

Business Faculty in Industry Program

Guidelines for 2008 Projects

1. Introduction

The Business/Higher Education Round Table's January 2002 position paper *Greater Involvement and Interaction between Industry and Higher Education*, emphasises the importance, in a knowledge-based economy, of universities forming mutually beneficial and lasting relationships with industry. "To forge ahead ... universities will need to leave the campus and engage with industry." The paper argues that university staff need to see collaboration with others as "central to all that they do."

The development of enhanced links and collaboration with industry is vital for the future success of the RMIT Business Portfolio. This needs to be addressed in a variety of ways. One way is to encourage staff to work directly in industry. The Business Faculty in Industry Program (BFIP) will enable staff to work with an industry partner on a research or other project of mutual benefit to the partner organisation, the staff member and the Business Portfolio.

2. Purpose of the Program

The broad objective of the program is to assist the RMIT Business Portfolio to become more innovative and responsive by developing enhanced links with industry and by enabling staff to have direct industry exposure and experience.

It is anticipated that increased links and joint ventures with industry will result in a range of benefits for the teaching, research and management functions of RMIT Business. It is expected that the program will be an important vehicle for enhancing staff skills and experience.

3. Program Funding Assistance

The BFIP will provide maximum funding of \$10,000 per industry placement. This will be a contribution towards the costs associated with enabling a staff member to be released from their normal responsibilities for up to 14 weeks full time or equivalent. The funds will be paid to the staff member's School or other work area, which will in turn be expected to contribute any additional costs beyond the approved amount. BFIP funding will be pro rata depending on the length of the staff member's planned time away from their normal responsibilities, and whether they are undertaking the placements on a full or part-time basis. Placements must be for a minimum of four weeks full time or equivalent (ie at least 20 working days). It is expected that staff will be located primarily in the industry partner's organisation for the duration of the placement. Staff members will continue to be paid their normal salary by RMIT while undertaking the placement.

4. Eligibility and Selection Criteria

The program is open to staff of RMIT Business. Applications will be assessed by a selection panel, chaired by the PVC Business or their nominee. A range of selection criteria will be used including (not in order of priority):

- the industry partner and its current and potential links and synergies with the School/work group;
- the type of research or other joint project to be undertaken and its potential to contribute towards the strategic priorities of the School/work group;
- the staff member's proposed strategies for making the results or learnings from their placement available to staff or students of the School/Portfolio;
- the potential of the project to contribute towards the skills development of the staff member;
- the extent to which the project is supported by the partner organisation and the applicant's School or Portfolio work area;
- the likelihood of the project leading to more joint activities between the Portfolio and the partner organisation (eg ARC Linkage Grant applications, tenders, guest lectureships, student mentoring, sponsorships etc).

5. Types of Industry Organisations

For the purposes of the program, "industry" is defined broadly to include large companies, small to medium enterprises, government and semi-government agencies and not-for-profit organisations.

6. Secondment Agreement Document

Under the RMIT Secondment of Staff policy, the BFIP Secondment Agreement document must be completed and signed by the applicant and the industry partner organisation prior to the commencement of the project. A copy of the document may be obtained from Rosemary O'Connor. See section 11 for contact details.

7. Ethics Approval for Research Proposals

Please note that Ethics Committee approval will be required for research projects which involve human subjects.

8. Application Process and Closing Date

Interested staff are strongly encouraged to have a preliminary discussion with Rosemary O'Connor, Innovation Manager (see section 10 below for contact details) prior developing and submitting their Expression of Interest.

Expressions of Interest for 2008 industry placements must use the BFIP Application Form obtainable from Rosemary O'Connor, Innovation Manager. The closing date is **Friday 19 October, at 4.00 pm**. Note that your Head of School or work unit manager will need to support your application before it can be approved.

9. Expectations of Participating Staff

All staff participating in the program will be expected to ensure that the benefits of their industry placements are made available as widely as possible to their School/work area or the Portfolio. The minimum requirement is to produce a written report within four weeks of completing the industry placement. Staff who have undertaken research placements will be asked to hold a seminar on their research findings and outcomes, and to give details of any planned future collaborations, grant applications etc.

10. Program Management and Enquiries

The program is being managed by the Innovation Unit. Enquiries concerning the BFIP should be directed to Rosemary O'Connor, Innovation Manager ext 51383 (email: rosemary.o'connor@rmit.edu.au).

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