

CONFERENCES AND FIELD WORK PROCEDURE

SCOPE

This procedure applies to all academic and professional staff at Australian campuses of the University ('us', 'our' or 'we'), herein collectively referred to as 'you' for the purpose of this procedure.

PROCEDURE STATEMENT

All members of staff may apply to attend conferences and undertake field work within Australia and overseas provided such pursuits are in line with the objectives of their work unit and individual performance development plans.

The purpose of this procedure is to clarify how staff can apply to attend conferences and to undertake field work.

1. Initiating conference leave or field work

- 1.1 If you are a staff member (other than a Dean or Professor) who wishes to attend a conference or participate in field work that does not require any domestic or international travel, you should:
 - prepare precise details of why you wish to attend, what the financial costs are likely to be, and what effect your temporary absence from your work area is likely to have;
 - include reference to any other conference or field work undertaken in the past year;
 - prepare a statement of what the benefits of attending the conference or engaging in the field work are likely to be for your work area, and for us; and
 - forward this information in writing to the head of the school or department.
- 1.2 If you are a staff member (other than a Dean or Professor) who wishes to attend a conference or participate in field work that requires domestic or international travel, you must submit the above details as part of a travel request in [Concur](#).
- 1.3 You should refer to the [International Travel \(Australian-based staff\) procedure](#) or the [Domestic Travel \(Australian-based staff\) procedure](#) for further guidance on how to submit a travel request.
- 1.4 The Head of Unit will consider:
 - your development needs and benefits to the work unit;
 - the amount of time requested for attending conferences or taking leave for field work;
 - the potential impact on unit workload and work flow and available resources to support the leave; and
 - any implications for equal employment opportunity or for matters to do with equity.
- 1.5 The Head of Unit may:
 - approve requests to attend a conference or engage in field work within Australia; and
 - consult with the Dean or Executive Director before granting approval for conferences or field work outside of Australia.
- 1.6 The Head of Unit will provide authorisation via:
 - [Concur](#) where domestic or international travel is required to attend the conference or engage in the field work; or
 - in writing for you to attend a conference or engage in field work where no travel is required.

Professors

- 1.7 If you are a Professor who wishes to attend a conference or engage in field work within Australia, you are to inform the Head of Unit of the intended absence. The Head of Unit will advise the Dean that the Professor is to be absent for the period specified and grant approval in writing or via [Concur](#) where travel is required.
- 1.8 Where you seek leave to attend a conference or engage in field work outside of Australia, you are to obtain the agreement of the Head of Unit, who will discuss the intended absence with the Dean prior to granting approval via [Concur](#).

Head of Unit

- 1.9 If you are a Head of Unit intending to attend conferences or field work within Australia, you will advise the Dean and seek approval in writing or via [Concur](#) where travel is required.
- 1.10 You are to consult with the Dean or equivalent and obtain approval via [Concur](#) before taking leave to attend an overseas conference or field work activity.

Deans

- 1.11 If you are a Dean intending to attend conferences or field work or otherwise be absent for more than one day within Australia, you are to advise the Provost.
- 1.12 You are to obtain the prior agreement and approval of the Provost via [Concur](#) for absences overseas.

2. Request for financial assistance

- 2.1 If you are seeking financial support to attend a conference within Australia or overseas, you are to apply through the Head of Unit to the Dean or Executive Director.
- 2.2 To qualify for financial assistance to attend a conference, you are normally expected to have received an invitation from the organising body to present a paper to the conference, or to take a leading part in the conduct of the conference.
- 2.3 If you are seeking financial support to participate in field work within Australia, you are to apply through the Head of Unit.
- 2.4 If you are seeking financial support to participate in field work overseas, you are to apply through the Head of Unit to the Dean or Executive Director.
- 2.5 You can request financial assistance to engage in field work where the proposed field work is relevant to the interest of you and the unit and benefits are likely to accrue to the University from the activity.
- 2.6 The Dean or the Head of Unit will consider the request for financial assistance, taking into account:
 - special needs of particular areas of scholarship;
 - the level of financial assistance, taking into account any previous financial assistance granted to you towards attendance at conferences or for absences on field work; and
 - the willingness of the inviting body or of some other outside organisation to make a financial contribution towards expenses.
- 2.7 In cases where some support from an outside body is available, the Dean or equivalent would not normally expect to meet more than 50% of the total cost of the visits. However, in those disciplines, which, in the opinion of the Dean or equivalent, grants from outside bodies are less readily available, they may decide to make a proportionately larger grant.
- 2.8 If your absence is to be contiguous with, or an interruption during, a period of participation in an outside studies program, the financial assistance will be assessed in respect of these circumstances.
- 2.9 You should check details regarding staff expense claims and travel allowances through the [Corporate Finance Division](#) web page and [clause 77](#) of the Monash University Enterprise Agreement (Academic and Professional Staff) 2014 respectively.

3. Unsupported requests for conference and field work

- 3.1 Where a request to attend a conference or engage in field work, or to be provided with financial assistance is denied by the Head of Unit or Dean, you will be given reasons by the decision maker for the denial as soon as is practicable.
- 3.2 In those cases, where the Head of Unit or the Dean has refused a request to attend a conference or to engage in field work, or provide financial assistance, you may seek to invoke the [Dispute Settlement and Employment Related Grievances Resolution procedure](#). This will be concerned with matters of process and equity only, since we are not obliged to provide such leave and financial assistance.

4. Arrangements during conference and field work

- 4.1 Once approval is granted, you are to:
 - take action to ensure that your work situation is manageable in your absence;
 - ensure that the administrative arrangements for your journey and stay at the field work or conference are completed; and
 - advise and seek approval in writing, or via [Concur](#) where travel is required, from your supervisor or Head of Unit as to travelling arrangements and advise where you intends to stay.
- 4.2 Consistent with the [International Travel \(Australian-based staff\) procedure](#) and [Domestic Travel \(Australian-based staff\) procedure](#), accommodation should be of a reasonable standard. If there is any dispute regarding the travel arrangements, attempts will be made to resolve the issue between you and the head of the particular unit.

- 4.3 If you have been issued with a corporate credit card, you should incur reasonable University business related expenses on the corporate credit card, in accordance with [Corporate Credit Card policy](#).
- 4.4 Where corporate credit card facilities are not available, you will obtain a receipt or other satisfactory evidence of reasonable personal expenses incurred whilst travelling on approved University business and this amount, if approved, will be reimbursed. Alternatively a cash advance may be approved in advance by your supervisor or head of administrative unit; this advance may be drawn not earlier than six weeks prior to departure.
- 4.5 If you are travelling overseas, you must familiarise yourself with the [International Travel \(Australian-based Staff\) procedure](#) and the requirements for preparation of a travel plan, insurance, risk management and travel advice, travel class, visas, travel diary and so on.

5. Returning to normal duties

- 5.1 Following the leave of absence that has been granted, you will return to your normal duties.
- 5.2 Any undue absences that may exceed the initial approved time are to be advised to the Head of Unit or Dean prior to the absence continuing so that a decision may be made about whether continued absence is permissible.
- 5.3 No additional expenditure above the agreed financial assistance levels committed to by us should be entered into if further leave is granted without prior approval from your supervisor (Head of Unit or above).
- 5.4 Following the conference or field work activity, you will be expected to complete a detailed report that encompasses what you have learnt and what you have done. This is necessary so that Monash and other staff working in the discipline may benefit from your attendance. The report may be either written or a verbal presentation.
- 5.5 The Head of Unit should keep records of written approvals and will have access to records of approved travel for conferences and field work submitted via concur.

6. Breach of procedure

- 6.1 We treat any breach of our policies or procedures seriously. We encourage reporting of concerns about non-compliance and manage compliance in accordance with the applicable Enterprise Agreement or contract terms.

DEFINITIONS

Concur	The University's Travel Management System.
Conference	Conferences that may be acceptable to the University for conference leave purposes are those that are concerned with aspects of the work of a University faculty, division or work area and which will contribute to the work of the faculty or division or work area. It is expected that staff who obtain leave to attend the conference will be contributors to the conference, and may be presenting papers.
Conference papers	In this instance conference papers refers to those papers that the leave applicant has been involved in writing, or will present to the conference. Where leave is applied for it is expected by the University that the applicant will be presenting their own paper to the conference (or in special cases that of another member of Monash University staff).
Dean or Executive Director	The Dean of the faculty or Executive Director or nominee in any case where the dean or director has formally nominated a person to act as their nominee for the purpose.
Field work	An activity related to the work of a staff member and the faculty, division or work area in which they are employed, but takes place in a setting outside of the University's usual sites and campuses. Field work in the appropriate geographical areas may be relevant to the research needs of scholars in such disciplines as anthropology, botany, language studies, and so on and may also encompass research in libraries with special resources or laboratories with specialised equipment or expertise not available locally. Field work should contribute to the responsibilities and capacities of those who are engaged in it, and is therefore, expected to have a tangible benefit to the University.
Financial assistance	The amount of money and associated resources that the University is willing to provide to a staff member who obtains leave to attend a conference or undertake field work.
Leave to attend conferences or field work	Leave that is associated with the work of the staff member and is usually considered to be a part of their employment. Absences to attend conferences will not normally exceed two weeks for any one conference. Absences to undertake field work is 10 weeks or less in any given year. Where possible, absences are to be during the between-teaching periods. Satisfactory arrangements to cover teaching and other commitments must be made if leave is requested during teaching times.

GOVERNANCE

Parent policy	Probation, performance and promotion
Supporting schedules	
Associated procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Credit Card (Australia only) • Domestic Travel (Australian-based Staff) • International Travel (Australian-based Staff) • Performance Development Process: Academic Staff • Reimbursements <p>Procedure forms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application for Leave
Legislation mandating compliance	
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Content enquiries	ask.monash or phone Monash HR on (03) 990 20400