Academic Pursuit Procedure

GOVERNING POLICY

Academic Pursuit Project Policy (MPF XXXX)

SCOPE

This procedure supports the Academic Pursuit Project Policy (MPF XXX) and sets out the operational requirements for the creation, management and oversight of Academic Pursuit Projects.

PROCEDURE

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Part 1 - Creation of an Academic Pursuit Project

1.1 Academic Pursuit Projects will be created as project codes in the Workday, Foundation Data Model.

1.2 Eligibility for an Academic Pursuit Project is set out in section 4 of the Policy.

1.3 An eligible individual may hold only one Academic Pursuit Project at any given time.

1.4 Notwithstanding section 2.3, an eligible individual may temporarily act as custodian of another Academic Pursuit Project where required to support an arrangement approved under clause 4.4 of the Policy. Any such custodianship arrangement must be temporary and solely for the purpose of maintaining appropriate management and continuity during the transition period.

1.5 The standard naming convention for an Academic Pursuit Project within Workday is **<APP_<first name> <last name>**. For example, APP_Maya Singh. For display purposes, Workday presents the project identifier together with the project name and, therefore, Academic Pursuit Projects will appear as <Project ID> APP_<first name> <last name> For example, PRJ 000123 APP_Maya Singh.

Part 2 - Appropriate use of Academic Pursuit Project funds

2.1 Funds held in Academic Pursuit Projects **remain the property of the University** and are not transferable outside of the University. The account holder is the custodian of the funds and is financially responsible for their appropriate management and use.

2.2 Income and Expenditure recorded within an Academic Pursuit Project must comply with relevant University policies and procedures, including the Financial Code of Conduct Policy (MPF 1338), Delegations Policy (MPF1301), Procurement Policy (MPF1087), Contracts Policy (MPF1247), and relevant supporting processes.

2.3 The Academic Pursuit Project Policy defines what constitutes allowable and non-allowable income and expenditure.

2.4 The Academic Pursuit Project Policy does not permit expenditure on continuing staff appointments, where such appointments create ongoing employment obligations. The following framework provides guidance on the relative risk associated with different staffing arrangements:

- **Low risk (Generally Acceptable):**
    - Engagement of casual staff and short fixed-term appointments (typically 12 months or less)
    - Roles must be:
        - Task-specific;
        - Clearly defined in scope; and
        - Time-limited.
- **Medium risk (Conditional Use):**
    - Longer fixed-term appointments, which may create expectations of ongoing employment beyond the funded activity.
    - Short-term 'bridge funding' for continuing appointments, including continuing research contingent appointments.
    - These arrangements:
        - Carry a higher risk of future employment expectations;
        - Must be for a **clearly defined, limited period**; and
        - Require written approval by the Head of Department (or equivalent).
- **High risk use (Not Permitted):**
    - Continuing appointments or rolling short-term contracts that create ongoing employment obligations.
    - Any arrangement that:
        - Extends beyond a defined period; and/or
        - Implies ongoing employment beyond available funding is not permitted under the policy.

Part 3 - Governance, oversight and financial management

3.1 Academic Pursuit Projects must be actively managed to support the appropriate and timely use of funds and to avoid unmanaged financial risk.

3.2 A documented plan must be in place and agreed between the account holder and Head of Department (or equivalent) for any Academic Pursuit Project that:

a) is in deficit;
b) holds a materially large, accumulated balance; or
c) has been inactive for 12 months or more.

The documented plan is intended to support **effective planning, forecasting, and transparency** in the management of project funds. It is **not intended to restrict appropriate or necessary expenditure** aligned with the purpose of the funding.

The intent of this requirement is to maintain appropriate **flexibility**, while ensuring there is a **credible, well-considered, and transparent approach** to the use of funds.

3.3 Financial management (for those accounts in deficit) or spend plans must set out a clear approach for the use or remediation of funds, including planned actions, expected timing of expenditure and alignment to University related academic activities.

3.4 For the purpose of this Procedure, a materially large balance is an Academic Pursuit Project balance exceeding **$250 000**. This threshold applies unless otherwise revised through the annual budget process or associated financial guidance.

3.5 Whilst the account holder is accountable for remediating a deficit balance, where the deficit cannot reasonably be resolved through future income within an agreed timeframe (generally no longer than 6 months), it must be resolved using departmental funds within the department in which the Academic Pursuit Project is held.

Part 4 - Transition of employment and ongoing access to funds

4.1 Any surplus funds remaining when access to an Academic Pursuit Project ceases must be:

a) transferred to the department in which the Academic Pursuit Project is held; or

b) transferred to a nominated University trust or gift account.

4.2 Deficits remaining when access ceases must be resolved using departmental funds within the department in which the Academic Pursuit Project is held.

4.3 Where an employee transitions to honorary status, continued access arrangements may be approved by the Dean (or an appropriate delegate) subject to the following requirements:

a) **Document Spend Plan**

A realistic and achievable spend plan must be established and maintained to ensure responsible use of funds during the transition period. Use of funds must be limited to defined categories, including existing research commitments and supervision of graduate researchers.

b) **Oversight and Accountability during transition**

A continuing staff member must hold formal accountability for the Academic Pursuit Project and approve transactions in accordance with the University's financial delegation framework.

c) **Time -limited access arrangements**

Continued access will be limited to a maximum period of three years to enable the active management and close-out of associated financial and project activities. The approved duration of access should be aligned with active grant funding or supervision responsibilities and subject to periodic review. Accounts must be closed or transferred appropriately once the approved activities conclude.

d) **Restriction on Transfers**

Funds must not be transferred to another Academic Pursuit Project.

Part 5 - Academic Pursuit Project lifecycle management

5.1 Academic Pursuit Projects in Workday will be created, managed and closed in line with the **Guidance for the Workday Foundation Data Model** and applicable **Foundation Data Model** governance processes.

5.2 An Academic Pursuit Project will generally be created as part of the onboarding process for an eligible individual commencing employment at the University.

5.3 Existing Academic Pursuit Projects must not be renamed or reassigned to another Academic except where a temporary custodianship arrangement is approved in accordance with clause 4.5 of the Academic Pursuit Policy.

5.4 Academic Pursuit Projects must be closed when the Account holder no longer meets the eligibility criteria under clause 4 of the Academic Pursuit Policy or no longer has authorisation to transact business on behalf of the University.

5.5 Finance will conduct periodic reviews, and at a minimum annually, to ensure that Academic Pursuit Projects associated with Academics who no longer meet the eligibility requirements are identified and closed in a timely manner.

Part 6 - Roles and responsibilities

Role/Decision/Action	***Responsibility***	***Conditions and limitations***
Academic Pursuit Project account holder	Account holders must: a) Ensure all activity within an Academic Pursuit Project complies with relevant University policies and procedures. b) Understand and appropriately apply the Academic Pursuit Project Policy and Procedure. c) Ensure sufficient funds are available *before* committing to or incurring any expenditure, including entering into financial commitments. d) Regularly monitor project balances and spend to avoid deficits, large accumulated balances, and extended periods of inactivity. e) Provide information or updates relating to Academic Pursuit Project activity where requested by the Head of Department (or equivalent). f) Ensure agreed financial management or spend plans are established where an account has a large accumulated balance, deficit or extended period of inactivity. g) Engage with Finance where further guidance or clarification is required on University policies and procedures.	Academic Pursuit Project holders <u>should not</u>: a) Incur expenditure that contravenes University policies or that is not in line with furthering their research, teaching or engagement activities. b) Make changes to the scope, purpose, or use of funds. Any recommendations for change must be referred to the Academic Pursuit Project policy owner.

Head of Department (or equivalent)	Heads of Department (or equivalent) must: a) Understand the Academic Pursuit Project policy and procedure, and how they apply in practice. b) Partner with finance to review and understand key metrics regularly — including large account balances, inactive accounts, and any accounts in deficit. c) Ensure issues are identified and appropriately addressed, including: i. Confirming that spend or closure plans (e.g. transition to retirement plans) are in place for significant or inactive accounts. ii. Escalating concerns about misuse to the Dean. iii. Referring any ambiguous or unclear matters to Finance for guidance.	Heads of Departments (or equivalents) should not: a) Carry out day-to-day financial transactions or detailed account management, this is the responsibility of the account holder under the Vice-Chancellor's delegations. b) Approve exceptions to the Academic Pursuit Project Policy. c) Create or amend rules relating to Academic Pursuit Projects. d) Oversee their own Academic Pursuit Project accounts, or any other accounts where a conflict of interest exists.
Finance staff	Finance staff must: a) Understand the Academic Pursuit Project policy and procedure, and how they apply in practice. b) Provide guidance and support to Account holders and Heads of Department (or equivalent) regarding the application of the policy and procedure. c) Provide insights and analysis at a total faculty, school or department level to support understanding of activity and associated risks, including: i. Highlighting risks and opportunities, such as unusually large balances, frequent negative positions, or underutilised accounts. ii. Prompting discussion with financially responsible leaders where management actions or plans may be required and identifying any risks or concerns. d) Support effective governance and decision-making by providing advice, guidance and escalation of potential issues, recognising that accountability for compliance and decision-making remains with the relevant Academic and faculty or chancellery leaders.	Finance staff should not: a) Approve or reject Academic Pursuit Project spend. This is the responsibility of the account holder under the Vice-Chancellor's delegations. b) Provide on-demand reporting or analysis at an individual Academic Pursuit Project level. Real-time reporting is available through Workday and Finance will support users to access and interpret these reports. c) Create or determine rules relating to Academic Pursuit Project activity. Avoid interpreting "grey areas" in the absence of policy – instead, escalate for clarification to the Academic Pursuit Project policy owner.

	e) Support policy and framework maintenance by: i. Identifying and escalating potential improvements or ambiguities in policy or procedure. ii. Raising issues impacting the Foundation Data Model (FDM) or requiring governance review. iii. Liaising with relevant teams (e.g. Research Finance) in managing complex scenarios or arrangements. iv. Close accounts for Academic Pursuit Project holders upon cessation of employment. f) Enable visibility and forward planning by ensuring Academic Pursuit Project activity is captured in budgets, forecasts, and financial plans. g) Support the financial administration by facilitating: i. account creation and closure in line with policy. ii. funds transfers (internal or external) and corrections, where material.	

Part 7 - Transition and implementation arrangements

To support implementation of the Academic Pursuit Project Policy and Procedure, the following transitional arrangements apply from the policy implementation date.

7.1 **Professional Staff (Academic Pursuit Project Ownership)**
Professional staff who currently hold Academic Pursuit Projects must transition these arrangements.

Within three months from the policy implementation date, Academic Pursuit Projects held by Professional staff must be reviewed and either:

a) Reassigned to an eligible Academic; or

b) closed.

7.2 **Honorary Appointees (Eligibility)**
Honorary appointees who currently have access to Academic Pursuit Project funds, all funding access must be fully closed out within six months of the policy implementation date.

An exception applies to honorary appointees who were employees of the University, within the last two years. Any ongoing access arrangement for these individuals:

a) requires written approval by the Dean (or delegate); and
b) must comply with the transition requirements specified in Part 4 of this Procedure.

7.3 **Indirect Costs of Research**
From the policy implementation date, any indirect costs of research must be recorded in the appropriate Faculty Operating Budget. Amounts recorded prior to the policy implementation date do not require retrospective adjustment.

7.4 **Severance Payments**

Academic Pursuit Projects must not be used to fund severance, termination or separation payments.

Any existing or planned severance arrangements currently involving Academic Pursuit Projects must be identified and transitioned within twelve months of the policy implementation date. Alternative funding mechanisms will be established to manage such payments going forward.

7.5 **Internal Income**

Internal income planned to be recorded in an Academic Pursuit Project (including both new and existing arrangements that are ongoing) must be reviewed and transitioned within six months of the policy implementation date.

Faculties and Chancellery portfolios must identify and implement appropriate alternative coding arrangements, in line with guidance provided by the Chief Financial Officer Group.

Internal funding recorded in an Academic Pursuit Projects prior to the policy implementation date does not require retrospective transfer where there are no ongoing or future internal funding transfers.

7.6 **Current accumulated balances**

The University recognises that some Academic Pursuit Projects have accumulated balances that pre-date the implementation of this Policy.

Consistent with the Policy, accumulated balances should ordinarily be expended within two to three years.

However, given the current financial environment and the need to manage financial sustainability across the University, for areas with significant balances, a longer spend-down period of three to five years will be required.

Faculties and Chancellery portfolios will be required to develop and manage spend-down plans for existing balances, reflecting both local priorities and the University's overall financial position. Spend-down arrangements will be considered at the Faculty or Chancellery portfolio level rather than solely at the individual project level.

7.7 **Deficit balances**

Academic Pursuit Projects operating in deficit at the policy implementation date must be reviewed and an agreed remediation plan established.

Deficit balances should ordinarily be resolved within six months of the policy implementation date. Where this is not practicable, an alternative remediation timeframe must be approved by the Dean (or delegate).

7.8 **Research income coded to Academic Pursuit Projects**

From the date of Policy implementation, any research income must be managed through the appropriate University project accounts and must not be coded to an Academic Pursuit Project, unless identified as allowable income in section 4.11 of the Policy.

7.9 **Implementation priorities**

The Chief Financial Officer Group will determine implementation priorities and sequencing having regard to risk, materiality and operational requirements. Initial priorities include:

a) resolution of deficit balances;

b) review of Academic Pursuit Projects with significant accumulated balances;

c) review of Academic Pursuit Projects held by Professional Staff;

d) review of Academic Pursuit Projects held by Honorary Appointees and other individuals who no longer meet eligibility requirements;

e) closure of Academic Pursuit Projects associated with former employees; and

f) application of standard naming conventions.

7.10 **Implementation Period**

Data cleansing and implementation activities may continue for up to twelve months following the policy implementation date.

Part 8 - Tools and guidance

8.1 **Managing Academic Pursuit Projects**

The Project Essentials dashboard available to help Account holders easily monitor the cash position of their projects, including Academic Pursuit Projects. Access real-time insights on available funds, expenditure, salaries by worker, commitments, and quickly drill down into source data.

A step-by-step instructional guide has also been included to guide you through setting your dashboard parameters.

Useful Links:

Project Essentials-Dashboard

Project Essentials-Demo

User Guide – Project Essentials Dashboard

8.2 **Projects within the Workday Foundation Data Model**

8.2.1 This section provides guidance on the application of the Foundation Data Model (FDM) and clarifies how funds managed by Academics should be structured and managed within Workday.

8.2.2 Within Workday, project codes may be used for both internally and externally funded activity where the relevant project criteria are met. The use of separate project codes supports improved management, transparency and accountability.

8.2.3 The **Guidance for the Workday Foundation Data Model** defines the requirements for establishing a project code.

8.2.4 Where an activity meets the definition of a project, a separate project code must be established within the Foundation Data Model. For reference, this definition includes the following key criteria:

a) **Must have a specified start and end date** - i.e. a defined period in which the work is expected to be completed, and the funds are expected to be spent;

b) **Must have a specific purpose or outcome** - that is an agreed output, objective and/or piece of work which is to be completed using the allocated funding. The arrangement must be agreed with the supervisor and/or area providing the funding and documented in writing; and

c) **An allocated person responsible for the project** - there is at least one person responsible for managing the activities and finances of the project.

8.2.5 Project definitions and criteria apply equally to internally (University) and externally funded projects. They also apply equally to projects of different natures including (but not limited to) research projects, fee-for-service projects, consultancy projects, strategic projects.

8.2.6 In Workday, each project code will be assigned to the relevant project holder (custodian and financially responsible person) – for example, the Chief Investigator(s) will be owner(s) of Research projects. This will enable reporting across the portfolio of projects for individual owners.

8.3 **Key contacts and escalation points**

8.3.1 Research Finance is the primary point of contact for day-to-day administration of Academic Pursuit Projects, providing guidance and support to project holders and responding to queries.

8.3.2 The Finance Business Partnering team is responsible for supporting budgeting and forecast planning in consultation with Research Finance. The team will assist in assessing and escalating financial risks and issues to senior management (for example, the Dean), as appropriate.

Part 9 - Definitions

9.1 **Academic Pursuit Project** means a project created within the Workday Foundation Data Model for the management of untied funds in accordance with the Academic Pursuit Project Policy.

9.2 **Account holder** means an eligible Academic employee who holds an Academic Pursuit Project. The account holder is the custodian of the funds and is financially responsible for ensuring their appropriate use.

9.3 **Foundation Data Model (FDM)** means the University's enterprise financial data structure within Workday used to classify, record, manage and report financial and operational information.

9.4 **Head of Department (or equivalent)** for the purpose of this policy, includes roles such as Head of School, Head of Department or any other role with equivalent financial accountability for the relevant area.

9.5 **Untied Funds** means funding provided to an Academic that is not tied to a specific project, purpose, deliverable, funding agreement or defined outcome. Untied funds remain University funds and may be used to support legitimate University-related activities in accordance with applicable University policies, procedures, and financial management requirements.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Academic Pursuit Policy (MPF XXXX)
- Transferring University Funds to Gifts Guidelines
- Financial Code of Conduct Policy (MPF 1338)
- Delegations Policy (MPF1301)
- Procurement Policy (MPF1087)

- Contracts Policy (MPF1247)

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

Chief Financial Officer

IMPLEMENTATION OFFICER

Deputy Chief Financial Officer

REVIEW

This procedure is due to be reviewed by 1 March 2026.

VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved By	Approval Date	Effective Date	Sections Modified
1	Chief Financial Officer			