RMIT RESEARCH LEAVE AWARDS - GUIDELINES

This document is a supplement to the RMIT Professional Development Policy. Professional development is a purposeful learning activity designed to enhance Professional members’ or team’s knowledge, skills and attitudes relevant to their current work or to undertake a new role. Professional development is an umbrella term which relates to changes in job demands, levels of capability, organisational change and career progression. Professional development options include Professional exchanges, industrial release, international activities, conferences, seminars, formal study, action learning and special projects, School/group specific training, secondments, job rotation, mentoring, on the job coaching and professional memberships.

To provide selected RMIT leading researchers with access to supplementary funding to support a research intensive program of activities at a location external to RMIT. The awards aim to enable researchers to be temporarily freed from their teaching and administrative responsibilities, for a consolidated period of time, during which they will engage in activities directly relevant to their research careers and to RMIT’s research objectives. Activities may include:

- undertaking research in libraries, universities and other research relevant institutions;
- visiting relevant industrial or professional agencies or establishments;
- visits to overseas research-intensive universities and establishments;
- secondments to other universities or industry, professional or government agencies and establishments.

*Note 1: activities will need to be framed within a ‘research project context’ with identified research deliverables. Such deliverables could include the completion of specific research outcomes such as a peer reviewed ‘publication’, exhibition and the like.

Terms of the Award

Within the general terms of the RMIT ‘Supporting Professional Development Policy’ these RMIT Research Leave Awards will provide:

- staff replacement costs – up to $30,000 paid to the School to cover the applicant’s absence;
- up to 6 months paid leave (Research Leave) – to be taken within one RMIT semester;
- travel support up to a value of $3,000 (as required/described via a research plan);
- research project support up to a value of $2,000 (as required/described via a research plan).

Eligibility

Academic staff are eligible to apply for an Award if they:

- are in a continuing position at RMIT;
- have been employed by RMIT for at least 3 years;
- have been research active over the previous 3 years;
- present a well structured case for research leave;
- have not received such an Award during the three calendar years prior to their current application.

Application Process

Applicants are to submit a research proposal, of no more than 4 pages, which would include:

- profile of research activities, experience & strengths;
- statement regarding the role the proposed leave would play in advancing the applicant’s research achievements or productivity as well as relevance to RMIT’s research objectives;
- justification for period of leave requested;
- the measurable research outcomes that are expected from the proposed leave program,
- a description of any supporting funds they have secured/expect to secure from parties external to RMIT,
- a description of the nature of travel and projects support funds sought via the Award, and evidence that the proposed ‘receiving institution’ is in agreement with the program proposed.
- and attach a current CV including a list of publications* for last 5 years.
* Note 2 – For the purposes of these Awards RMIT will use the emerging Excellence in Research for Australia guidelines in assessing the broader definitions of ‘research publications’ as they will apply across the wide range of RMIT research disciplines.

Applicants are expected to discuss their applications for a ‘Research Leave Award’ with their Head of School. The planned activities should be consistent with the research aspirations set out in their work plans. Applications will require the endorsement of the Head of School.

Applications will be sought normally during August, using the template provided on the research funding web page.

The PVC(R&I) will convene a small panel (comprising appropriate lead RMIT researchers) to assess and rank all applications received, with successful applicants to be informed within 6 weeks of the closing date. Each Award should be expended within the following 12 months.

**Selection Criteria**

- applicant’s record of research achievement over the last 3 years;
- merit of the proposed activities and the standing of the institutions, establishments or teams to be visited;
- the likelihood that the Research Leave Award will enable the applicant to significantly advance his/her research productivity.

**Funding Arrangements**

- the RMIT Research Investment Fund will underwrite 50% of the paid leave (up to a maximum of $30,000) and the travel and research project support components up to a value of $5,000;
- the applicant host School will underwrite the remainder of the paid leave component;
- the administration of financial support will be approved by the PVC(R&I) and relevant Head of School, as appropriate for each Award.

**Submission of Application**

The application should be submitted to the Head of School in the first instance for recommendation and signature.

The application and post-award processes will be administered by the Research Support team of the R&I Portfolio.

Enquiries can be directed to Margaret Thorpe ext 57405, or email to margaret.thorpe@rmit.edu.au

Applications (typed) should be sent as one signed original plus 3 single-sided copies to:

Margaret Thorpe  
Research Support Unit  
Level 2, Building 215  
Bundoora West Campus

by no later than 17 August 2009.

**Reporting**

Within two months of returning to RMIT each Awardee will submit a written report describing:

- the activities undertaken;
- achievement or otherwise of the outcomes specified in the initial application;
- details of how the research learnings will be disseminated to colleagues (e.g. via a Research Seminar).

This should be submitted to the Head of School for comment, and subsequently transmitted to the College Research Dean and the PVC(R&I).

*The application form and report form are available on the RMIT Research web site:*
  http://www.rmit.edu.au/research/sources