

FNU CONFERENCE POLICY

Prepared by: OPVCR

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1.0 Purpose

This policy applies to all academic staff and Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students at Fiji National University to encourage and assist them to present academic papers at high standard academic conferences.

Academics and HDR candidates are encouraged to attend academic conferences to:

- a. present a paper in front of peers and experts working in the same or similar fields of study to gain positive feedback and constructive criticism about their research.
- b. to convert the conference paper into a journal publication incorporating feedback from peers at the conferences.
- c. networking for future collaboration.
- d. meeting new people with similar research interests.
- e. finding out what is new in their research fields.
- f. promoting Fiji National University in the international arena.

2.0 Organisational Scope

This is a University-wide policy that includes.

- a. College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
- b. College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies.
- c. College of Engineering, Science and Technology.
- d. College of Humanities and Education.
- e. College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences.
- f. All HDR candidates.
- g. All Research Centres and FNU affiliates..

3.0 Definitions

Conference Academic conference that accepts peer-reviewed papers and are acceptable to FNU for conference leave purposes. . Staff members and HDR candidates of FNU are expected to participate and engage in conferences either online or in person, in the national or international arena, and make contributions through presentations, reviews, and publications. To attend a conference in person, staff members shall apply for conference leave.

Conference Papers conference papers refer to peer-reviewed academic papers that have been accepted for presentation and authored by one or more FNU academics.

Field-work Field-work generally refers to research-related field-work that an academic member of FNU is engaged in either at another setting outside of the University, its campuses, and units to carry out research or research-related practical activities. Field-work should contribute to the responsibilities and capacities of those who are engaged in it and is, therefore, expected to have a benefit to the University.

Financial assistance is the amount of money and associated resources that the University is willing to provide to a staff member who obtains leave to present a paper at a conference or undertake field-work.

3.0 Leave to attend conference or field-work

A staff member or HDR candidate is entitled to conference leave subject to proper approvals from the College Deans, Associate Dean Research or higher authorities responsible for approving conference leave. For a staff member, conference leave is usually considered as part of their employment, and for a HDR candidate, a conference leave is usually considered as part of the HDR programme.

Conference leave may be allowed for a maximum of two weeks for anyone conference for both the staff members and HDR candidates. Approved absence for field-work can extend to 10 weeks in any given year.

While an academic is away on conference leave, all arrangements to cover the teaching, including all responsibilities, shall be arranged prior to approval.

4.0 Conference and Fieldwork

All members of staff may apply to attend conferences and undertake field-work within Fiji and overseas, provided such pursuits are in line with the research strategic plan and research priorities of the University. For HDR candidates, all conferences and field-work shall be aligned to their research project.

The purpose of this procedure is to clarify how staff can apply to attend conferences and to undertake field-work. Similar procedures apply to HDR candidates.

This procedure applies to all academic staff and HDR candidates (where applicable) at FNU.

5.0 Arrangements During Conference and Field Work

To attend a conference or to undertake research-related field-work, the staff member is to:

- a. ensure that their work situation is managed in their absence.
- b. ensure that the administrative arrangements for their journey and stay at the field-work site or conference are complete, advise and seek approval in writing from the College Dean and HR as to traveling arrangements and to leave with the university full address of their accommodation and contact while they are away.

6.0 Returning to Normal Duties

Following the leave of absence that has been granted, the staff member will return to their normal duties.

Any undue absences that may exceed the initial approved time (due to networking meetings; university visits; and/or a reason acceptable to the College Dean are to be organised and approved before academic staff or HDR candidate proceeds to travel.

No additional expenditure above the agreed financial assistance levels committed to by the University should be entered into if further leave is granted without prior approval from the supervisor (College Dean).

7.0 Responsibilities

Staff Member

The staff member is responsible for applying to present a paper at a conference or to engage in field-work and for:

- a. providing the necessary details in support of their application;
- b. providing details to the College Dean and OPVCR of any other conference or field-work attendance in the past year;
- c. ensuring that all administrative arrangements are completed, including ensuring that the activities of their work and responsibilities will not be affected as a consequence of their absence;
- d. Seeking financial support from associated parties such as the College, conference organisers, international universities, incentive awards, leftover research funds from external sources, others; and
- e. Providing a presentation of their activities and what they have learned during the conference or field-work to their respective School/College within three months after the conference/field-work.

Professors

Professors have more scope to determine their needs to attend conferences and engage in field-work than less senior staff, but they have a responsibility to ensure that their actions are justifiable and that such absences will not cause any undue operational or decision-making difficulties for their work area.

In the case of overseas conferences and field-work, professors have a responsibility to ensure their applications are considered by Deans of their Colleges.

College Dean

The Dean of College is responsible for:

- a. considering applications to present a peer-reviewed academic paper at a conference or undertake fieldwork for a research project that will have a positive impact on the work unit, staff development needs, potential benefits for research development, and resourcing;
- b. ensuring that the proposed time for leave is consistent with the university policies for such leave;
- c. ensuring staff adhere to the requirements concerning the maximum time for attending the conference;
- d. informing those whose requests for leave or financial assistance are not supported are notified as soon as possible and given reasons for the refusal;
- e. examining whether their decision has implications for an equal employment opportunity or for matters to do with equity;
- f. monitoring the attendance for professors at field-work and conferences; and
- g. ensuring that records of leave to attend conferences and engage in field-work are maintained in writing. These details may be used in assessing future applications.

Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor Research

The OPVCR is responsible for:

- a. ensuring that the College Deans' approval to present a paper at a conference or undertake field-work is attained.
- b. that the applicant has adequate funds accumulated from incentive awards or other sources to cover the costs of the conference.

- c. that Early Career Researchers are supported to present a paper at a conference for two years, prior to accumulating incentive awards for conference and field-work.
- d. ensuring that leave to attend the conference and to engage in field-work is managed in an equitable manner.
- e. advising staff and their College Deans promptly where the applications for field-work or conference leave cannot be supported (these applications will be reviewed with the support of College Deans where applicable).
- f. informing FNU Finance to proceed with payments.

8.0 Conference Funding Details

Applications are open all year round.

The Incentive payments incurred from researchers' patents, research books, journal articles, book chapters, creative works & externally funded projects will remain as a record with OPVCR for a period of two years to be used by academics to fund their conferences and field-work.

Early career researchers are also encouraged to seek funding from their respective Colleges to fund their conferences. . All early career researchers will be funded for conferences in the first two years of their employment at FNU without having to accumulate incentive awards for one international and one national conference per annum. In exceptional cases such as funding new staff will be considered by the College Deans.

9.0 Eligibility

- a. The applicants must be either invited speakers or have their peer-reviewed papers accepted by the conference committee.
- b. The applicants must publish their papers as part of the conference proceedings for the conference attended and convert the paper into a journal paper.

10.0 Application

- a. Complete the *Application for Conference Funding Form*.
- b. HDR students to have their Principle Supervisor complete the *HDR Candidate Supervisor Support Form*.
- c. Attach a copy of the acceptance letter with at least two review reports from the conference.
- d. Endorsement of the application by respective College Dean and Associate Dean Research.

11.0 Approval Agency

FNU Senate

12.0 Revision Log

This table will be used to insert dates of the different versions made on the policy/procedure.

Version	Date of Approval	Comment
1.0	11 December 2019	Approved by FNU Senate
2.0	2 March 2021	Approved by FNU Senate

13.0 Policy Sponsor

Pro Vice Chancellor Research

14.0 Contact Person

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this policy:

Office of the Pro Vice Chancellor Research

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