



<b>Version Control and Objective ID</b>	Version No: 1	Objective ID: A6445854
<b>Name of parent policy/administrative directive</b>	<a href="#">Study Assistance Administrative Directive</a>	
<b>Approved by General Manager on</b>	15 September 2020	
<b>Date of Review</b>	15 September 2024	

## 1. Background

N/A

## 2. Purpose

This procedure outlines the process for eligible employees to request assistance with study at recognised institutions included but not limited to TAFE, University, Registered Training Organisations or other recognised professional development organisations. Council is committed to the provision of relevant, ongoing learning and development opportunities for employees within and external to the workplace.

It is noted that many institutions will offer study options on-line or via recorded sessions that may occur outside working hours. Employees are encouraged to consider learning opportunities that do not disrupt their work commitments however where this is not possible, leave arrangements will be available for attending workshops, seminars, tuition, study and exam attendance requirements.

This procedure does not apply to vocational training or training that may be required under an approved Traineeship, Apprenticeship or Cadetship program. It also does not apply to training courses, seminars or conferences identified by the organisation as being a requirement for your role, for these matters refer to the relevant learning and development procedures.

## 3. Regulatory Authority

*Local Government Act 2009*

*Industrial Relations Act 2016 (Qld)*

*Anti-Discrimination Act 1991 (Qld)*

*Work Health and Safety Act 2011*

*Human Rights Act 2019*

## 4. Human Rights Commitment

Council has considered the human rights protected under the *Human Rights Act 2019 (Qld)* (the Act) when approving and/or amending this procedure. When applying this procedure, Council will act and make decisions in a way that is compatible with human rights and give proper consideration to a human right relevant to the decision in accordance with the Act.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

- Employees are responsible for discussing planned study arrangements where Council assistance is being sought with their supervisor.
- General Manager approval is required for all study assistance requests.
- Branch Manager endorsement is required for all study assistance requests.
- Supervisors are to consider how this decision will impact our customers, organisation and team needs.
- People and Culture are responsible for providing guidance on requests, recording and reporting on endorsed study assistance applications.

Contact the People and Culture Branch for more information or to seek advice relating to study assistance categories, reimbursement or eligibility for leave and flexible work arrangements.

## 6. Key Stakeholders

The following will be consulted during the review process:

- People and Culture Branch
- Finance Branch
- General Manager, Corporate Services

## 7. Education and Training Requirements

N/A

## 8. Procedure

This procedure outlines the leave and financial support and assistance that Council provides to employees who study at or online with recognised institutions.

The study undertaken is not always required to lead to a qualification for the employee, which means that this procedure also covers individual subjects and executive courses offered by recognised institutions.

To be eligible for financial assistance the employee's Branch Manager and General Manager must endorse and approve the study as being relevant to the employee's current role or the employee's career path at Council.

### Study Assistance Categories

Employees may apply for study assistance relevant to the employee's current position or future career path. People and Culture in consultation with the employee and their Branch Manager will assess this for relevance to the employee's using the following categories:

- a) Category 1 – Highly Desirable
- b) Category 2 – Desirable

Category	Definition	Level of Assistance
<b>Highly Desirable</b>	<p>This category of Study Assistance is used when the study or professional development is one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the most cost effective method of developing skills and knowledge of direct relevance to the employee's current and/or changing job role, and which will provide a direct and immediate advantage to the work unit</li> <li>specific assistance to the department in meeting its corporate objectives and outcomes</li> <li>provides skills which are assessed as being highly desirable in the work area and there is a general need for such skills.</li> </ul>	<p>Up to 90%, maximum of \$2000 per financial year</p> <p>Council will be flexible with scheduling of RDO and annual leave requests.</p> <p>A maximum of up to five (5) hours paid leave per week (including travel time) for attendance at lectures and/or compulsory practical training during working hours will be available.</p>
<b>Desirable</b>	<p>This category of Study Assistance is applied when the study or professional development is one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>developing personal skills for general application and future job roles within local government</li> <li>provides skills that may assist the employee to perform their work but there is already an abundance of the skills available (i.e. not critical to the work unit).</li> </ul>	<p>Up to 50%, maximum of \$2000 per financial year</p> <p>Council will be flexible with scheduling of RDO and annual leave requests.</p> <p>A maximum of up to three (3) hours paid leave per week (including travel time) for attendance at lectures and/or compulsory practical training during working hours will be available.</p>

### Financial Assistance

Employees may be eligible for financial assistance provided up to the amounts indicated in the table above per Council financial year (1 July – 30 June).

Financial reimbursement is to assist employees pay course enrolment fees and other directly related fees. Approval for financial assistance is at the discretion of the authorised delegate and all funding for approved study and professional development assistance is to be borne by the relevant business unit.

## Reimbursements

Financial payment is conditional upon employees passing the subject/s undertaken and/or meeting the requirements of their educational institution during the semester/year. Where training is being undertaken online or through remote learning, reimbursement is paid on successful completion of the approved request.

Financial assistance is not available where the employee has deferred to higher education contribution scheme (HECS-HELP, FEE-HELP) that part of the cost of the study claimed in terms of this procedure.

In the event that the employee does not successfully complete the study, the employee will not receive any further financial assistance in relation to that study and the employee may be expected to reimburse the financial assistance received in respect of that particular study.

Irrespective of the category of assistance, Study Assistance financial reimbursement does not cover:

- membership fees for professional associations;
- textbooks, handbooks, periodicals;
- reimbursement of late fees and other fines/penalties levied by an institution;
- paid leave or financial assistance for an employee repeating a subject, unless the delegate considers that extenuating circumstances caused, or largely contributed to, failure to pass the subject. Such situations may include an extended illness, pregnancy or personal issue.

In the event that the employee submits their resignation from Council's service within two months after submitting a claim for financial assistance then, unless the employee completes that study by the date that the employee leaves Council's employment, the employee may be required to refund to Council the financial assistance received in relation to that study.

## Leave Assistance

Employees are required to contribute their own time and financial investment. Paid leave will be provided up to the limit identified for each category in the table above, this is to including travelling time, for attendance at face to face sessions, compulsory practical training, on line lessons, tutorials (not available outside work hours), research or other approved activity.

Council will be flexible with scheduling of RDO and annual leave requests. Leave will be subject to the requirements of the Branch and to be taken in accordance with approvals or by using flexible working arrangements in consultation with the Supervisor and Branch Manager.

When a leave request is made, consideration should also be given to the relevance/importance of the request and impacts to business continuity when requesting/assessing study leave.

## 9. Monitoring and review

This procedure will be reviewed from time to time in line with experience gathered in applying it and feedback from employees.

Data on the number of study assistance arrangements, financial support provided and feedback from employees will be collected to support the review.

## 10. Related documents

[Flexible Working Arrangements Administration Directive](#)

[Leave Management Administration Directive](#)

[Study Assistance Administration Directive](#)

[Application for Study Assistance](#)

## 11. Definitions

*Study* means any individual course, unit of study, workshop or seminar that can be undertaken at recognised institutions.

*Professional development* means any personal learning and development identified by the individual and the organisation related to their agreed learning or career path.

*Recognised institutions* are organisations that have been identified as providing an accredited or industry recognised source of education and learning for three (3) or more years, this includes and is not limited to the following:

- Technical and Further Education (TAFE) Colleges or Universities;
- Registered Training Organisations (RTOs);
- Professional development organisations recognised in the industry to a related area of work.

*FEE-HELP FEE* means the Higher Education Loan Program, A loan available to eligible fee-paying students by the Australian Government to help pay part of their tuition fees.

## 12. Process Model

N/A

## 13. Procedure Owner

The General Manager (Corporate Services) is the procedure owner and the Manager, People and Culture is responsible for authoring and reviewing this procedure.