Professional Development and Performance Planning Procedure

Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure outlines the strategies and programs Victoria University (VU) employs to enhance the capacity and skills of its professional and academic staff, supporting their ongoing learning and career development through internal and external opportunities, including study support and secondment arrangements.

Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to all fixed-term and continuing staff of the University unless stated otherwise.

Section 3 - Policy/Regulation

(3) Professional Development and Performance Planning Policy

Section 4 - Procedures

Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Staff Member	Actively engage in performance discussions and complete applications for study leave. Advise their supervisor of their interest in accepting an internal or external secondment as soon as practical. Provide all required documentation and sign Agreements. Abide by the notice requirements specified in clause (26).
Manager / Supervisor (Substantive position)	Facilitate performance development conversations and align plans to support staff growth with business needs. Approve study leave applications. Work with the staff member and the manager of the Seconded position to agree the terms of the secondment. If required and appropriate, arrange for back-fill coverage for the staff member's substantive position.
Manager / Supervisor (Seconded position)	Discuss the potential to second an internal staff member with the manager of the substantive position before making the offer of secondment. Work with the staff member and the manager of the substantive position to agree the terms of the secondment. Adhere to the University's Recruitment and Selection Policy and Procedure.
People and Culture	Provide advice, support, and process paperwork related to study support, development and secondment agreements. Refer any proposed amendments to External Secondment Agreements to the Office of the General Counsel for review. Ensure all secondment paperwork is correctly completed and recorded.

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Roles	Responsibilities
Student Services and Administration	Process the Domestic Student Refund Form.

Part B - Overview

(4) VU aims to foster a culture of continuous learning and is committed to providing opportunities for professional development where staff are engaged, empowered, and enabled to drive their own careers and development. VU recognises that enhancing knowledge, skills, capabilities, and career growth through professional development is a key driver of success.

Part C - Professional Development (PD)

(5) PD activities can include but not limited to:

a. VU Block Model Professional Learning Program (VUBMPLP): Refer to the Learning and Teaching Quality and Standards - Professional Development of Academic Staff Procedure for more information.
b. VU Develop: Performance, Development and Probation Plans are accessed through VU Develop. There are development opportunities via Capability Hub in VU Develop to access various internal training and development programs.
c. Special Studies Program (SSP): The SSP releases a staff member from normal duties for periods of one month up to a maximum of six months to pursue planned projects/activities. For more information refer to the Special Studies Program Policy.
d. Customised Solutions: Career Conversations Program, leadership development and team-based training facilitated by People & Culture.
e. Career opportunities: secondments, coaching, mentoring opportunities.
f. External opportunities: Where a professional learning opportunity (such as a short course, workshop or seminar) is offered by an external organisation, staff should discuss the course details and their attendance with their supervisor.

Part D - Study Support – Professional staff members

(6) The Study Support initiative aims to support professional staff members in pursuing an approved course of formal study that is directly relevant to their work and/or career aspirations within the University, as agreed between the staff member and their Supervisor.

(7) Staff members who undertake an approved course of study, normally taken on a part time basis, are entitled to 130 hours per calendar year (pro rata for part time staff members) paid study leave for attendance at lectures and other requirements for the period of the study in accordance with this Procedure. Any approved study leave will be subject to satisfactory performance by the staff member and will be included in their VU Develop Plan.

(8) Staff members who undertake units and courses of study provided by the University will be entitled to 25% subsidy on the fees for satisfactory completion of that unit or course. The subsidy of VU units aims to support staff undertaking approved study that is directly related to their work and VU Develop plan.

Applying for Study Leave

(9) The course of formal study undertaken must be approved, prior to enrolment, by the supervisor as being aligned to the staff member’s VU Develop plan and their work and/or career aspirations within the University.

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(10) Applications for study leave should be made directly to the staff member's supervisor for approval. Once approved, a study leave agreement must be signed by the staff member and supervisor and submitted to People and Culture for processing.

(11) Standing arrangements for study leave are subject to the work requirements of the organisational unit and the satisfactory work and study record of the staff member.

(12) Supervisors will do their best to accommodate requests for study leave, but may decline applications where it is likely to compromise the effective operation of the department/business unit.

(13) The unused portion of any study leave does not accrue.

Applying for a subsidy on VU courses or units

(14) Staff members who undertake approved units and courses of study provided by the University will be eligible for a 25% subsidy on the fees (subject to staff member’s department budget limits and constraints) on satisfactory completion of that unit or course.

(15) Staff members employed on a time fraction of 0.5 or more will not be charged the University's Student Services and Amenities Fee.

(16) Admission to courses/units will be in accordance with VU admission policies and procedures. Staff members must apply and accept their offer, and enrol as per normal processes and deadlines.

(17) Staff members undertaking approved unit or course of study must pay (at least) 25% of the fee upfront to be eligible for the subsidy.

(18) Staff members who have access to HECS-HELP, VET Student Loan or FEE-HELP may defer the remaining 75% of the fee.

(19) Upon completion of the units and courses of study, the staff member must provide an official transcript to the supervisor to show satisfactory completion. The supervisor then completes the Domestic Student Refund Form, identifies the relevant cost centre, signs and submits to Student Services and Administration to process the refund for 25%.

Part E - Secondment

(20) VU utilises four different types of secondment arrangements:

a. External Secondment (Outgoing): this occurs when a VU staff member is the successful applicant for a fixed term position with an external organisation, or another organisation requests the University's services, which results in a staff member working for the external organisation for a defined period of time and then returning to their role at VU;
b. External Secondment (Incoming): a staff member from an external organisation is employed to work at the University for a fixed term period and will then return to their home organisation;
c. Internal Secondment: a staff member is seconded to a different role within the University on a temporary basis; or,
d. Job Exchange - External Secondment (Outgoing and Incoming): a reciprocal arrangement is put in place between two staff members (one from VU and one from an external organisation) to exchange jobs for a defined period.

(21) Secondments are available to fixed-term and continuing employees who have satisfactorily completed their

probationary period, or where probation does not apply, have been working in their current position for a minimum period of 12 months, unless otherwise negotiated between the employee's supervisor and the employee.

(22) Secondments are normally only granted for periods of up to twelve months. Secondment requests for periods of more than twelve months will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and for a total period of two years.

(23) The conditions of employment of the University will continue to apply during the period of the external secondment or exchange unless other arrangements are agreed between the relevant parties. This includes:

a. leave entitlements
b. salary level and any increments falling due
c. employer superannuation contributions and employee contributions
d. workers' compensation and public liability

(24) University staff members retain the right of return to their substantive position at the expiration of the external secondment or exchange. Leave accrued during the secondment or exchange should be taken prior to the expiration of the secondment or exchange period.

(25) If a backfill arrangement is used to fill the seconded staff member's substantive position, the backfill term must not exceed the period of time of the secondment.

(26) The following notice periods apply:

a. Commencing secondment: A notice period should be negotiated with the supervisor of the staff member's substantive position, and should not be less than two weeks.
b. Extending a secondment arrangement: A proposed extension to a secondment arrangement should be discussed at least eight weeks prior to the cessation of the secondment period, to allow adequate time for resource planning. NB: Extending a secondment arrangement would generally occur only once, and must be agreed between both supervisors and the staff member and formalised in writing.
c. Intention not to return to substantive position: It is the responsibility of the staff member to advise their supervisor of their intention not to return to their substantive position at least eight weeks prior to the cessation of the secondment period.
d. Resigning from the University: If an internally seconded staff member resigns from the University during their secondment, the standard notice period will apply (in accordance with the relevant industrial/employment agreement/letter of offer of employment).

(27) To end a secondment earlier than the designated expiry date, a staff member should consult with their supervisors and People and Culture to determine whether an appropriate temporary arrangement may be put in place (for example, the taking of Leave Without Pay or a temporary transfer to another position for the interim period). Early return to the substantive position may not be available due to backfilling arrangements.

External Secondment (Outgoing)

(28) Secondments will generally only be approved where the external organisation agrees to fully fund the secondment.

(29) Secondments that are unfunded or partially funded will only be approved in consideration of the importance of the secondment to the University. Approval is in line with the Delegations and Authorisations Policy.

(30) Where an external organisation requires the services of a University staff member, the request must be made in writing to the relevant supervisor by the external organisation. The application should outline:

a. the reason for the secondment;
b. terms of the secondment;
c. conditions that will apply;
d. selection process required; and,
e. funding arrangements.

(31) An External Secondment - Outgoing Agreement must be prepared by a delegated officer of the University (in line with the Delegations and Authorisations Policy) in conjunction with the external organisation, the outgoing secondee, and People and Culture. This agreement must be in place and signed prior to the commencement of the secondment.

(32) Where changes are required to the standard External Secondment - Outgoing Agreement, these changes must be reviewed and agreed to by the University's Office of the General Counsel prior to signing.

(33) Prior to commencement of an External Secondment, an External Secondment - Outgoing Agreement must be sent to People & Culture for processing. People and Culture will retain the signed secondment agreement and any other paperwork.

External Secondment (Incoming)

(34) Where possible, when a temporary vacancy is to be filled by someone external to VU, it is preferred that vacancies be filled by way of a fixed term contract arrangement. From time to time, the University may second a staff member from an external organisation for the purposes of obtaining specialised skills and knowledge or building beneficial reciprocal links with other organisations.

(35) All required recruitment processes and probity checks, including referee reports, police checks, working with children checks, confirmation of qualifications, and eligibility to work in Australia checks, must be followed and adhered to for all external secondments.

(36) Under an external secondment arrangement, the secondee remains an employee of their substantive organisation and on the payroll of the substantive workplace. The substantive workplace must invoice the University for the secondee's salary and salary on-costs for the secondment period.

(37) An External Secondment - Incoming Agreement should be prepared by a delegated officer of the University (in line with the Delegations and Authorisations Policy) in conjunction with the substantive workplace, the incoming secondee and People and Culture. The agreement must be in place, approved and signed by all parties before the secondment commences.

(38) People and Culture will retain the signed secondment agreement and any other paperwork. The secondee's details will be added to the People and Culture VU People First System for appropriate record keeping.

(39) Where changes are required to the standard External Secondment — Incoming Agreement, these changes must be reviewed and agreed to by the University's Office of the General Counsel prior to signing.

Internal Secondment

(40) Before an offer of internal secondment is made, the Supervisor of the Seconded position must discuss the prospect with the staff member’s substantive supervisor to ascertain whether the staff member can be released from their substantive position.

(41) Prior to commencing a secondment, the terms and conditions of the secondment must be established and agreed by all parties.

(42) An internal secondment can be filled by using the University’s Recruitment and Selection process or by Direct

Appointment. Refer to the Recruitment and Selection Policy for more information.

(43) A requisition must be entered in VU People First and approved in accordance with the Delegations and Authorisations Policy. More information on how to raise a requisition can be found on the People and Culture Recruitment SharePoint page or alternatively contact a People and Culture Recruitment and Reward team member.

(44) A formal letter of offer is generated by the Recruitment and Reward Team in VU People First after the requisition is approved and all recruitment and selection processes have been adhered to. The letter of offer will be approved in accordance with the Delegations and Authorisations Policy. The staff member is required to accept the offer within VU People First.

(45) Probation provisions do not apply to internal secondment arrangements.

Job Exchange

(46) Job Exchanges are usually undertaken where there is a definable benefit for both VU and the other organisation, as well as for both staff members.

(47) The paperwork and process for approving Job Exchanges follows the requirements of both External Secondment (Outgoing) and External Secondment (Incoming) outlined above.

Section 5 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(48) Higher Education Standards Framework: Standard 3.2 Staffing.

(49) Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2025: Standard 3.1 VET Workforce Management; 4.2 Leadership and Accountability; 4.4 Continuous Improvement.

Section 6 - Definitions

(50) Professional Development (PD): Includes all forms of learning and development, internal or external, that support the enhancement of staff skills and capabilities.

(51) Secondment: A temporary transfer of an employee to another role within the University or an external organisation for a defined period.

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