

# RESEARCH AND STUDY LEAVE (RSL) POLICY

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## **2. Introduction**

- 2.1. Research and Study Leave (RSL) is leave from normal teaching, research and administrative duties which may be granted to academic staff members (see section 6) in order that they may pursue an approved research and study programme under such conditions as may be determined.
- 2.2. RSL is a form of service to the University and is granted for those purposes which are consistent with the basic purposes for which the University is constituted. For this reason particular attention is paid to the academic merit of research or other project(s) proposed by any applicant for RSL, and the extent to which the quality of the work of the University may be expected to improve if such leave is granted.
- 2.3. No member of staff is, in any context, entitled to RSL. The granting of RSL is always discretionary.
- 2.4. Although RSL is not given as a matter of right and each application will be considered on its merits, the University is convinced of the value of RSL in principle.
- 2.5. Staff members may accrue up to 365 days RSL over a period of seven years (see section 21).
- 2.6. The University encourages staff members to plan for RSL in consultation with their Heads of Departments and encourages Heads of Departments to maintain a departmental schedule of proposed RSL plans.
- 2.7. Temporary replacements for staff members undertaking RSL normally are not supplied (see section 18).

## **3. Purpose of RSL policy**

- 3.1. RSL is undertaken by academic staff members in order to extend their own knowledge and to improve their teaching, research and (if appropriate) clinical skills.
- 3.2. RSL aims to increase staff members' contributions to the University's teaching and research programmes, and to its general development.
- 3.3. The value of RSL is measured by its usefulness to the University's teaching and research, the individual's professional development and the contribution the leave may make to the wider community.
- 3.4. RSL may allow staff members to undertake study and research of a kind or to an extent that cannot be pursued during the course of their normal day to day employment. For Executant Staff members in the Performing Arts 'study and research' shall be understood to include the study of relevant pedagogical techniques and the preparation of major works for public performance.
- 3.5. RSL is an opportunity for staff members to develop and maintain contacts with the wider academic and research community. RSL is therefore normally made available to staff members so that they may undertake research and study in association with people in the same field with whom face to face contact is not normally possible and who may help provide access to information, equipment or other developments not normally available. Such contacts give staff members the chance to assess themselves, their research and

their teaching against the highest international standards and also confers advantages to both the individual and the University alike.

- 3.6. The University acknowledges that often a significant benefit can be gained by attaching shorter periods of RSL to approved Conference Leave (see section 15).

#### **4. Accountability/Staff members' RSL reports**

- 4.1. Staff members taking RSL are accountable to the University through their Head of Department, Dean where applicable, and Pro-Vice-Chancellor. This accountability is achieved by:
- 4.1.1. requiring evidence from applicants for RSL that the leave will advance the goals of the University;
  - 4.1.2. reviewing past achievements, including those during and consequent to previous period(s) of RSL;
  - 4.1.3. requiring applicants to demonstrate how their last RSL positively contributed to the performance of their duties and responsibilities and the development of the University;
  - 4.1.4. requiring staff members within three months of their return from RSL to submit a brief report of 200 - 500 words, through their Head of Department (and Dean in the Division of Health Sciences) to their Pro-Vice-Chancellor.
- 4.2. The staff members' reports on their RSL shall:
- 4.2.1. list the extent to which these goals have been achieved;
  - 4.2.2. list major visits resulting in establishing significant and enduring contacts between the University (and the individual) and another institution;
  - 4.2.3. provide information about conditions and methods of university education elsewhere, particularly in the areas of teaching, assessment and curriculum development;
  - 4.2.4. summarise the research undertaken;
  - 4.2.5. list teaching given;
  - 4.2.6. list seminars and conferences attended;
  - 4.2.7. list publications completed during their leave;
  - 4.2.8. specify RSL Financial Support used during the leave.
- 4.3. Staff members may wish to make a longer report, particularly where they have specific recommendations to make or matters of general interest to report. The report should not exceed two pages without prior approval by their Pro-Vice-Chancellor.

- 4.4. The approved report will be retained on the staff member's personal file held by Human Resources. Additional copies shall be supplied by the Divisional Office to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) and the Divisional Marketing Co-ordinators.
- 4.5. Eligibility for future RSL will not accumulate if a satisfactory RSL report is not received by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor within three months of return from leave.

## **5. RSL within New Zealand**

- 5.1. Staff members may submit applications to spend all or part of RSL within New Zealand. In their application, staff members:
  - 5.1.1. must state why the objectives of the leave cannot be achieved during a non-RSL period in the normal course of duties;
  - 5.1.2. normally are expected to disengage from all of their departmental and University duties for the duration of the approved RSL;
  - 5.1.3. may be provided with RSL Financial Support, depending on the circumstances of the individual case, and where all or part of the leave period spent in New Zealand involves travel;
  - 5.1.4. may undertake RSL and remain on campus. Such staff members normally must not be involved in other duties and must be free to focus on their research;
  - 5.1.5. despite the requirement not to be involved in other duties, may be expected to continue supervision of postgraduate students;
  - 5.1.6. if it is not possible to continue postgraduate supervision, staff members applying for RSL are required to identify, and obtain evidence of agreement of, the colleague who is to take over their supervisions during the RSL.

## **6. Eligibility of full and part-time staff members for RSL**

- 6.1. RSL is granted only to full time or part time academic staff members:
  - 6.1.1. having the status of Lecturer or above; and
  - 6.1.2. holding a confirmed appointment; or
  - 6.1.3. holding a confirmation path appointment; or
  - 6.1.4. having a role as Research Fellow or above with more than four years' continuous service.
- 6.2. Approval of RSL for research only academics is subject to funding organisations (external funders, Pro-Vice-Chancellors or Cost Centre Heads in Health Sciences) agreeing to continue to fund salaries and the RSL Financial Support.
- 6.3. Eligible part-time academic staff members may apply for RSL as frequently as full-time staff members, but with the appropriate fraction of the financial grant;

- 6.4. Staff who have agreed to take retirement or phased retirement will only be granted RSL in exceptional circumstances.

## **7. Eligibility of Heads of Departments/Deans of Schools for RSL**

- 7.1. Heads of Departments and Deans of Schools should not go on RSL for more than three months during the first three years of their first term of office except in exceptional circumstances.
- 7.2. It is recommended that pending Heads of Departments/Deans should establish their future plans for RSL prior to their appointment to the position. Heads of Departments/Deans are strongly encouraged to take RSL at the end of their agreed term.

## **8. Qualifying service for RSL**

- 8.1. Qualifying service required to apply for RSL is calculated from the date of appointment to a confirmation path position or eligible research position. This date may be backdated if there is any recognised prior service (see sections 9 and 10).
- 8.2. RSL may be taken to the extent to which it has accrued in a staff member's current septennium of service. Staff members may take less leave or RSL Financial Support than they have accrued. Any untaken leave or RSL Financial Support may be carried forward.
- 8.3. RSL will accrue up to a maximum of 365 days. Weekends and public holidays are part of the RSL entitlement.
- 8.4. The maximum RSL Financial Support accumulates after seven years' service for full time staff members. (For part time staff members, see section 21.9).
- 8.5. Untaken RSL beyond the maximum entitlement will be forfeited.

## **9. Recognition of prior service outside the University for purpose of eligibility for RSL**

- 9.1. Any credit for prior service outside of the University of Otago will be determined on a case by case basis. It will be negotiated, wherever possible, at the time of employment only, following an application from the staff member and with the support of the Head of Department. Consideration will be given only to a person who immediately prior to their appointment to this University was a member of the academic staff of another University, normally with the grade of Lecturer or above. Service in positions which did not attract similar leave at another institution will not be considered. The credit given will not normally exceed six months eligibility. Any leave credited generally will not be available until the completion of two years' service with the University of Otago.
- 9.2. Approval of any credit for prior service will be made by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) acting on a recommendation from the Head of Department, with the support of the Dean of the School (where appropriate) and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the appropriate Division. The application must include:

- 9.2.1. a justification for crediting the prior service;
- 9.2.2. a certificate of service from the staff member's previous employer;
- 9.2.3. a statement from the previous employer regarding eligibility for any research and study leave;
- 9.2.4. details of the normal leave provisions from the previous employer;
- 9.2.5. any special factors which have prevented the appointee from taking research and study leave;
- 9.2.6. the applicant's CV.

## **10. Recognition of prior service within the University for purpose of eligibility for RSL**

- 10.1. The University has resolved that:
  - 10.1.1. any service as a fixed term Assistant Lecturer or Lecturer shall be recognised for the purposes of RSL providing that it is immediately prior to and continuous with a confirmation path appointment;
  - 10.1.2. if a staff member is appointed as a confirmation path or confirmed Lecturer or above, and if that staff member has any service as a Research Fellow or above, this service shall be recognised for the purposes of RSL only if the staff member has at least four years continuous service that is immediately prior to and continuous with a confirmation path appointment;
  - 10.1.3. any service by a staff member as a Teaching Fellow, Professional Practice Fellow or Senior Teaching Fellow shall not be recognised for the purposes of RSL
  - 10.1.4. any service as a General Staff member shall not be recognised for the purposes of RSL.
  - 10.1.5. any service as a Clinical Lecturer or Clinical Senior Lecturer shall be recognised for the purposes of RSL providing that it is immediately prior to and continuous with a confirmation path appointment. Prior to the appointment to the confirmation path position, the Clinical Lecturer or Clinical Senior Lecturer must be working at least 0.4 FTE and be covered by the University of Otago Academic Staff Medical/Dental Employment Agreement.

## **11. Parental leave and eligibility for RSL**

- 11.1. Periods of Parental Leave count towards qualifying service for RSL in accordance with the Parental Leave Policy.

## **12. Leave without Pay/Staff Exchange and eligibility for RSL**

- 12.1. Periods of leave without pay or staff exchange, while not reducing accumulated RSL credit, will not count as qualifying service toward eligibility for RSL. Staff members' eligibility for RSL is suspended while they are taking leave without pay or on a staff exchange.

## **13. Timing of RSL**

- 13.1. The timing of RSL will be governed by the following principles:
  - 13.1.1. The timing is entirely within the discretion of the University. When RSL is being planned, both the teaching and administrative needs of the University shall be considered, as well as the needs of staff members to link their leave arrangements to conferences, patterns of academic activity in the places where leave is to be taken and appropriate times for field research. In addition, the clinical needs of the District Health Board must be considered by joint clinical staff members (see section 17).
  - 13.1.2. Staff members are expected to make the maximum possible use of non-teaching time for RSL. Consequently, except for staff members for whom it is a teaching period, RSL will normally include the months of December and January.
  - 13.1.3. Staff members are expected to organise their RSL so that it will start and/or finish at a break in the academic year unless there are strong reasons why this should not be so. RSL of 240 days or less should not normally involve absence from the University during more than one semester.

## **14. Applications for RSL**

- 14.1. Applications for RSL should be submitted by 1 April for leave which will commence in the period 1 November of the same year to 31 October of the following year.
- 14.2. Before applying for RSL staff members should discuss proposed plans with their Head of Department or Dean. If they wish further advice concerning any aspect of their intended application they should contact their Pro-Vice-Chancellor.
- 14.3. ONE copy of the full application for RSL (including attachments) should be sent to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor through the Head of the applicant's Department and the Dean where appropriate. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor will be responsible for establishing the applicant's eligibility.
- 14.4. When applying for RSL, staff members must, in their own interests, supply the fullest possible information in support of their case. The application should include a clear statement of:
  - 14.4.1. the purpose of the proposed leave in the form of tangible objectives;
  - 14.4.2. how and where they are to be achieved;

- 14.4.3. specific likely outcomes of the leave;
  - 14.4.4. the likely benefits to the University;
  - 14.4.5. letter/s of invitation from host institution/s;
  - 14.4.6. letter of support from the funding body (external funders, Pro-Vice-Chancellors or Cost Centre Heads in Health Sciences) agreeing to continue to fund salaries and the RSL Financial Support for research staff members;
  - 14.4.7. letter of support from the District Health Board for joint clinical staff members (see section 17).
- 14.5. Heads of Departments are expected to supply a detailed statement which sets out their own views as to the merits of the application and the effect that the staff member's absence will have on teaching and administration in the Department. Otherwise the matter may be referred back to the Department for further information, and a decision on the application may be unnecessarily delayed.
- 14.6. Decision making on RSL has been delegated to Pro-Vice-Chancellors. Pro-Vice-Chancellors may seek the advice of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), if required.
- 14.7. All decisions are reported to the Staffing Advisory Committee annually.
- 14.8. Staff members who wish to change their approved itinerary or programme for RSL must obtain approval from their Pro-Vice-Chancellor prior to the commencement of their leave, or, if necessary, during their leave. The change may create an obligation on staff members to repay part of the RSL Financial Support advanced to them before the leave commenced or if they are already on leave, upon their return to duty.
- 14.9. It is the responsibility of each Pro-Vice-Chancellor to ensure that full records are maintained for all eligible staff.

## **15. Applications for RSL as an extension of Conference Leave**

- 15.1. The University acknowledges that often a significant benefit can be gained by attaching shorter periods of RSL to approved Conference Leave. Staff members must meet the same standard of eligibility, accountability and criteria for approval. In such circumstances the Pro-Vice-Chancellor may approve use of up to \$1,000 of the employee's RSL support monies (see section 21).
- 15.2. For absences for non work purposes beyond the minimum reasonable period required for attendance at the approved conference, staff members are expected to take the additional time as Annual Leave. The Annual Leave may be taken before or after the conference. See also section 26 for information about the University Travel Policy.
- 15.3. For absences for work purposes of up to 10 working days beyond the minimum reasonable period required for attendance at the approved conference, staff members are expected to take the additional time as Leave of Absence.



- 15.4. Leave of Absence refers to a period of time when staff members are working away from their normal workplace. It is not Annual Leave, Sick Leave, RSL, Conference Leave, Leave without Pay or Discretionary Leave. Leave of Absence can be taken at any time and is not linked to Conference Leave alone. Requests for Leave of Absence must be made in writing. For information about who approves Leave of Absence, go to:  
<http://www.otago.ac.nz/humanresources/hr/employment/leave-delegation.php>.
- 15.5. For absences for work purposes of more than 10 working days beyond the minimum reasonable period required for attendance at the approved conference, staff members, in most circumstances, must apply for RSL as an extension of Conference Leave:
- 15.5.1. Application for a period of extended conference leave longer than 10 working days and using RSL days, including any application for funding assistance (\$1,000), is to be submitted in writing to Pro-Vice-Chancellors, through the Head of Department and Dean (if appropriate) who will signify their approval of the request. For joint clinical staff members, District Health Board approval will also be necessary.
- 15.5.2. Application may be made at any time, but should be received by Pro-Vice-Chancellors no less than two weeks prior to the proposed date of departure.
- 15.5.3. Applications for extended conference leave (using RSL days) should be in the form of a one-page letter explicitly stating the following:
- total period for which leave is sought i.e. date of departure and date of return to work;
  - proposed itinerary with dates (including the dates of the conference(s) for which separate approval has been granted);
  - objectives for the period of extended conference leave.
- 15.6. Normally staff members may not take more than 20 working days Leave of Absence per annum. For more information about Leave of Absence, go to:  
<http://www.otago.ac.nz/humanresources/policies/leaveofabsence.php>

## **16. Attending Conferences while on RSL**

- 16.1. Staff members who are, or who will be on RSL, may apply for additional financial support to attend conferences, under the conference leave policy.

## **17. Applications by joint clinical staff members**

- 17.1. Joint clinical academic staff members must consider the clinical needs of the hospital when planning their RSL.
- 17.2. Joint clinical academic staff members must provide a letter of support from the appropriate District Health Board.
- 17.3. Joint clinical academic staff members must provide written confirmation from the appropriate District Health Board Manager specifying to what extent the DHB will continue to fund their component of the staff member's salary (including information on whether any additional payments/allowances are to continue or cease during RSL).

Note: Joint clinical academic staff may be required to convert to their full-time (1.0 FTE) University salary rate while on RSL.

- 17.4. Joint clinical academic staff members must provide confirmation that clinical cover is available for the period of RSL requested.
- 17.5. Joint clinical academic staff must provide written confirmation from the appropriate District Health Board Manager specifying whether or not the District Health Board will fund their share of the RSL Financial Support (e.g. 50% of the RSL Financial Support available to the applicant), **or** provide a statement from the Dean that the School and/or Department will provide the total amount of the RSL Financial Support available.
- 17.6. Clinicians who have separate employment agreements with the University and the DHB (or other clinical employers) will be eligible for RSL for their University position only. For more information about eligibility for RSL for part time staff members, see section 6.

## **18. Temporary replacement for staff members on RSL**

- 18.1. Other than in exceptional circumstances, temporary replacements for staff members undertaking RSL are not supplied. Heads of Departments/Deans of Schools are required to confirm that satisfactory arrangements can be made from within existing staffing resources to ensure that the work of Departments/Schools continues satisfactorily in the absence of staff members during their period of RSL. Please note the Division of Health Sciences will not provide temporary replacements.
- 18.2. In exceptional circumstances, where additional resources are required, Heads of Departments must provide a statement detailing the resources required to cover specific work during the applicant's absence, and the exceptional circumstances requiring them. Please note that within the Division of Health Sciences, any additional resources will need to be provided by the Department.
- 18.3. Where existing staff members cannot cover the Department/School's workload, approval of RSL will be deferred. Temporary staffing difficulties should not provide continuing occasions for denial of RSL to staff members in a way which disadvantages them relative to other University staff members.

## **19. Criteria for granting RSL**

- 19.1. Before approving any RSL proposals Pro-Vice-Chancellors will be satisfied that:
  - 19.1.1. staff members meet the eligibility criteria;
  - 19.1.2. staff members have set objectives which are acceptable to the University;
  - 19.1.3. the period of leave and the leave project(s) are sound, well-documented and will, in the opinion of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, significantly enhance staff members' research and teaching ability in their discipline;

- 19.1.4. satisfactory arrangements can be made by departments and the University generally for maintaining teaching, administrative functions and (if applicable) clinical duties during the absence of the staff member (see section 18).
- 19.2. When assessing applications Pro-Vice-Chancellors will pay particular attention to:
- 19.2.1. the quality of applicants' service to the University and in particular the applicants':
- research record,
  - teaching responsibilities, performance, and any creative achievements.
- 19.2.2. the detailed statement by the Head of Department (and Dean where applicable) on the merit and practicability of the proposed leave programme;
- 19.2.3. the appropriateness of the proposed places of work;
- 19.2.4. applicants' access to these places and to research materials;
- 19.2.5. the effect the intended leave will have on the teaching and supervision of students in the department;
- 19.2.6. if it is not possible to continue post graduate supervision, staff members applying for RSL are required to identify, and obtain evidence of agreement of, the colleague who is to take over their supervisions during the RSL;
- 19.2.7. The future benefits of RSL for both the staff member and the University.
- 19.3. In the case of first RSL applications, particular attention will be given to whether staff members have demonstrated adequate performance in their teaching and have clearly embarked on a productive line of research. Pro-Vice-Chancellors will require those staff members who are not as yet clearly established in teaching and research to have a particularly precise and practicable programme to be conducted in close association with a recognised overseas scholar and/or institution. A prolonged stay based at one centre is preferred to shorter visits to a number of different centres.
- 19.4. In the case of staff members applying for second or subsequent periods of RSL, particular attention will be paid to whether the applicants:
- 19.4.1. in the report on their previous leave, clearly indicated how that leave positively contributed to the performance of their duties and responsibilities and/or the development of the University;
- 19.4.2. in their curriculum vitae, have provided proof of the achievement of the goals of previous periods of leave and continuing good performance in teaching and research.

## **20. Selection priorities**

- 20.1. Funding for RSL may not allow for approval of all the leave applications that would otherwise be approved. In such a situation Pro-Vice-Chancellors may approve applications on the basis of the quality of the application and the applicants' research and teaching record. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor may also rank applications according to the following priorities (in order of significance):
  - 20.1.1. applications by staff members applying for their first RSL since their appointment at this University and who will have accumulated the maximum eligibility of 365 consecutive days at the time of their intended departure for leave;
  - 20.1.2. applications by staff members who are applying for their second or subsequent RSL since their appointment at this University and who will have accumulated the maximum eligibility of 365 consecutive days at the time of their intended departure for leave;
  - 20.1.3. the performance of the applicants in teaching, research, clinical practice (where applicable) and service;
  - 20.1.4. the extent to which the leave period will enable the staff members to further their teaching and research to benefit both the University and themselves and, where applicable, clinical practice;
  - 20.1.5. the provision of satisfactory arrangements to use existing staffing resources to ensure that the work of the Department/School continues satisfactorily in the absence of a staff member taking RSL.
- 20.2. Pro-Vice-Chancellors also may take into account factors such as:
  - 20.2.1. staff members making their first application for RSL since their appointment at this University and who have had no previous opportunity for academic experience outside New Zealand since being employed by the University;
  - 20.2.2. the proposed timing being particularly appropriate, for instance, because the staff member has obtained a prestigious fellowship or award.

## **21. RSL Financial support**

- 21.1. Successful applicants will proceed on RSL on full salary. In addition, applicants may be granted funds to assist with travel and sustenance.

21.2. The maximum assistance for service prior to 31 December 2010 will accrue as follows:

Qualifying Service (years)	Leave Allocation (consecutive days)	Accumulating Total Allocation	RSL Financial Support	Accumulating Total Support
1	65	65	\$1,300	\$1,300
2	50	115	\$1,300	\$2,600
3	50	165	\$1,300	\$3,900
4	50	215	\$1,300	\$5,200
5	50	265	\$1,300	\$6,500
6	50	315	\$1,300	\$7,800
7	50	365	\$1,300	\$9,100

21.3. The maximum assistance for service from 1 January 2011 until 31 December 2012 will accrue as follows:

Qualifying Service (years)	Leave Allocation (consecutive days)	Accumulating Total Allocation	RSL Financial Support	Accumulating Total Support
1	65	65	\$1,700	\$1,700
2	50	115	\$1,700	\$3,400
3	50	165	\$1,700	\$5,100
4	50	215	\$1,700	\$6,800
5	50	265	\$1,700	\$8,500
6	50	315	\$1,700	\$10,200
7	50	365	\$1,700	\$11,900

21.4. The maximum assistance for service from 1 January 2013 accrues as follows:

Qualifying Service (years)	Leave Allocation (consecutive days)	Accumulating Total Allocation	RSL Financial Support	Accumulating Total Support
1	65	65	\$1,800	\$1,800
2	50	115	\$1,800	\$3,600
3	50	165	\$1,800	\$5,400
4	50	215	\$1,800	\$7,200
5	50	265	\$1,800	\$9,000
6	50	315	\$1,800	\$10,800
7	50	365	\$1,800	\$12,600

21.5. The maximum assistance for service from 1 January 2015 accrues as follows:

Qualifying Service (years)	Leave Allocation (consecutive days)	Accumulating Total Allocation	RSL Financial Support	Accumulating Total Support
1	65	65	\$1,840	\$1,840
2	50	115	\$1,840	\$3,680
3	50	165	\$1,840	\$5,520
4	50	215	\$1,840	\$7,360
5	50	265	\$1,840	\$9,200
6	50	315	\$1,840	\$11,040
7	50	365	\$1,840	\$12,880

21.6. The leave allocation and RSL Financial Support for year 7 may be anticipated by staff members taking the full period of leave and support in that year. There shall be no other anticipation (i.e. no pro rata allocation for part years) and leave and support will be credited at the anniversary date of the commencement of eligibility.

21.7. Part-time staff members are entitled to the RSL Financial Support (see sections 21.3 and 21.6) on a pro-rata basis. For example, a half-time (50%) employee will accumulate 365 days of leave eligibility after 7 years service but half of RSL Financial Support.

21.8. For staff members who worked variable hours during the eligibility period, their salary while on RSL normally will be paid at the rate that applies at the time their application was approved. In some circumstances, for reasons of equity, Pro-Vice-Chancellors may review the level of salary paid while on RSL.

21.9. Part-time staff members may continue to accumulate eligibility for the RSL Financial Support until it reaches the maximum allowed. For example half time (50%) staff members employed for 14 years may accumulate the maximum RSL Financial Support available. The maximum RSL remains at 365 days.

21.10. In exceptional circumstances, Pro-Vice-Chancellors may increase the RSL Financial Support paid to part-time staff members beyond that for which they are eligible, up to the maximum full-time RSL Financial Support, but only in cases where members do not have any other significant income outside the University.

21.11. Generally, part-time staff members may not increase their hours while they are on RSL. However, recognising the inherent cost increase to the department or school, if Pro-Vice-Chancellors see a benefit to the Department, School or the wider University and also to staff members, they may agree to enter into a variation of employment to allow part-time staff members employment of up to full-time subject to the reduction of the period of RSL by the percentage of employment increase. For example, a half-time employee wishing to be paid full-time whilst on RSL would be entitled to a maximum period of leave each 7 years of 183 days with the maximum RSL Financial Support available for that period.

21.12. Staff members may apply to use up to their accumulated total leave and/or support eligibility or such part of either as they consider necessary to fulfill their RSL obligations. For example, staff members eligible for 365 days leave and maximum RSL Financial Support may choose to apply for 180 days leave and the maximum

RSL Financial Support. This means staff members would still be eligible for at least 185 days leave but with no RSL Financial Support.

- 21.13. Pro-Vice-Chancellors are to satisfy themselves that the amount of support being sought is consistent with the nature and scope of the study programme.
- 21.14. The maximum RSL Financial Support varies, depending on the eligibility period and the rates that apply from time to time.
- 21.15. For staff members appointed as Lecturers, or staff members initially appointed as Lecturers and subsequently promoted to Senior Lecturer, the financial assistance may be supplemented by up to \$2,500. Such supplementation will depend upon the nature and scope of the study programme, and will only apply when the RSL is for a period of three months or more. The additional funding is available for the first period of RSL only.
- 21.16. The level of assistance will be reviewed every two years by the Vice-Chancellor's Advisory Group, taking into account changes in international travel and living costs and the University's financial circumstances.
- 21.17. Financial support is for goods and services purchased by staff members such as airfares, accommodation and conference fees. Invoices should be in the name of the University and approved and coded in the normal manner.
- 21.18. Use of RSL Financial Support is subject to University policies and procedures, in particular the Travel and Travel Related Costs Policy and the Travel Planning Procedure.
- 21.19. Staff members may seek reimbursement for partners and dependent family members accompanying them on Research and Study Leave for one month or more.
- 21.20. Expenses paid or reimbursed by the University for RSL must be work related and contain no element of private expenditure to avoid a taxation liability. To avoid a taxation liability, costs related to family members accompanying staff members should be treated as follows:
  - 21.20.1. where the RSL is less than one month it is not normally an acceptable business expense unless the family member is involved in the study or research activity. The short term nature of the relocation means that costs incurred in relation to family visits to staff members cannot be reimbursed tax free.
  - 21.20.2. where the RSL is one month or more, it would be an acceptable business expense in most cases for the RSL Financial Support only.

## **22. Other financial assistance**

- 22.1. Financial assistance from outside sources must be stated specifically in RSL applications. If the extent of such assistance is not known at the time the application is made, staff members, on becoming aware either before going on leave or while on leave that financial assistance will be received from outside sources, must inform the University of the extent of that assistance as soon as possible.

- 22.2. The University is well aware of the financial difficulties encountered by staff members on RSL. If staff members obtain additional support to defray the costs of the RSL, it will not normally affect their RSL Financial Support.
- 22.3. In exceptional circumstances, where the additional financial assistance is substantial or received for reasons other than defraying the costs of the RSL, then the Pro-Vice-Chancellor has the discretion to withhold all or part of the RSL Financial Support. In some circumstances the matter may be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) for final decision. Providing that the acceptance of financial assistance does not unduly constrain or impede the study and research for which the leave was granted, the University will view favourably the acceptance of financial assistance.
- 22.4. The following forms of assistance can be identified (the list is not exhaustive):
- 22.4.1. Scholarships and Fellowships awarded to staff members and the particular components that may be specified in the awards, e.g. travel;
  - 22.4.2. grants-in-aid in the form of subsidised accommodation, use of vehicles, free meals etc;
  - 22.4.3. facilities made available to assist the purpose of the RSL, e.g. use of laboratories, libraries, computers, provision of rooms, attendance at conferences etc;
  - 22.4.4. remuneration by way of salary for incidental teaching or consulting etc.
- 22.5. University funding such as research grants can be used while on RSL but the grants cannot be used to defray family or personal costs of staff members. Research grants must be used in accordance with the terms and conditions of the funding organisation.



- 22.6. If any proposed activity (whether supported financially or not) impedes achievement of RSL goals, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor may recommend to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) that the staff member not undertake the activity.

### **23. Employment on RSL**

- 23.1. Staff members on RSL may not, without prior permission, continue to hold another appointment or accept a financial grant or salaried post whether at a university or elsewhere, or engage in private consulting for fees, during the period of their leave.
- 23.2. Applications will not be approved for RSL to be spent entirely in a (non-research) temporary appointment, but a programme in which not more than half the period of leave will be spent in appropriate salaried employment may be approved. Formal teaching commitments should not exceed 60 hours in a year.
- 23.3. Where staff members applying for RSL have a right of professional practice, leave is granted on condition that they will not, during the period of leave, devote more time to professional practice than they would have been entitled to do if they were not on leave.

### **24. Conditions of RSL – repayment of RSL Financial Support**

- 24.1. RSL is granted to staff members on the following conditions that:
- 24.1.1. they will return to the service of the University at the conclusion of the leave;
  - 24.1.2. in the event of resignation during leave, failure to return to duties following leave or resignation within six months of return from leave, staff members shall be liable to repay to the University all RSL Financial Support received for that period of leave;
  - 24.1.3. in the event of resignation with effect after six months but within twelve months of the proper date of return from RSL, staff members shall be liable to pay a proportion of the RSL Financial Support received for that period of leave on a pro rata basis;

## 25. Annual Leave

- 25.1. For periods of RSL of three months or more, Annual Leave entitlements form part of RSL and are not an additional allocation over and above the RSL days. As an example, for a staff member using 365 days of accumulated RSL, this leave would be expected to include that period's accrual of 25 days (or 27 days for some clinical staff members) of Annual Leave.
- 25.2. Staff members taking RSL of less than three months are not required to take Annual Leave during their period of study leave. However, staff members wishing to take Annual Leave during a period of Research and Study Leave of less than three months will apply for it in the normal way via the staff web kiosk. Any Annual Leave taken will not be considered to be part of the RSL. Applicants should make it clear in their application that they intend to take Annual Leave to avoid it being included as part of their RSL.
- 25.3. Staff members taking RSL of 91 days or more are not required to apply separately for Annual Leave. The Human Resources Division will deduct the appropriate amount of Annual Leave days via the Staff Web Kiosk on advice from Divisional Offices, once final approval is given. The table below calculates the Annual Leave accruing during periods of RSL and which must be taken within those periods.

Annual Leave entitlement of 25 days	
Consecutive Days of RSL	Annual Leave to be incorporated into RSL
91-100	6
101-114	7
115-128	8
129-142	9
143-156	10
157-170	11
171-184	12
185-198	13
199-212	14
213-226	15
227-240	16
241-254	17
255-268	18
269-282	19
283-296	20
297-310	21
311-324	22
325-338	23
339-352	24
365	25

Annual Leave entitlement of 27 days	
Consecutive Days of RSL	Annual Leave to be incorporated into RSL
91-94	6.5
95-107	7
108-120	8
121-134	9
135-148	10
149-161	11
162-175	12
176-188	13
189-202	14
203-215	15
216-229	16
230-242	17
243-256	18
257-269	19
270-283	20
284-296	21
297-310	22
311-323	23
324-337	24
338-350	25
351-364	26
365	27

- 25.4. Requirements regarding authority to carry over Annual Leave from one leave year to the next will continue as normal.

## **26. University travel policy**

- 26.1. Staff members undertaking RSL are encouraged to make themselves familiar with the University travel policy found at:  
<http://www.otago.ac.nz/financialservices/Policymanual/21Travel.html>
- 26.2. Please note that Section 4.2 of the Travel Policy states that where the facilities are available, international air travel shall be booked using the University's mandatory travel agents.
- 26.3. Please note that it is mandatory for University staff members to arrange travel insurance with the University's Insurance Officer prior to going overseas. For more information go to:  
<http://www.otago.ac.nz/financialservices/Policymanual/16Insurance.html>

## **27. Transfer of funds**

- 27.1. Staff members are responsible for making their own arrangements for the transfer of funds overseas during RSL.

## **28. Accident, sickness and ACC**

- 28.1. Staff members are reminded that once outside New Zealand they lose their immunity to liability in respect of negligence causing personal injury. The University's Travel Insurance provides personal liability cover except when driving a motorised vehicle, aircraft or boat. Staff members may need to consider their need for supplementary insurance cover which, incidentally, does not affect their entitlement to benefits under the ACC Act.
- 28.2. The Accident Compensation Corporation has supplied a statement on the eligibility of staff members for Accident Compensation cover while on RSL overseas. For more information, check the ACC publication *Getting Help if you've been injured while travelling overseas* which can be found at:  
<http://www.acc.co.nz/publications/index.htm>
- 28.3. Staff members are reminded to record any periods of Sick Leave in the Staff Web Kiosk found at:  
[https://concept.otago.ac.nz/pls/ess/WK8003\\$.startup](https://concept.otago.ac.nz/pls/ess/WK8003$.startup)

## **29. Overseas addresses**

- 29.1. Staff members going on RSL are requested to supply the Department/School with a list of addresses at which they may be reached by mail during the various stages of their leave.

## **30. Re-entry to New Zealand**

- 30.1. All staff members who are not New Zealand citizens must hold permits to enable re-entry to New Zealand after return from RSL. Staff members in this category should apply to their local office of the New Zealand Immigration Service for re-entry permits before departure from New Zealand. Applications should be accompanied by passports which should be valid until a date beyond the time of their proposed return to New Zealand.

## **31. Salary and tax**

- 31.1. Staff members should consult the Payroll Services in the Human Resources Division before going on RSL in case there are any matters affecting the continuation of salary.
- 31.2. It is the staff members' responsibility to clarify, with either the Inland Revenue Department or a tax consultant, all matters relating to their liability for tax on income derived from within New Zealand and from overseas during their absence on RSL, particularly where absence exceeds 365 days.

## **32. Further Information**

- 32.1. For the application form and any current notices, consult the RSL web page: <https://www.otago.ac.nz/humanresources/working-at-otago/leave-and-holidays/research-and-study-leave>.
- 32.2. For further information about eligibility and applying for RSL, contact your Divisional Office.
- 32.3. For further information about this policy document, contact the Promotions and Remuneration team, Human Resources Division, [rem.admin@otago.ac.nz](mailto:rem.admin@otago.ac.nz).