



ACADEMIC CONFERENCES POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Te Kupenga is a leading provider of Catholic thought leadership, knowledge and faith formation in NZ and is the home of three national agencies: the Catholic Theological College, responsible for providing approved tertiary qualifications; the National Centre for Religious Studies, responsible for supporting Religious Education in Catholic schools; and the Nathaniel Centre for Bioethics, responsible for research and advocacy on bioethical issues. Te Kupenga acknowledges and supports the Church's commitment to tangata whenua and to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

University of Notre Dame Australia (UNDA) policies also apply. Where there is a conflict between this policy and the UNDA policies, the UNDA policies should be followed.

Principles

Te Kupenga supports high quality research and professional development. Staff members are given opportunities to apply to present at academic conferences to promote their research and publication activities. 'Presenting' at a conference could include papers, keynotes, panels, workshops, posters or other scholarly contributions.

All staff can apply to attend academic conferences as part of their professional development and to strengthen the knowledge held within the organisation. Attendance at conferences (as opposed to presenting at a conference) is considered professional development and comes under the Te Kupenga Professional Growth and Goal Setting Policy for budgeting purposes. 'Attendance' refers to participation without a formal contribution to the programme. Conferences connected to higher degree research can be supported where they also contribute to the staff member's role and Te Kupenga's academic profile.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Professional Growth and Goal Setting Policy and the Academic Research and Study Leave Policy, which covers Sabbatical Leave and other significant Research and Study Leave.

Purpose

Attendance at academic conferences is an important part of promoting and implementing the teaching and research goals of Te Kupenga. The purposes are to:

1. Stimulate the research interests and research projects of staff members.
2. Avail of opportunities to offer a research paper at a conference.
3. Encourage and stimulate writing and publication by staff members.
4. Establish and maintain contacts with other scholars in the staff member's field.

Eligibility

To be eligible for conference leave and/or costs, you must be a permanent employee of Te Kupenga, either through a permanent employment contract or as an appointed member of a religious order.

Guidelines

Approval of conference leave is always discretionary.

1. While all applications will be reviewed, consideration will be given to whether the staff member has been selected by the conference organising committee to present a paper at a conference, whether publication is likely, and available budget.

2. The budget for presenting at academic conferences will be approved as per the Budget policy. The Budget for attendance at an academic conference (without presenting) will be considered as part of the professional development budget for Te Kupenga each year and will be approved as per the Budget Policy. The Chief Executive will consult with the Director of Catholic Theological College (or the Director of the National Centre for Religious Studies or the Director of Nathaniel Centre where applicable) as part of this process.

Procedures

1. A possible application to present at an academic conference should first be discussed with the staff member's manager, who will discuss proposed topics and suitability of applications. An application should then be made to the appropriate Director.
2. All applications for conference attendance (whether presenting or not) should first be made to the Director. The Director will review all applications and may consult with the Dean of Level 5 & 6, the Academic Advisory Board, or other experts in the field of study as appropriate. Applications should be made at least six weeks before the conference, and earlier where international travel or significant costs are involved.
3. Applications to attend academic conferences (including online and hybrid conferences) must include:
 - a. How conference attendance will benefit the staff member's professional development and/or Te Kupenga.
 - b. An itemised list of costs applied for (including any travel or accommodation expenses requested). (If invited to present, please include information on any expenses that would be covered by the conference organising committee). Costs that can be considered include registration, travel, accommodation, visa costs, conference-related meals, and other reasonable expenses, subject to prior approval and available budget.
 - c. Dates of leave requested (and whether this is requested as paid or unpaid leave).
 - d. How teaching papers are proposed to be covered, if the period of attendance is during term time.
4. Criteria that could be used in assessing applications may include relevance to the staff member's role in Te Kupenga, alignment with Te Kupenga's strategic priorities, contribution to teaching/research/advocacy, likelihood of publication or other scholarly output, networking value, and equity of access across eligible staff.
5. The Director will have the authority to grant, grant in part, or decline an application. In declining an application, the Director will consider the teaching and operational requirements of the organisation and the perceived value to the organisation of the conference attendance. The Director should consult the Chief Executive when appropriate.
6. All applications will be dependent on available budget. (Please note that budget is limited, and consideration will be given to the distribution of budget for eligible staff).
7. Te Kupenga expects staff to enhance organisational learning as appropriate following attendance at an academic conference. This could include a short-written report, staff presentation, resource list, teaching update or research output.

Review and approval

The Academic Conferences Policy and Procedures are subject to the normal three-year review cycle. The Academic Advisory Board should be consulted as part of the review process, with approval by the Te Kupenga Governance Board.

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