year), with a closing date of 31 May, for any Special Studies periods between 1 January to 31 December in the following year.
4.2	Applicant	<p>a) Obtain accrued balance of SSP days from Staff Services Online (the SSP balance is accrued as calendar days, not hours).</p> <p><u>Note:</u> Accrual of SSP days is <u>not an entitlement</u> to take SSP, which will be subject to consideration and approval process outlined in this procedure.</p> <p>b) Complete an SSP Application form, attaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a copy of the report lodged following your most recent period of special studies, where SSP had been undertaken in the past. SSP applications without a report attached will not be considered. approximation of all-inclusive travel costings for yourself only, obtainable from Faculty/School Travel Arranger, if seeking financial support. Head of School Supporting Statement and Recommendation (Appendix A) <p><u>For recognition of prior service, if applicable:</u> Seek approval from the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic) [DVC & VP (A)]</p> <p>c) for any request for recognition of prior service at this University, or another institution of higher education (or equivalent) operating an equivalent program, for purposes of entitlements under the SSP, up to a maximum period of 183 days.</p> <p><u>Note</u> Approval to proceed on special studies during the first three years of employment will usually be given only where the staff member has been credited with SSP days in recognition of prior service and then only for a maximum period of 61 days.</p>
4.3	Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic) [DVC & VP (A)]	a) Approve or decline a request for recognition of prior service at this University, or another institution of higher education (or equivalent) operating an equivalent program, for purposes of entitlements under the SSP, up to a maximum period of 183 days.
4.4	Head of School	a) Complete the supporting statement (Appendix A) and provide to the applicant for submission to the Faculty SSP Committee.
4.5	Convener, Faculty SSP Committee	<p>a) With regard to the following criteria, ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the application is for a period of up to six months and consistent with the University's and Faculty's Strategic Plan; the proposed special studies are academically sound and will enhance the contribution of the staff member to research, scholarship, teaching or to the relevant profession, with significant benefit to the University and the professional development of the applicant in their chosen academic field;

4 Process: SSP Application (Continued)

Person Responsible	Actions
<p>4.5 Convener, Faculty SSP Committee (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education Specialists are encouraged to seek out learning and teaching initiatives, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing massive open online course (MOOC) or other major curriculums; or • visiting one of the priority partner institutions to update or change curriculum in their discipline; • the proposed location/environment and period are appropriate to the activities to be undertaken (there being no requirement or expectation that staff members should utilise the entire period for which they may be eligible); Where appropriate, particularly in instances where the applicant does not have an established affiliation with another institution, the staff are expected to liaise with and undertake a period of special studies at a priority partner institution of the University of Adelaide. SSP proposals that promote appropriate industry collaboration are also encouraged. • the applicant has the capacity to make effective use of the opportunity, having either a proven and sustained record of productivity in research, scholarship, teaching or in the relevant profession, or having considerable potential for such achievement; • the application has the support of the Head of School who considers that the preceding criteria are met and is able to provide an assurance that the School can function effectively in the absence of the applicant, especially in relation to its teaching commitments; • the applicant has successfully completed any previously approved SSP; • the applicant has not formally notified an intention to vacate the position held and is not subject to a misconduct or serious misconduct process; • if applicable, assess applications against further Faculty criteria (including Academic role statements) which reflect the priorities of the Faculty, provided those criteria are documented and have been communicated to the DVC & VP (A) and remaining Faculties. <p>b) Recommend to the Executive Dean by 31 July which applications should be approved, whether financial support should be granted and the amount.</p> <p>If recommending financial support, consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • any significant external financial support available to the staff member; • approximation of all-inclusive travel costings for the applicant only, obtainable from the Faculty/School Travel Arranger; • whether private portion of travel (annual and/or long service leave) is 30% or more of the overall travel time, in which case 50% of the air-fare is to be paid by the staff member; • the maximum amount for taxable SSP Living Allowance of 14.4% of daily salary for a Senior Lecturer, Step 6 (Level C, Step 6 annual rate / 365 x 14.4%) per day spent outside of South Australia.

5 Process: Approve SSP Application

Person Responsible	Actions
5.1 Executive Dean	<p>a) Consider and approve or decline the application, taking into consideration financial support recommended. Refusal of a request is at the discretion of the Executive Dean, who may also decline and/or revoke approval for any staff member subject a misconduct or serious misconduct process.</p> <p>b) Advise the Convener, Faculty SSP Committee of the outcome.</p> <p>c) Provide financial support as approved on the application.</p> <p><u>If applicable:</u></p> <p>d) Refer to the DVC & VP (A) to approve or decline any applications inconsistent with the provisions of the SSP procedure.</p>
5.2 Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic) [DVC & VP (A)]	<p>a) Consider exceptional circumstances referred by the Executive Dean for authorising or declining an application.</p>
5.3 Convener, Faculty SSP Committee	<p>a) Advise the applicant of the outcome of their application by 31 August, including any variations to the conditions requested on their application and financial support pre-approved, if applicable.</p> <p>b) Retain the approved Application form, to be attached to the SSP Commencement form 6 weeks before the start of SSP, if application approved. If declined, send to the Records Management Office (RMO) for filing on the Staff Member's file.</p> <p>c) Capture statistical data regarding the applications and outcomes and submit to the Executive Dean for review and submission to the DVC & VP (A).</p>

6 Process: Right of Appeal

Person Responsible	Actions
6.1 Applicant (if applicable)	<p>a) Appeal to the DVC & VP (A) in writing, no later than 10 days after outcome advised, on the grounds that the decision of the Faculty SSP Committee was based on an improper assessment process. The DVC & VP (A) may convene an ad-hoc Appeal Committee to advise on such an appeal. The decision of the DVC & VP (A) will be final.</p>

7 Process: Variations (if applicable)

Person Responsible	Actions
7.1 Applicant	<p>a) Seek approval for any significant variation to an approved special studies activity via the SSP Amendment Form (Appendix C).</p> <p>b) Submit the completed form to the Head of School.</p>
7.2 Head of School	<p>a) Make recommendations to approve or decline a request for variation of approved activity on the SSP Amendment form, prior to submitting to SSP Committee.</p>

7 Process: Variations (if applicable)

Person Responsible		Actions
7.3	Convener, Faculty SSP Committee	a) Consider the proposed changes and make recommendations to the Executive Dean.
7.4	Executive Dean	a) Consider requests for variations and the recommendations and approve or decline the variation.
7.5	Convener, Faculty SSP Committee	a) Advise the applicant of the outcome of their request for variation, including any resulting changes to the pre-approved financial support. b) Retain the approved Amendment form, to be attached to the SSP Commencement form 6 weeks before the start of SSP, if variation approved. If declined, send to RMO for filing on the Staff Member's file.

8 Process: Commencement, Payment and Travel Arrangements

Person Responsible		Actions
8.1	Applicant	<p>a) Complete an SSP Commencement Form (Appendix C) 6 weeks prior to commencement.</p> <p>b) Advise Faculty / School of travel dates and times using the University's Travel and Entertainment site. (If financial support for air-fare was pre-approved, only the 'best fare of the day' Economy Class ticket will be accepted.)</p> <p><u>Note</u> The University's Corporate Travel Policy automatically covers staff travelling, studying and working overseas on University approved travel for up to 180 days. Travel approval must be obtained from Head of School/Branch. For travel beyond 180 days, staff need to apply for "Top Up" travel insurance which applies for up to 365 days. Top-Up travel insurance must be purchased by staff at additional cost and prior to departure from Australia. Staff travelling or working overseas for periods greater than 12 months will need to arrange expatriate cover. For more information refer to the staff travel guide on the Legal and Risk Branch website.</p> <p>The Air-fare allowance and SSP Living Allowance are initially given as provisional amounts based on the proposed activity described in the application and within the maximum amount permitted in the Program. The entitlements will be confirmed and any necessary adjustments made on the staff member's return.</p>
8.2	Convener, Faculty SSP Committee	<p>On receipt of SSP Commencement Form:</p> <p>a) Complete the relevant section, attach the approved Commencement form and the latest approved Amendment form (if applicable) and forward a scanned copy to HR for processing the fortnight prior to the SSP commencement date.</p>
8.3	Faculty/School Travel Arranger	a) Purchase airfares as per the Corporate Travel website .

9 Process: Finalising SSP and SSP Report

Person Responsible	Actions
9.1 Applicant	<p>Within one month of return from a period of SSP</p> <p>a) Submit an SSP Report (Appendix E) to the Head of School. Delay in providing or a failure to provide the report will exclude the staff member from undertaking any future periods of special studies.</p> <p><u>Note</u> The report is intended to enable Faculty SSP Committees to verify that the approved activity was pursued and objectives were achieved.</p> <p><u>If applicable:</u></p> <p>b) Report any deviations from the approved activity and travel to the Head of School using the SSP Amendment form (Appendix C).</p>
9.2 Head of School	<p>a) Review applicant's report and add any required comments, before submitting it to the Faculty SSP Committee for approval.</p> <p><u>If applicable:</u></p> <p>b) Consider any deviations from the approved activity reported via the Amendment form and recommend any adjustments to be made to the SSP Living Allowance.</p> <p>c) Claim reimbursement of sums paid for airfares from the relevant Faculty SSP account, where air-fare allowance was pre-approved, and any excess amount from the staff member.</p>
9.3 Convener, Faculty SSP Committee.	<p>a) Consider applicant's report against the original application and any approved variation.</p> <p>b) Recommend approval or request further details if necessary and have the report resubmitted by the staff member.</p> <p><u>Note</u> If the Committee considers the revised report unsatisfactory, believes that the SSP activity has not been carried out to a satisfactory standard, or considers that there are other exceptional circumstances, it consults with Executive Dean on action to be taken.</p> <p><u>If applicable:</u></p> <p>c) Consider any report of variation to the approved activities and recommend any adjustment to be made to the pre-paid SSP Living Allowance (if applicable).</p> <p><u>Note</u> In the case where an SSP Living Allowance was paid to the Staff Member in advance, the amount is reconciled against the actual number of approved days away. Any excess of the Allowance will be recovered from the Staff Member in accordance with clause 3.12 of the University of Adelaide Enterprise Agreement.</p>
9.4 Executive Dean	<p>a) Consider applicant's report and approve or conduct an enquiry into the SSP undertaken if the report has been deemed unsatisfactory.</p> <p><u>If applicable:</u></p> <p>b) Consider any report of variations to the approved activity and recommendations for adjustment of pre-paid SSP Living Allowance and approve or decline.</p> <p>c) Consider any recommendation for reimbursement of air-fares paid in excess of the pre-approved amount and approve or decline.</p>

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9 Process: Finalising SSP and SSP Report (Continued)

Person Responsible	Actions
9.5 Convener, Faculty SSP Committee	a) Notify the staff member of acceptance of the report. b) Send the report to the Records Management Office for filing on the Staff member's file. <u>If applicable:</u> c) Advise the applicant of the outcome of their request for variation, including any resulting changes to the pre-approved financial support. d) Forward the approved Amendment form to HR for processing of any adjusted SSP leave and/or SSP Living Allowance, if required. If no changes to the SSP leave or allowance, send the amendment form to the RMO for filing on the Staff member's file.

10 Process: Reporting to Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Academic)

Person Responsible	Actions
10.1 Executive Dean	a) Submit a report to the DVC & VP (A) annually in September (in consultation with the Faculty SSP Committee) on the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of applications received and approved • of successful applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ number of applications whose focus was Research, Teaching, Professional Practice or General Scholarship; ○ number of female and male applicants; ○ the financial support provided (min, max and average) and source of funding; ○ SSP days approved (min, max and average). • of unsuccessful applications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ number of applications whose focus was Research, Teaching, Professional Practice or General Scholarship; ○ number of female and male applicants. • learning goals set and met; • any other general observations relevant to the effectiveness of the Program.

11 Useful information and resources

11.1 University related documents and Policies

[Workforce Management Policy](#)

[Travel Policy](#)

[Enterprise Agreement](#)

[Health, Safety and Wellbeing Travel Information Sheet](#)

11.2 Related Legislation

11.3 Useful Web-links

[Legal and Risk – Travel Insurance](#)

[Corporate Travel website.](#)

Arrangements with respect to applicant's responsibilities in the School

Empty space for detailing arrangements with respect to applicant's responsibilities in the School.

The School/Branch's responsibilities and commitments with respect to teaching can be sustained during the applicant's proposed absence on Special Studies.

YES

Head of School

I confirm the staff member is not the subject of a misconduct or serious misconduct process.

Name *(please print)*

Signature:

Date:

If the Head of School is the applicant, the Executive Dean should complete and sign this section

SPECIAL STUDIES PROGRAM (SSP) APPLICATION FORM

PLEASE COMPLETE AND FORWARD TO:
Faculty's Special Studies Program Committee.

RECOMMENDATION BY FACULTY SSP COMMITTEE

Recommendation that the application be approved: YES NO

SSP leave period from to.....

Financial support (if applicable)

In recommending financial support, consider approximation of all-inclusive travel costings for the applicant only (*refer to the Faculty/School Travel arranger or the University's [Travel and Entertainment site](#)*).

Maximum payable amount for taxable SSP Living Allowance is 14.4% of daily salary for a Senior Lecturer, Step 6 (Level C, Step 6 annual rate / 365 x 14.4%) per day spent outside of South Australia.

Recommended total provisional **SSP Living Allowance:**

SSP days outside South Australia x \$.....daily amount = \$.....

Recommended total provisional **Air-fare Allowance:** \$.....

Other remarks:

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RECOMMENDATION (SIGNATURE REQUIRED)

Convener, Faculty SSP Committee

Ensure applicant has been advised of the outcome of their application, including any variations to the conditions requested on their application and / or funding offered.

Retain the approved Application form, to be attached to the Commencement form 6 weeks before the start of SSP.

Name (*please print*).....

Signature:.....

Date:.....

AUTHORISATION

Executive Dean

Name (*please print*).....

Signature:

Date:

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SPECIAL STUDIES PROGRAM (SSP) AMENDMENT FORM

PLEASE COMPLETE AND FORWARD TO:
Faculty's Special Studies Committee.

This form is used to obtain an approval for any significant variation from the period or itinerary set out in your original application.

APPLICANT DETAILS (PLEASE USE BLOCK LETTERS)		
Employee ID: _____	School/Branch:	FTE:
Title:.....	Family name:.....	Given names (in full):

LEAVE DETAILS		
Please show details of the amended periods for which you are seeking approval. Also indicate any periods of annual or long service leave you wish to take. Note that all periods of annual and long service leave will need to be amended as appropriate through Staff Services Online (SSO) once the amendment has been approved by the Executive Dean.		
Leave type	Leave Periods (Note: Leave periods must not overlap. If necessary, provide details for each individual period in a separate row.)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Special Studies Program	Original Begin date:	Original Return date (inclusive):
	Original Begin date:	Original Return date (inclusive):
	Revised Begin date:	Revised Return date (inclusive):
	Revised Begin date:	Revised Return date (inclusive):
..... Number of SSP calendar days initially approved Number of SSP calendar days requested. Of these: days will be spent in South Australia (<i>excluding all other forms of leave</i>) days will be spent outside of South Australia (<i>excluding all other forms of leave</i>)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Annual leave	Revised Begin date:	Revised Return date (inclusive):
	Revised Begin date:	Revised Return date (inclusive):
<input type="checkbox"/> Long service leave	Revised Begin date:	Revised Return date (inclusive):
	Revised Begin date:	Revised Return date (inclusive):
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>specify</i>)	Revised Begin date:	Revised Return date (inclusive):
	Revised Begin date:	Revised Return date (inclusive):

ITINERARY - DESTINATIONS VISITED		
Provide details of any changes to the destination nominated and approved on the original application or subsequent amendment.		
Destination	Periods	
	Revised Begin date:	Revised Return date (inclusive):
	Revised Begin date:	Revised Return date (inclusive):
	Revised Begin date:	Revised Return date (inclusive):
	Revised Begin date:	Revised Return date (inclusive):

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE

Applicant

I hereby certify that information provided in this application is true and correct, and current as at the date of my signature. I acknowledge that any variations to the proposed activities will require further consideration and approval.

Signature: Date:

RECOMMENDATION BY HEAD OF SCHOOL

Recommendation that the amendment be approved: YES NO

Other remarks:

RECOMMENDATION (SIGNATURE REQUIRED)

Head of School

Name (please print).....

Signature:

Date:.....

If the Head of School is the applicant, the Executive Dean should complete and sign this section

RECOMMENDATION BY FACULTY SSP COMMITTEE

Recommendation that the amendment be approved: YES NO

Where applicable:	Originally Approved	Amended
Recommended amendment to SSP leave period	From: To:	From: To:
	From: To:	From: To:
Recommended amendment to SSP Living Allowance (SSP days outside South Australia x daily amount capped at Level C, Step 6 annual rate / 365 x 14.4%)	\$.....	\$.....
Recommended amendment to Air-fare Allowance	\$.....	\$.....

Other remarks:

RECOMMENDATION (SIGNATURE REQUIRED)

Convener, Faculty SSP Committee

Ensure applicant has been advised of the outcome of their request for variation, including any resulting changes to the pre-approved financial support

Retain the approved Amendment form, to be attached to the Commencement form 6 weeks before the start of SSP

OR

If submitted on staff member's return, where an adjustment to SSP leave or SSP Living Allowance is required, forward to HR for processing. If no adjustment required, forward to the Records Management Office for filing on the Staff member's file once approved.

Name (please print).....

Signature: Date:

AUTHORISATION

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Executive Dean

Name (*please print*).....

Signature:.....Date:.....

SPECIAL STUDIES PROGRAM (SSP) COMMENCEMENT FORM

PLEASE COMPLETE AND FORWARD TO:
Human Resources Branch, Division of Services and Resources

This form is to be submitted to Human Resources along with the approved application and the latest approved amendment (if applicable) 6 weeks prior to commencement of Special Studies Program, to ensure entry of SSP leave and to initiate the payment of the SSP Living Allowance.
The payment will be made in the first available pay period following the submission of completed and approved form.

APPLICANT DETAILS (PLEASE USE BLOCK LETTERS)

Employee ID: _____ School/Branch: FTE:

Title: Family name: Given names (in full):

DECLARATION BY APPLICANT

Applicant

I declare that my period of Special Studies Program leave is to commence in 6 weeks, on (dd/mm/yyyy).

I am aware that any subsequent amendments to the SSP leave or SSP Living Allowance (if applicable) will be subject to further consideration and approval by the Faculty SSP committee and the Executive Dean.

If SSP Living Allowance is payable:

Should any adjustment to Allowance be required, which results in an overpayment of the provisional allowance, I authorise the University to deduct in six equal instalments from my salary payments the amount of any refund to the SSP Living Allowance. I understand that I will be advised of the amount of any such refund before the deductions commence.

Signature: Date:

CONFIRMATION (SIGNATURE REQUIRED)

Convener, Faculty SSP Committee

Ensure that the approved application and the latest approved amendment form (if applicable) is attached, showing the approved period of SSP leave and SSP Living Allowance. (Note: no SSP leave or Living Allowance will be processed without the appropriately approved attachments)

Name (please print)
.....

Signature:
.....

Date:
.....

SPECIAL STUDIES PROGRAM (SSP) REPORT GUIDELINES AND TEMPLATE

- All members of staff who have been granted Special Studies are required to submit the Special Studies Report and summary for consideration by the Faculty's Special Studies Program Committee and the Head of the School **within one month** of their return.
- The Special Studies report must be accompanied by a brief summary (e.g. 200 words) of the major aspects of the leave taken. The full report is to be limited to two pages and cover the points listed below where applicable. To facilitate consideration of the report, staff members are asked to attach this form as a covering page.
- Where applicable the special studies report should refer to the following:
 - The principal activity of the study leave:
 - Details of places/institutions visited.
 - Outline of work carried out, including work carried out during the Adelaide portion of the leave (where applicable).
 - Implications for the teaching and/or research work of the individual and the School, including any publications resulting from the research.

Note: Any specific technical details (e.g., details of research undertaken, results of experimentation, the development of a new technique, etc.) should be provided in a supplementary report to the Head of the School/Branch.

SPECIAL STUDIES PROGRAM REPORT
<p>Name:</p> <p>School/Area:</p> <p>Period of Absence:</p> <p>Number of days outside of South Australia:</p> <p>Principal Activity: <input type="checkbox"/> Pursuit of Research; <input type="checkbox"/> Improvement of Teaching; <input type="checkbox"/> Professional Practice; or <input type="checkbox"/> General Scholarship </p>

RECOMMENDATION BY HEAD OF SCHOOL
<p>Comments </p>

RECOMMENDATION (SIGNATURE REQUIRED)
<p>Head of School Name <i>(please print)</i> </p> <p>Signature: </p> <p>Date: <i>If the Head of School is the applicant, the Executive Dean should complete and sign this section</i></p>

AUTHORISATION (ALL SIGNATURES REQUIRED)	
<p>Convener, Faculty SSP Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure applicant has been advised of the acceptance of their report and any adjustments to the pre-approved financial support <input type="checkbox"/> Once approved, forward to RMO for filing on Staff Member's file Name <i>(please print)</i>: Signature: Date:</p>	<p>Executive Dean Name <i>(please print)</i> Signature: Date: </p>