1. OBJECTIVES

The School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning is committed to supporting the professional development of all its staff.

Professional development is designed to increase skills and knowledge, to assist staff to develop their professional abilities and to contribute to the achievement of the School’s and RMIT’s strategic goals. Professional Development enables individual career development as well as facilitating the performance of individual staff members and thereby improving the performance of the School and University as a whole.

2. STAFF DEVELOPMENT & WORKPLANNING

Your professional development begins by becoming familiar with the University’s and School’s planning documents and the directions and goals expressed within them.

- RMIT Strategic Plan
- Portfolio Plan
- School/Dept Plan
- Staff Workplan

The Strategic plan is the document that sets the goals for the University as a whole. Each part of RMIT has plans that guide its activity in light of the Strategic Plan and these documents are important because they help individuals work out priorities for staff development.

Your workplan is the driver of your annual development planning process.

The workplan is negotiated between the staff member and their supervisor and has two main sections:
- a) staff objectives and targets for the year;
- b) staff job-related development needs.

After taking into account the goals of your work area and personal goals, you can match your current skills and knowledge with the requirements of your role. This can be a formal or informal process. Having identified any new skills and knowledge required, you and your supervisor will agree on your staff development areas for the year ahead and discuss ideas for a 3 year period.

It’s important to research possible professional development activities in order to make an informed decision about the most suitable activities for you.
3. PROCESS

3.1 The School Manager will have the responsibility for receiving, co-ordinating and processing of applications for professional development from all eligible staff within the School. Applications for Staff Development funding may be submitted at any time during the year up to November 15, 2009.

3.2 The School Manager in conjunction with a small reference group of two nominated people one representing academic staff and one representing administrative staff will receive and assess applications from all eligible staff. In 2009 this will be: Director of L&T: Assoc. Prof. Julian Bondy and Manager, Academic Services: TBA.

3.3 All staff making an application will need to:
(a) consult the relevant Policy guidelines;
(b) discuss the activity or activities for which they seek support with the relevant workplace supervisor and get their approval (applications for staff development must be signed by your workplace supervisor); and
(c) submit their application for Staff Development support on the appropriate form to the School's Planning & Resources Manager. That form will clearly specify the kinds of approvals, signatures and documentation needed for an eligible application proceeding to approval by the School.

3.4 Staff Development funding is limited to the amount allocated to via the budget process - for 2009 this is set at $47,000. (HOS has agreed to review this limit if required in light of recent changes to the Research Committee funding guidelines.)

4. ELIGIBILITY

4.1 Staff development support is available to:
- full-time or part time continuing academic staff, research staff and administrative staff;
- full-time or part time contract academic, research and administrative staff who have worked in excess of 12 months with the School and who are on a 12 month or longer contract.

4.2 Applications for the collective professional developmental needs of sessional staff may be considered under this process but this will require the review and advice of the respective Program Directors and/or Administration Managers. Individual sessional staff applications will not be considered as part of this policy/process but may be considered by and funded by the local area.

5. STAFF DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The forms of staff development activity for which School support may be granted include:

5.1 All forms of study and training related to work skills maintenance and improvement. Application may be made for costs of tuition and for part-time release from teaching or administrative duties.

5.2 Postgraduate qualifications. Application may be made for costs of tuition/enrolment and for part-time release from teaching or administrative duties;

5.3 Work experience related to work skills maintenance and improvement. Application may be made for costs of part-time release from teaching or administrative duties.

5.4 Attendance at conferences/seminars/workshops to upgrade skills and/or keep abreast of developments in fields related to teaching and administrative duties. Applicants may not apply for funding for the same activity/event from both the Research Committee and Staff Development fund. (applications may be made for travel and registration costs but not for per diem expenses);

5.5 In addition to funding assistance administrative staff may also apply for a maximum of 3 study days per semester to support their approved studies;
5.6 Other activities approved in the staff development section of staff three-year work plans.

6. FUNDING SUPPORT

6.1 Subject to normal budgetary policy and constraints applicants can apply for a maximum of $2,500.00 per annum.

6.2 Funding support must be expended on those activities and only those activities for which approval was sought and approved.

6.3 There is no implied guarantee that all applications will receive support or that all applicants will receive the maximum support.

6.4 Appropriate financial and other relevant documentation in the form eg., of tax invoices [etc] must be supplied when requested by the School or University.

6.5 All financial support applied for and approved must be expended within the calendar year in which the application was initiated. Professional development funds do not carry over from year to year and must be utilised in the year they are approved.

6.6 Financial support that can not be expended within the calendar year may be reallocated to other applicants.

6.7 Under no circumstances will applications be considered for activities which have not received prior support or approval.

6.8 Applications are considered on a year by year basis. As such there is no implied guarantee that funding granted in one calendar year will automatically be granted in subsequent years for the same or similar activity.

7. CRITERIA FOR SUPPORT

Criteria for approval of applications will include:

7.1 The applicant will offer a clear specification of the support needed and the rationale for the program for which support is requested;

7.2 The applicant will offer evidence that the project has been approved as part of the staff member’s three-year work plan;

7.3 The applicant will offer clear identification of the value of the proposed program in light of professional duties and career development;

7.4 The applicant will offer a clear explanation of the expected outcome in terms of professional responsibilities in the School of Global Studies, Social Science and Planning and/or in terms of career development;

7.5 The applicant will supply an account of previous support and evidence of outcomes for the period prior to 2009. The failure to offer such account will make the applicant ineligible to apply.
8. ACCOUNTABILITY

8.1 All recipients of staff development support in 2009 must, within four weeks of completion of the program/event/etc provide a report on their funded activities to their workplan supervisor and School Manager. The report should detail outcomes and/or progress towards specified outcomes and be provided in written form so this can be placed on file. The actual format of this report is subject to discussion & agreement between the staff member and their supervisor.

9. MONITORING

9.1 The School Manager will provide quarterly reports to the Learning & Teaching Committee outlining the financial status of the Staff Development funding and a summary of the applications supported.

9.2 The Head of School, Director of Learning & Teaching and School Manager will be responsible for instituting consultative procedures for reviewing its policies and processes to ensure the effectiveness of its operation in support of staff development programs.

9.3 The Head of School, Director of Learning & Teaching and School Manager will review the operations of this policy in October 2009 and make appropriate changes in time for the start of 2010.