

Study Assistance - Operational Policy

1. Purpose of policy

1.1 This policy supports the provision of a skilled and flexible workforce and encourages the development of individual staff.

1.2 This policy sets out the assistance available to staff members to improve their education and the conditions under which financial and other assistance can be granted.

1.3 This policy must be read in conjunction with the linked Study Assistance - Procedures.

2. Application of policy

2.1 This policy applies to ongoing staff and fixed term staff holding an appointment of 12 months or more.

3. Definitions

Refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for definitions as they specifically relate to policy documents.

Commonwealth Supported Place means a place at a university or higher education provider where the government pays part of your fees. This subsidy does not cover the entire cost of the study. The remaining portion is called the student contribution amount.

Cost Centre Manager (CCM) means the manager responsible for the budget of an organisational unit.

Domestic fee-paying places means student places which are available to non-international students, that is, Australian citizens and permanent residents, and New Zealand citizens and Permanent Humanitarian Visa holders, in which the student pays a tuition fee.

Examination leave means leave granted to attend examinations and can include time to travel to and from an examination.

Financial assistance means the provision of a fee discount for study at UniSC, study leave or reimbursement of associated costs.

Registered Training Organisation (RTO) is an organisation accredited to provide teaching or facilities for assessment of results in the area of study concerned and includes universities, colleges, TAFE colleges and registered agencies.

Relevance to role means the program will directly contribute to the staff member's performance of duties and is consistent with the qualifications and training level reflected in the classification standards of their substantive position or anticipated future duties at the University. Australian Taxation Office guidelines also help to inform assessment of the relevance to role.

Study leave means leave granted to attend classes or study for an examination and can include additional leave such as work-based learning or placement requirements.

4. Policy statement

4.1 The University acknowledges that staff members, and the knowledge, skills and values they bring to their work, are the most important resources we have. Career development is part of a lifelong learning process for our people to learn and expand their capability to be effective in their work. Study assistance is a means by which the University can support staff to attain formal qualifications.

5. Principles

5.1 All eligible staff are offered the opportunity to study at UniSC through a standard 40% fee discount of unit costs for UniSC subjects and courses.

5.2 Approval for financial or other assistance to support study can only be made within the financial and operational constraints of the Cost Centre.

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Vice-Chancellor and President

RESPONSIBLE EXECUTIVE MEMBER

Chief Operating Officer

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, People and Culture

FIRST APPROVED

6 December 2005

LAST AMENDED

20 December 2023

REVIEW DATE

13 December 2028

STATUS

Active

5.3 The intention to apply for study assistance should be discussed between a staff member and their supervisor as part of annual performance and development conversations.

5.4 Study assistance is available primarily for study related to a staff member's role or that which would enable upskilling or retraining to undertake other work within UniSC.

5.4 Eligibility

5.4.1 All ongoing and fixed-term staff holding an appointment of 12 months or more are eligible to apply for study assistance.

5.4.2 Access to study assistance

5.4.2.1 Study assistance is available to staff who enrol in:

(a) university programs, for example, Bachelors and Masters degrees, Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas, that are Domestic Fee Paying or Commonwealth Supported Places;

(b) vocational education and training courses provided by public or private providers (RTOs). This may include certificate courses, single subject enrolments and micro-credentials that may lead to a formal qualification; or

(c) reputable online training providers for formal qualifications that clearly demonstrate relevance to their current role.

5.5 Study assistance options

5.5.1 Study assistance is comprised of financial assistance, including paid study leave, and other leave support to enable subjects and courses to be completed. The different types of study assistance aim to encourage staff members to learn and develop based on their career interests, current role or future aspirations.

5.5.2 Internal financial assistance

5.5.2.1 Financial assistance is available to study subjects and courses at UniSC via:

(a) a standard fee discount;

(b) study leave provisions; and

(c) reimbursement of associated study costs.

5.5.2.2. All eligible staff can request the standard fee discount that is applied prior to the session fee due date. The staff member pays the residual course fees or defers payment via HELP (HECS/FEE) prior to the Census date.

5.5.2.3 When the study is not relevant to a staff member's current role or career pathway, the staff member can still access the standard fee discount but is not eligible for study leave or reimbursement of associated study costs.

5.5.2.4 Larger staff discounts can be offered for particular subjects or microcredentials from time to time, when it is determined by the University as strategic priorities for capability uplift. Larger fee discounts or reimbursement of associated costs can also be considered for strategic talent attraction, talent development or workforce planning purposes.

5.5.2.5 The Cost Centre Manager (CCM) can make no commitment to discounts or arrangements outside of policy without prior discussion with People and Culture and approval by the Director, People and Culture.

5.5.3 External financial assistance

5.5.3.1 The fees of external study are not funded however the staff member can access study leave provisions and reimbursement of associated costs when relevant to their role or career pathway.

5.5.3.2 Any approved financial assistance would entail payment by the staff member and reimbursement of the agreed costs after the successful completion of the course or unit of study.

5.5.4 Study leave

5.5.4.1 Paid study leave is available to provide support to attend classes, examinations and compulsory residential schools when the study is relevant to role.

5.5.5 Other leave support

5.5.5.1 Other types of leave, including recreation leave, flexible hours and long service leave, can be utilised to attend classes, examinations and residential schools, as well as other study requirements such as study for an examination, full-time study to complete a course, or work placements.

5.5.6 Fringe Benefits Tax

5.5.6.1 Commonwealth Supported Places (CSP) will attract Fringe Benefits Tax (FBT). There is no FBT applicable for non-CSP if employees meet Australian Tax Office eligibility regarding relevance to role and deductibility if they had incurred the expense themselves.

5.6 Assessing relevance to role

5.6.1 The relevance of programs of study to the staff member's role is determined by whether the program will directly contribute to the staff member's performance of duties and is consistent with the qualifications and training level reflected in the classification standards of their substantive position or anticipated future duties at the University.

5.6.2 Refer to the Australian Taxation Office guidelines to inform decision making around the relevance of study and potential Fringe Benefits Tax implications for the University.

6. Authorities/Responsibilities

6.1 The University encourages staff to participate in relevant staff development activities, including study assistance, and recognises that responsibility for development lies jointly with individual staff and the University.

6.2 The following authorities/responsibilities are delegated under this policy:

ACTIVITY	UNIVERSITY OFFICER/COMMITTEE
Encouraged to take ultimate responsibility for their own career development and to seek and take advantage of relevant opportunities for development, such as study assistance.	Each individual staff member
Review and consider applications for study assistance, providing feedback to applicants where appropriate and recommendation/s to the Cost Centre Manager.	Supervisor
Ensure implementation of the annual Performance and Development Cycle within their Cost Centre and encourage discussion about applying for study assistance when relevant to a staff member's development; plan for resourcing appropriate staff development; and allocate resources so that staff members are able to participate in relevant development activities, such as formal study.	Cost Centre Manager (CCM)
Review and consider applications for study assistance, in context with talent attraction or development, succession and workforce planning requirements within the Cost Centre. Provide feedback to the applicant and their supervisor and/or authorisation for the application on the form submitted to People and Culture.	
Review the application and give approval to ensure that requests meet eligibility requirements, as well as consideration of broader talent attraction, development, succession and workforce planning strategies.	Director, People & Culture
Prepare correspondence to staff to formalise approval of study assistance; and monitor and report on participation in study for which study assistance has been provided.	People and Culture
Responsible for creating a positive and stimulating environment in which staff are able to achieve success in their work. Study assistance is a means of investing in the development of staff to enhance their capabilities and contribute to increased organisational effectiveness.	University

END

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Performance Management - Operational Policy
- Study Assistance - Procedures

LINKED DOCUMENTS

- Study Assistance - Procedures

usc.edu.au/policy

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