



Support of Professional Training Policy

ARC Centre of Excellence

Last Updated: 17 August 2011

Owner: Education & Outreach Coordinator

Overview

The Funding Agreement between the Australian Research Council (ARC) and The University of Sydney – as the Administrating Organisation of the Centre of Excellence for All-sky Astrophysics (CAASTRO) – states Research Training and Professional Education for staff and postgraduate students as Standard Performance Indicators (Schedule D, page 45).

The number of attended professional training courses and the number of Centre attendees at all professional training courses will be reported to and reviewed by the ARC on an annual basis.

CAASTRO is committed to providing these opportunities for staff and students. This policy document disseminates the nature, as well as the administrative and financial extent of support for these activities that can be made available through CAASTRO resources at the six collaborating organisations:

- University of Sydney;
- University of Melbourne;
- Swinburne University;
- The Australian National University;
- Curtin University;
- University of Western Australia.

As Professional Training is not assigned a specific budget within CAASTRO, this program contains a number of low-cost options, for instance participation in local events and utilising video-conferencing equipment. In particular, interstate travel for Professional Training will be minimised by coordinating workshops to coincide with the all-CAASTRO Annual Retreats.

Scope

The CAASTRO Professional Training Policy applies to all members of CAASTRO research and professional staff and to all postgraduate students (Masters and PhD) who are supervised by a CAASTRO Chief Investigator or Associate Investigator.

Honours students and visitors, for instance research students at Affiliates' or Partner Investigators' institutions, will not be eligible for support of Professional Training.

Related Documents

The **CAASTRO Funding Agreement** contains the list of Standard and Centre-specific Performance Indicators under the section Research Training and Professional Education (Schedule D).

The **CAASTRO Application for Funding commencing in 2011** is the ARC application form as submitted in April 2010 with details on the proposed CAASTRO budget (Part D).

Definitions

- Affiliates:** CAASTRO Affiliates are researchers who have a scientific association with CAASTRO, but who are not CIs, PIs, AIs or staff. CAASTRO Affiliates include independently funded researchers (e.g., Super Science Fellows) working alongside CAASTRO researchers at CAASTRO nodes, or researchers who have an involvement in CAASTRO not warranting membership at the CI, PI or AI levels. They will not any CAASTRO research deliverables.
- Associate Investigators:** Associate Investigators (AIs) are skilled scientists who are funded from a Collaborating Organisation or Partner Organisation or other source, and are participating in CAASTRO Research projects with specific deliverables. These associates are responsible for making an intellectual and strategic contribution to CAASTRO in their specific area(s) of expertise. AIs will be based in Australia and are not CIs or PIs for logistical, scientific or political reasons.
- Chief Investigators:** Chief Investigators (CIs) are senior researchers employed by collaborating organisations named in the CAASTRO Collaborators' Agreement. CIs are responsible for making a substantial intellectual and strategic contribution to CAASTRO, and for supervising CAASTRO research staff, CAASTRO professional staff and CAASTRO students.
- Partner Investigators:** Partner Investigators (PIs) are senior researchers employed by partner organisations in the CAASTRO Multi-Institute Agreement. PIs are responsible for making a substantial intellectual and strategic contribution to CAASTRO. Where appropriate, they may also co-supervise CAASTRO students.
- Professional Staff:** CAASTRO Professional Staff are employees of a CAASTRO collaborating organisation who are classified on the professional/general pay scale and are funded from the CAASTRO budget or as an in kind contribution to CAASTRO. Professional staff are responsible for coordinating the administrative, financial, educational and outreach activities within CAASTRO. All CAASTRO Professional Staff must have a CAASTRO CI or the CAASTRO Chief Operating Officer as their line manager.
- Research Staff:** CAASTRO Research Staff are employees of a CAASTRO collaborating organisation who are classified on the academic pay scale and are funded at FTE 0.2 or higher from the CAASTRO budget. Research staff are responsible for producing the research, technical and outreach results associated with the CAASTRO milestones and, where appropriate, may also co-supervise CAASTRO students. All CAASTRO Research Staff must have a CAASTRO CI as their line manager. Early Career Researchers are junior staff members within five years of completion of their PhD.
- Students:** CAASTRO students are postgraduate students (e.g., PhD, or masters by research) whose research projects make a substantial intellectual contribution to CAASTRO. A CAASTRO student can be enrolled at any University or higher degree granting institution, but must have a CAASTRO CI as an official supervisor or co-supervisor.
- Visitors:** CAASTRO Visitors enhance the collaborative work between international researchers and CAASTRO researchers. It allows academics from outside Australia to spend time working in CAASTRO on a research project with a CI and other research staff.

Policy Details

Professional Training is likely in the interest of every individual within CAASTRO: to extend the breadth of knowledge and skills, to increase competitiveness in grant or job applications, and to work towards career goals. The individual needs for Professional Training will therefore differ between members of CAASTRO research and professional staff and students.

CAASTRO will be delivering Professional Training through **five activities or means of support** to best reflect and account for these different needs. Activities specified below are shaped to suit different target groups within the CAASTRO personnel.

Ultimately, however, CAASTRO CIs, supervisors and line managers should be aware that Professional Training constitutes a significant fraction of CAASTRO's **Key Performance Indicators** (Schedule D). As these have to be addressed and reported to the ARC, there is an additional incentive to support Professional Training of staff and students. Due to limited resources, the activities specified below are also shaped to suit the limits of financial and organisational investment involved with offering Professional Training.

1. Cross-node Postdoc Mentoring:

Each Early Career Researcher in CAASTRO will be paired up with a senior research staff mentor who is located at a different CAASTRO node. Regular and frequent communication and interaction, in particular by using the video-conferencing equipment at each CAASTRO node, are desirable.

If visiting CAASTRO researchers at different nodes, the Education & Outreach Coordinator should be informed for reporting purposes.

This activity is one of several components of CAASTRO's commitment to mentoring and will be reported under Key Performance Indicator *"Number of mentoring programs"* (Schedule D, page 46).

2. Training & Development at CAASTRO Nodes:

All six CAASTRO node universities offer Training & Development services to staff and students (note: the node-specific names of the respective departments may differ). All CAASTRO students, research and professional staff members are strongly encouraged to take part in relevant courses. Approval of participation should in all cases be sought with the supervisor or line manager.

The CAASTRO Education & Outreach Coordinator will distribute a selection of relevant courses to each node at the beginning of each month. Students and staff are, however, advised not to feel limited to this selection. The CAASTRO Education & Outreach Coordinator will collate information on participants of Training & Development events.

Leveraging the universities' capacity in providing Professional Training is a major incentive in reporting to the CAASTRO Key Performance Indicators *"Number of attended professional training courses for staff and postgraduate students"* and *"Number of Centre attendees at all professional training courses"* (Schedule D, page 45).

3. External Training & Development Opportunities:

CAASTRO students and staff members may choose to attend relevant Training & Development events outside of their university.

Participants need to seek approval from their supervisors or line managers prior to registration and should report back to the CAASTRO Education & Outreach Coordinator. Travel arrangements are subject to node-specific approval and booking processes.

External opportunities for Professional Training are supported in order to meet the CAASTRO Key Performance Indicators *"Number of attended professional training courses for staff and postgraduate students"* and *"Number of Centre attendees at all professional training courses"* (Schedule D, page 45).

4. CAASTRO Student Workshops & International Mentoring:

Postgraduate students in CAASTRO are encouraged to establish their scientific networks and collaborations early in their academic careers. CAASTRO will facilitate this through two formats of Student Workshops:

- annual 1-day meetings at each CAASTRO node location using the video-conferencing equipment to connect the groups and an external (domestic) mentor in a “Virtual Workshop” with time for student presentations and discussions
- annual 1-day meetings in conjunction with the off-site all-CAASTRO Annual Retreat, with external mentors from CAASTRO’s international collaborating organisations present (i.e. CAASTRO Partner Investigators, Associate Investigators, Affiliates) to share their advice on research and career issues

The Student Workshops are another important component of CAASTRO’s mentoring program. While this activity will be naturally contribute to Key Performance Indicators *“Number of students mentored”* and *“Number of mentoring programs”* (Schedule D, page 46), it will also attract international links and networks, to be reported under *“Number of international visitors and visiting fellows”* (Schedule D, page 46).

By recording and publishing student presentations at the workshops, CAASTRO will be further able to satisfy Key Performance Indicator *“Number of minutes of scientific animation / short video material produced”* (Schedule D, page 54).

5. Professional Training at all-CAASTRO Annual Retreat:

The physical “together time” during off-site Annual Retreats will be extended to accommodate professionally facilitated 1-day training workshops.

Professional facilitators will be hired to present and work on defined key topics with each of the two groupings within CAASTRO, senior research staff (i.e. Executive, Chief Investigators, Associate Investigators) and junior research staff (postgraduate students and postdoctoral fellows).

Topics at Annual Retreats may include:

- Communicating Science to the Public
- Dealing with the Media and Giving Interviews
- Writing Successful Grant Applications
- Project Management (on a higher level suitable for senior research staff)

Professional Training under this activity will immediately constitute a substantial proportion of CAASTRO’s requirements with regard to Key Performance Indicators *“Number of attended professional training courses for staff and postgraduate students”* and *“Number of Centre attendees at all professional training courses”* (Schedule D, page 45) with all staff members and students present for the Annual Retreat.

It is anticipated that professionally facilitated sessions comprise presentation elements that can also be used to collect video footage to further support CAASTRO’s Key Performance Indicator *“Number of minutes of scientific animation / short video material produced”* (Schedule D, page 54).

Budgeting

Costs for Professional Training will be covered by **various components within the CAASTRO budget**, by negotiation with the CAASTRO Chief Operating Officer. The proposed budget sources are specified below for each of the five Professional Training activities.

Mentoring:

Travel associated with meetings between CAASTRO Early Career Researchers and their mentor will be paid through funds under *“Conference and collaborative travel by CAASTRO researchers”* (Part D, page 22).

Training & Development at CAASTRO nodes:

These services are usually **free of charge** and subject to registration via university-internal systems.

External Training & Development opportunities:

A maximum annual allocation of \$250 per person is available for support of external Training & Development events. Eligibility expires after four consecutive years, i.e. maximum amount per person is \$1k total.

If registration fees and / or travel expenses are associated with these events, costs will fall under the following funds within the CAASTRO budget:

- PhD students – *“Support for PhD students”*
\$30k per year per node (Part D, page 22)
for 20 students → \$5k per year max.
- Early Career Researcher – *“Conference and collaborative travel by CAASTRO researchers”*
\$15k per year per ECR (Part D, page 22)
for 20 ECRs → \$5k per year max.
- Professional Staff – maintenance component *“Consumables & minor equipment items”*
\$900 per year per node (Part D, page 21)
for 10 staff → \$2.5k per year max.

CAASTRO Student Workshops:

The annual “Virtual Student Workshops” will incur minor catering costs at the four CAASTRO node locations (Sydney, Canberra, Melbourne, Perth) of <\$1k for 20 people. Honours students and visitors are welcome. This will be charged to the *“Supplies for outreach activities”* fund of \$25k per year (Part D, page 21).

The *“Annual CAASTRO Retreat”* fund within the CAASTRO budget (\$38k per year; Part D, page 22) will be used to cover travel, accommodation and catering costs relating to the all-CAASTRO Annual Retreat. The extension of accommodation and catering to allow for the Student Workshop will amount to approx. \$8k per year for 20 people and can be sourced from the *“Annual Scientific Workshop”* fund (\$38k per year; Part D, page 22).

Mentors will not be offered remuneration for their attendance of Student Workshops; however, associated travel and accommodation expenses will be part of the *“Supplies for outreach activities”* budget (Part D, page 21), with approx. \$4k per year.

Professional Training at all-CAASTRO Annual Retreat:

The remuneration for two professional facilitators of \$10k total per year will be deducted from the *“Supplies for outreach activities”* fund within the CAASTRO budget (\$25k per year; Part D, page 21).