

# STAFF STUDY SUPPORT PROCEDURE



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## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 CQUniversity's Staff Study Support is designed to encourage personal and professional development of staff and to benefit the University as a whole.

## 2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This procedure applies to continuing full-time and part-time staff members at CQUniversity.

## 3 PROCEDURE

- 3.1 Adequate appropriate training and development is to be provided to employees with a minimum of 2% of the salaries budget of the work unit allocated overall to training and staff development in accordance with the needs of the unit.

- 3.2 The Performance Review, Planning and Development (PRPD) process and the Performance Enhancement Program (PEP) are tools for determining staff members' professional development requirements and can be used to identify the need for Staff Study Support applications and the rationale for support. The extent of assistance provided will depend upon the relevance of the proposed study to the applicant's current or proposed employment within the University as determined through the PRPD and PEP processes.

### **Eligibility to apply for study support**

- 3.3 All continuing full-time and part-time staff members are eligible to apply for study support. Part-time staff are eligible to apply for study support on a pro-rata basis, calculated according to the proportion of full time hours they work. Long term (12 months +) contract staff members may be eligible for study support based on the requirements of their role and length of their contract.
- 3.4 The Staff Study Support application must be supported by the staff member's immediate supervisor with final approval by the relevant Executive Member.

### **Approval of study support**

- 3.5 Study Support refers to a program of study for the award of postgraduate qualifications, degrees, diplomas, certificates (including TAFE or other Registered Training Organisation), or other approved qualifications.
- 3.6 Applications for study at CQUniversity are encouraged and full support may be provided to staff undertaking study at CQUniversity in a discipline relevant to the staff member's current or prospective position within the University.
- 3.7 Where CQUniversity does not offer a particular discipline, consideration will be given to support study (including financial assistance) at another institution. This will be determined on a case by case basis by the relevant Executive Member as appropriate on recommendation by the Supervising Manager. Consideration will be given to the relevance of the study to the staff member's employment.
- 3.8 Where a staff member wishes to study at another institution, and that course is offered at CQUniversity, approval for Staff Study Support must be obtained from the Vice-Chancellor.
- 3.9 Staff members must seek approval for study support prior to the commencement of the relevant study period. Continuing study assistance is subject to satisfactory progress in study (at least a pass level on all subjects) as well as satisfactory performance of duties. Reimbursement via payroll is retrospective following the successful completion of approved study.
- 3.10 The staff member must provide evidence of successful completion of the study period, or in the case of research degrees, a letter from the staff member's research supervisor indicating satisfactory progress.
- 3.11 The chosen course of study must directly enhance the staff member's performance in their current role or in anticipated duties as discussed and agreed as part of the PRPD/PEP processes and must be aligned with the strategic direction of the University.
- 3.12 If a staff member changes organisational areas during this time, approval must be sought from the new supervising manager for continuation of the study support. Should a staff member's work status or hours of work change, the level of assistance provided by the University will be reviewed.
- 3.13 While approval for staff study applications are forwarded through the immediate supervisor for approval, approving officers should be conscious of the need for equity across the University, and are thus encouraged to discuss approval/non-approval of applications with their peers in similar areas of the organisation.
- 3.14 Supervisors must ensure that the workload allocations of staff are adjusted to reflect time approved to undertake study.
- 3.15 Study assistance will cease upon cessation of employment.

- 3.16 Repayment of staff study support costs are applicable to all staff that cease employment within two years of completing the relevant study units at the rate of 75% of all costs if terminating within 12 months and 50% of all costs if terminating after 12 months and before 24 months. In the case where a staff member is ceasing employment due to termination, no reimbursement of costs is applicable.

### **Levels of study assistance available**

- 3.17 Courses of study are categorised under the following criteria to determine the level of assistance offered to approved staff:
- 'Category A' applies where the staff member is required to enrol in a particular course as a condition of employment or where the course of study will directly contribute to the staff member's performance of duties or anticipated duties. All courses undertaken with CQUniversity (as directly related to the employment relationship) will be covered by this category. Study at another institution where CQUniversity does not provide the program may also be considered
  - 'Category B' applies where the study is not directly related to the specific employment of the staff member, but is relevant to other positions at CQUniversity and contributes to the continuing development of the staff member as an individual.
- 3.18 All applications will be considered. Applications for category B courses will not be rejected outright where the study is not directly relevant to a work area, but rather the extent of the assistance provided will be determined on a case by case basis.

### **Forms of assistance**

- 3.19 Eligible staff members enrolled in an approved course may be entitled to a range of assistance including:
- for CQUniversity Courses – financial assistance in the form of reimbursement of up to 100% of HECS up-front costs, tuition fees, or tuition fees under the Fee-HELP scheme before the loan fee is applied (to be reimbursed only after providing proof of successful completion) based on one course per staff member per term/semester, and/or
  - for non-CQUniversity Courses - financial assistance in the form of reimbursement of up to 75% of HECS up-front costs, tuition fees, or tuition fees under the Fee-HELP scheme before the loan fee is applied (to be reimbursed only after providing proof of successful completion) based on one course per staff member per term/semester, and/or
  - where the course is a condition of employment, or required as part of the person's role and it is not provided by CQUniversity, the Director/Dean/Head will determine whether the fees are to be paid upfront at the commencement of study,
  - time allocated for study during working hours, which will be negotiated on an individual basis to attend examinations, residential schools and classes, for consultations with supervisors and/or to study before an examination,
  - academic staff may be able to access the 20% individual workload allocation to dedicate to completion of relevant qualifications such as their PHD where agreement can be reached through the PRPD/PEP processes. Agreed completion timeframes will be required.
- 3.20 For staff undertaking research degrees, assistance with research costs and time release will be negotiated on an individual basis. Part-time staff receive pro-rata benefits, such as pro-rata reimbursement of course fees calculated according to the proportion of full-time hours they work. Long term (12 months +) contract staff members may be eligible for study support based on the requirements of their role and length of their contract.

### **Financial assistance**

- 3.21 Successful applicants for Staff Study Support may be provided with continued support for the duration of their studies provided the course continues to meet organisational need and they supply evidence of successful completion of the term/semester, or in the case of research degrees, a letter from the staff member's research supervisor indicating satisfactory progress.

- 3.22 The decision to provide continued support is subject to the satisfactory completion of courses. Staff Study Support will not be retrospective, but will commence once an application is approved.
- 3.23 Fees will not be reimbursed should a staff member not achieve successful completion of a course of study or satisfactory progress towards a research degree.
- 3.24 In all cases the staff member is responsible for paying any student amenities/services fees and will be responsible for all other costs associated with the study program including but not limited to text books and travel (in the circumstance where the study is a requirement of the position, approval may be given for reimbursement of these costs).

### **Financial assistance (special circumstances)**

- 3.25 Where a supervisor determines that special circumstances apply, the level of support provided to the staff member may vary from that outlined in clause 4 up to a maximum of 100% of total cost. Where the staff member provides evidence of financial hardship, the supervisor may approve the payment of fees upfront or, where a program of study is identified in the PRPD/PEP process as being essential or highly desirable for the staff member to undertake, a higher level of support than proposed in clause 4 may be approved.
- 3.26 Where staff members have received upfront funding support for a period when satisfactory progression or completion has not been attained, the re-study periods will not be funded and staff will be required to reimburse upfront fees paid by the University for all courses that they do not complete successfully. Should staff need to re-study due to cancellation of programs, genuine reasons of hardships, or other valid reasons, staff may submit a written application together with supporting documentation, for variation to these procedures to their supervisor.

### **Time allocated for study during working hours**

- 3.27 Time allocation for study during working hours must be approved by the supervisor through the PRPD/PEP processes and, from a resource perspective, by the Head of organisational area.
- 3.28 Requests for time allocation for study or to attend classes or residential schools must be negotiated between the supervisor and staff member and approved by the Head of organisational area prior to the commencement of the study. Where possible, staff members are encouraged to attend classes at times which provide minimum disruption to the work area.

### **Study leave (paid)**

- 3.29 Paid study leave may be granted for the staff member to be released from duties to:
- attend classes or training courses by Universities, TAFE, other Government accredited educational institutions and registered training providers up to a maximum of up to six hours in any one week. For Universities, TAFE and other Government accredited educational institutions, time allocation is restricted to study terms/semesters
  - attend compulsory residential schools up to a maximum of ten working days per annum.

### **'Category A' study**

- 3.30 Paid study time will be granted by the supervising manager to attend classes without loss of pay subject to the following limits:
- up to six hours per week
  - the number of hours of paid study time requested is no more than half the time required to attend classes during standard hours.
- 3.31 Time off in excess of those limits may be granted but the staff member may be required to repay that time. Approval will be subject to agreement between the staff member and the supervising manager on how that is to be done.

### **'Category B' study**

- 3.32 Paid study time may be granted by the supervising manager up to the limits set above, but the staff member may be required to repay that time.
- 3.33 Requests will be considered on a case by case basis by the relevant supervising manager.
- 3.34 Approval will be subject to agreement between the staff member and their manager on how that is to be done.

### **Exam leave (paid)**

- 3.35 Paid exam leave may be granted for the staff member to be released from duties to attend an examination including study time allocated for a half day prior to an examination (i.e. for examinations scheduled in the morning, the staff member may be released for half a day prior to the examination as well as the morning of the examination; for examinations scheduled in the afternoon, the staff member may be released for the full day).
- 3.36 An application for examination leave, including a copy of the examination timetable, must be submitted through their supervisor at least two weeks before the final examination.

### **Additional study leave (paid or unpaid)**

- 3.37 Additional study leave may be approved at the discretion of the Head of organisational area who will take into consideration the likely disruption to operations within the staff member's work area.
- 3.38 Non-compulsory residential schools may be attended through leave without pay to a maximum of ten working days per annum or through the deduction from recreation leave on a half-day or full-day debit basis.

### **Part-time staff**

- 3.39 Part-time staff will be eligible for pro-rata study leave benefits to attend classes or training courses, with time allocation calculated according to the proportion of full-time hours they work. Part-time staff will be eligible for study leave benefits to attend examinations, only at time(s) when the staff member is scheduled to work.

### **Overtime/flex time accrual**

- 3.40 The accrual of flex time and payment of overtime for professional staff will not be approved for time released from the workplace as Staff Study Support.

### **How to apply for staff study support**

- 3.41 The cost of fees provided as Staff Study Support will be met by the relevant area. The ongoing level of assistance is dependent on the annual allocated budget and will be reviewed on an annual basis to determine ongoing financial sustainability.
- 3.42 Reimbursement for Staff Study Fees will be paid through the payroll system as an allowance. Employees should seek professional financial advice in relation to their personal taxation circumstances in regard to the amount claimable as a tax deduction in the relevant tax year. The employee is responsible for retaining the appropriate documentation to enable them to comply with their personal taxation affairs. Options exist for salary sacrifice arrangements; however, it is the employee's responsibility to investigate this with the University's salary packaging provider.
- 3.43 An application for Staff Study Support should be made before the beginning of a study calendar year to ensure that the budgeted professional development funds for an area are distributed equitably. It is recognised, however, that there may be an exceptional circumstance, where a supervisor may choose to support a Staff Study Support application at other times during the year, provided that it occurs as part of the PRPD/PEP processes.

3.44 At each stage of the Staff Study Support process, the following procedures should be followed:

- a) The Staff Study Support Application Form must be completed annually by the staff member prior to the commencement of the proposed study for that year. The application must include:
  - details of the proposed study
  - an indication of the type of support requested (financial and/or time) including an estimate of financial assistance applied for, and
  - a statement of relevance to the employee's current or prospective position.
- b) A recommendation supporting the staff member's application is forwarded through the immediate supervisor to the Executive Member for approval.
- c) If the application is approved, a copy of the signed application form will be forwarded to the People and Culture Directorate and to the staff member making the application.

Where applications are not approved, the supervisor should discuss the reason for non-approval with the applicant.

- d) The staff member will pay for all upfront study fees and produce evidence of enrolment to their supervisor prior to undertaking the proposed course of study.

### **How to claim the study support payment**

- 3.45 A copy of the evidence of successful completion of the course or satisfactory progress towards a research degree is provided to the immediate supervisor for approval of the proportional reimbursement of any previously approved study support. At this time, the staff member submits documentation for reimbursement through their supervisor to People and Culture.
- 3.46 The Study Support Payment will be made at the end of each study period and should be made in the year the expense was incurred. The payment will be via Payroll.
- 3.47 A copy of evidence of successful completion of the course or satisfactory progress towards a research degree and approved reimbursement is forwarded to the People and Culture Directorate for the staff member's personnel file.

### **Payment conditions**

- 3.48 The Study Assistance Payment for all categories is subject to the following conditions:
  - a) The payment will only be made where prior approval has been granted. Applications for study undertaken in any study period prior to the date of approval will not be supported.
  - b) The payment will only be made for courses/units of study passed/achieved. A staff member must provide receipts for fees paid and evidence of successful completion of each course/subject or in the case of research degrees, satisfactory progress (i.e. certified copy of results, certified copy of certificate, supervisor's statement) where reimbursement of fees is being claimed.
  - c) A staff member holding a scholarship/award which provides payment of fees may only apply for Study Assistance Payment for fees not met by the scholarship/award.
  - d) Study Assistance Payment will not be provided for repeat subjects.

## **4 RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Compliance, monitoring and review**

- 4.1 The People and Culture Directorate will be responsible for the overall implementation of these procedures.

## Reporting

- 4.2 No additional reporting is required.

## Records management

- 4.3 Staff must maintain all records relevant to administering this procedure in a recognised University recordkeeping system.

## 5 DEFINITIONS

- 5.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

## Terms and definitions

**Staff Study Support:** refers to the assistance available from a staff member's organisational area for resources allocated to assist in undertaking a course of study for professional development purposes. This assistance can be offered in the form of financial assistance and/or time off required during working hours.

## 6 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

### Related policy document suite

[CQUniversity Enterprise Agreement](#)

[Outside Studies Program Policy](#)

[Staff Study Support Application Form](#) (available to staff only)

### Related legislation and supporting documents

[Staff Study Support Application Form](#) (available to staff only)

[Outside Studies Program Policy](#)

[CQUniversity Enterprise Agreement](#)

## 7 FEEDBACK

- 7.1 University staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing [policy@cqu.edu.au](mailto:policy@cqu.edu.au).

## 8 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor and President
Advisory Committee to Approval Authority	Joint Consultative Committee and Vice Chancellor's Advisory Committee
Administrator	Director, People and Culture
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