

OTAGO POLYTECHNIC MANAGEMENT POLICY		Number: MP1101.02
Title:	Research and Study Release	
Classification:	Operations	
Chief Executive Approval:	Effective Date: 1 June 2019	Review Date: 1 May 2022
Previous Policy No:	n/a	Status: Current
Contact Authority:	Deputy Chief Executive Learning and Teaching Services	

Purpose

Research and study release is release from normal research, teaching, management and administrative duties which may be granted to professorial, research active, and other eligible senior leadership staff. Eligibility will be included in the staff member's employment agreement.

Research and study release is an opportunity for an eligible staff member to pursue research interests or other scholarly activities, undertake a programme of strategically relevant formal or informal study/activity, and/or investigate best or innovative practice relevant to their area of responsibility and consistent with their role. The operational contact people for this policy are:

- Chief Executive – for Executive Leadership Team members
- Director Research and Postgraduate Studies – for professorial and research active academic staff
- Deputy Chief Executive (relevant Portfolio) – for senior leadership staff.

Policy

Eligibility and financial assistance

- 1 Eligibility for research and study release for any staff member shall be explicitly referenced in the position description or letter of employment offer.
- 2 Staff who may be eligible for research and study release are:
 - 2.1 Deputy Chief Executives;
 - 2.2 Directors and Heads of School/College;
 - 2.3 Professors and Associate Professors;
 - 2.4 Research active academic staff.
- 3 Unless agreed differently in the staff members letter of offer and/or employment agreement the quantum of research and study release shall usually be for each three 3 years of service:
 - 3.1 For professorial and research active staff 60 working days;
 - 3.2 For Executive Leadership Team, senior management and leadership staff 20 working days.
- 4 Eligibility for the first period of research and study release is calculated from the date of appointment to a qualifying position.
- 5 Eligibility for second and subsequent periods of release arise three (3) years after the report on the prior period of release is submitted.
- 6 Release time cannot be accrued – if not taken within the required time period, or an agreed written extended timeframe, it will be forfeit.
- 7 Periods of special release, with or without pay, shall not be counted towards eligibility for Research and Study Release.
- 8 Research and Study Release cannot be cashed up for any reason, such as resignation, retirement or redundancy.
- 9 If there is any conflict between any terms of the relevant employment agreement and this policy, then the terms of the employment agreement shall apply.
- 10 All costs associated with Research and Study Release shall be allocated to the Cost Centre in which the staff member is employed except the following:
 - 10.1 Grants-in-Aid for professorial and research active staff, which will be costed to the Director Research and Postgraduate budget;
 - 10.2 Grants-in-Aid for Deputy Chief Executives which will be costed to the Chief Executive budget;
 - 10.3 Grants-in-Aid for senior leadership staff, Directors, and Heads of School/College, which will be costed to the Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Services budget.

- 11 The responsibility for making adequate budget provision for research and study release rests with the staff member's Formal Leader. Costs to be considered are:
 - 11.1 Special Responsibility Allowances where a Deputy Chief Executive, Head of School/College or Director is on release. SRAs may apply to any roles which are required to replace the staff member who is on research and study release
 - 11.2 Replacement teaching staff, at part-time rates.
 - 11.3 Other expenses relating to the study release.
- 12 Staff members on approved Research and Study Release may be eligible to receive a Grant-in-Aid to assist with expenses directly related to the release, which may be incurred during the release period.
 - 12.1 Professorial and Research Active staff – up to a maximum of \$10,000 (GST inclusive)
 - 12.2 Deputy Chief Executives, Directors, Heads of School/College, Senior leadership staff – up to \$5,000 (GST inclusive)
 - 12.3 For release based in the staff member's usual place of work on a case by case basis, but generally not funded.
- 13 A Grant-in-Aid will be by way of direct payment of expenses where possible or by reimbursement of actual costs incurred and not covered by any other grant or external source. Approved financial support is paid to a staff member by Otago Polytechnic for goods and services purchased by the staff member related to the Research and Study Release on presentation of receipts and/or invoices.
- 14 Staff on Research and Study Release may not accept a financial grant or salaried post at any other tertiary institution, or engage in private consulting for fees, during the period of their release without prior written approval from the Employer.
- 15 For release taken overseas, outside financial assistance within reasonable limits will normally be approved provided that the acceptance of such financial support does not involve duties which:
 - 15.1 Conflict with the approved purpose of the release;
 - 15.2 Compromise the ability of the staff member to achieve the intended outputs or outcomes of the period of release.
- 16 Where a staff member submits a release proposal involving financial assistance in the nature of remuneration or consultancy fees full disclosure is required.
- 17 A staff member who resigns while on research and study release, or within six months of returning from that release, will be required to refund all, or a portion of, any Grant-in-Aid as determined by a Bond Agreement (forms part of an approved release agreement), provided that the Employer may waive the duty to refund solely at the employer's discretion.
- 18 Nothing in this policy shall prevent the approval of financial support in excess of the limits set out where appropriate justification is provided, and following consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive Corporate Services.

Application Requirements

- 19 Staff applying for Research and Study Release shall submit a written application *refer MP1101a Research and Study Release_SOP001 Application Form*, to the Chief Executive for Executive Leadership Team members, or for other applicants the Director Research and Postgraduate Studies through the appropriate Formal Leader, by the end of May annually for release the following year. This application shall include:
 - 19.1 A copy of the staff member's last Research and Study Release Report (if applicable).
 - 19.2 A detailed description of the staff member's proposed Research and Study Release programme outlining the academic purpose, benefits to the Polytechnic, expected outcomes including details of proposed research outputs, project activities, itinerary and contact details.
 - 19.3 Proposed coverage, if any, of administrative, teaching and/or research obligations while on release.
 - 19.4 A statement on sources of available financial assistance (if applicable), and a request for further financial support based on the proposed parameters of the Research and Study Release programme.
- 20 Research and study release will generally be taken as a single period of time, at the earliest feasible time in the year that funds are budgeted. In extraordinary circumstances other timing arrangements may be agreed.

- 21 Research and study release may be postponed by the employer for up to one year* in any, or a combination of, the following circumstances:
- 21.1 Inadequate notice (less than 8 months) has been given or other circumstances in which teaching and/or supervision duties cannot be covered by appropriately qualified and experienced staff.
 - 21.2 Where a significant number of staff seek release at the same time such that teaching and supervision are unreasonably disrupted and/or the Contestable Research Fund is unable to budget for financial support for all qualifying staff in that financial year.
- *Note: If an additional delay occurs, following the one year postponement, joint discussion will be entered into and outcomes put in writing.*
- 22 The role of a senior leadership staff member who is on research and study release may be backfilled with an acting leader appointed by the Formal Leader in agreement with the Chief Executive as appropriate.
- 22.1 To support this a grant of up to a maximum of \$5,000 (GST inclusive), may be made to the area from which the acting leader is drawn. These funds are the cost of replacement or support staffing specifically hired for the period of release.
 - 22.2 Staff who take on acting roles during a period of release are usually not paid special responsibility or higher duty allowances. This arrangement is regarded as a development opportunity.
- 23 Staff who take up research and study release must supply their release report to their Formal Leader, copied to the Research Office, within 3 months of returning from release. Staff members shall include in the report a statement of the extent to which the original goals, activities, outcomes and benefits to the Polytechnic have been achieved relative to those anticipated at the time of application. The research and study release report should also provide evidence of outcomes (e.g. copies of papers submitted to journals and copy of letter of receipt or acceptance by journals).

Note: eligibility for the next period of release does not commence until the report is received.

Appeals

- 24 A staff member, who has just cause to believe that he/she has been disadvantaged by the decision of the Director Research and Postgraduate, or Deputy Chief Executive (relevant portfolio) to release time or funding granted or declined, may lodge a written appeal with the Chief Executive, setting out the grounds for appeal. Such appeal shall be lodged within 20 working days of the advice of the decision.

Referral documents

MP1101a Research and Study Release_SOP001_ Application Form

MP0461 Staff Development
AP1102 Contestable Research Funding

Individual staff employment agreements

Approved by Chief Executive
Date: 1 June 2019

