

Casual Academic Hire and Payment project: Update

Sent from: Office of the Vice-Chancellor

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to update you on important developments that have taken place in relation to the Casual Academic Hire and Payment process (CAHP). Casual staff contribute significantly to the University, particularly in supporting the delivery of teaching programs: we need a system and process that is more responsive to their circumstances.

Earlier this year, it became clear that UQ's commitment to improving professional services needed to encompass the recruitment and payment of casual staff. There were two reasons why CAHP became a priority. First, it was identified that staff on casual contracts were not being well served by a payment process that was retrospective (in most Schools) and administratively demanding on them. Second, the consultation undertaken in relation to changes to HR and Finance Service Descriptions revealed the need to automate what was previously a sequence of manual processes that were highly variable across the different organisational units.

This is why I flagged, in my correspondence to you on 7 April, that UQ will develop an enterprise-wide system solution for casual staff recruitment and payment. What I mean by this phrase is the development of a preferred solution that will become operational for all organisational units: a one UQ solution to the challenge of how we improve the way that we hire and pay casual staff.

I delegated oversight of this project to a CAHP steering committee that includes the Directors of Finance, HR, and ITS, with Tim Dunne acting as the Academic Sponsor. The CAHP committee reports to the Enhancing Systems and Services Steering Committee, which I Chair. The real work is being done outside of these formal committees. Tasked with this responsibility is a project team led by Simon Paterson, who has assembled a team that includes both UQ professional staff and external specialists who together will develop an automated solution.

The work of the project team is going very well, not least because of the productive relations they have established with both a 'reference group' and a 'user group' of stakeholders who continue to provide valuable strategic guidance and detailed input. I would like to acknowledge the vital contribution of professional and academic staff involved in these groups; many of them took part in a three-day sprint which succeeded in mapping the many intricate steps that need to be incorporated into the one UQ solution.

An important decision was taken in July to prioritise the payment part of the process, which had been identified as taking up approximately 50% of the current administrative effort. The upside with this decision is that we are confident that automating payment can be developed, piloted, and tested, ahead of implementation for Semester 1 2018. Once the 'payment by schedule' approach has been completed, the other two dimensions of the end-to-end process, namely recruitment and selection/allocation, will be developed and incrementally released through 2018.

Let me spell out what is meant by the phrase 'payment by schedule':

- Schools specify in advance the number of hours and the correct payment rate for casual staff members for the entire Semester (the schedule)
- Thereafter, the Aurion system will automatically pay casual staff members according to the schedule
- Fluctuations in fortnightly pay will reflect the variation in work done in each pay period
- Adjustments can be made to the payment schedule at any point in the cycle (if, for example, the course convenor requires additional tutorial or lab hours)

Apart from updating all staff on this important initiative, the purpose of this message is to give you advanced notice of what needs to happen for this to be a success. Academic staff and their professional support teams are tasked with preparing the payment by schedule; the CAHP project team will provide administrative tools to assist with this activity. The schedule needs to be completed between December and 0-Week. We understand that some changes to the teaching program will occur after this period, requiring modifications to the schedule.

To assist Schools in preparing the schedule, Ryan Stride has been seconded from the professional services team that supports the Institutes; Ryan is a specialist in change and communications. A key aspect of Ryan's role will be to assist Schools in adapting to the newly designed payment by schedule system.

I have asked Tim Dunne, as the academic sponsor of CAHP, to use other available opportunities to socialise the benefits of the new payment process to professional and academic staff across UQ. The team is building a website where colleagues will be able to access more information (such as the project overview, timeframes and frequently asked questions). We will notify staff when this information can be accessed.

We have an opportunity with this CAHP project to make a real difference to the experience of our casual staff. At the same time, we will be meeting the University's goal of delivering process improvement in an area that has long been identified as in need of change. I would like to thank you for your cooperation in the implementation of this initial phase of the CAHP enterprise.

Regards
Peter

Professor Peter Høj
Vice-Chancellor and President
The University of Queensland
Brisbane Qld 4072
T: +61 7 33651300 | F: +61 7 33651266
E: vc@uq.edu.au | www.uq.edu.au

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