

# STAFF STUDY SUPPORT PROCEDURE

## CONTENTS

1	PURPOSE.....	1
2	SCOPE.....	1
3	PROCEDURE .....	2
	Eligibility to apply.....	2
	Approval .....	2
	Levels of study assistance .....	3
	Forms of assistance .....	3
	Financial assistance.....	3
	Financial assistance (special circumstances).....	4
	Time allocated for study during working hours .....	4
	Study leave .....	4
	Exam leave .....	5
	Additional study leave .....	5
	How to apply .....	5
	Payment conditions.....	6
4	RESPONSIBILITIES .....	6
	Compliance, monitoring and review .....	6
	Reporting.....	6
	Records management.....	6
5	DEFINITIONS .....	7
	Terms and definitions.....	7
6	RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS.....	7
7	FEEDBACK.....	7
8	APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS.....	7

## 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 Staff Study Support is designed to encourage personal and professional development of employees and to benefit CQUniversity as a whole.
- 1.2 This procedure outlines the process, including eligibility requirements, for applying and managing staff study support at CQUniversity.

## 2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This procedure applies to continuing and long term (12 months or more) fixed-term employees at CQUniversity.
- 2.2 This procedure does not apply to VET Educators, who are required to complete and maintain a minimum Certificate IV in Training and Assessment (TAE40110 or TAE40116, or its successor) as required by the [Australian Skills Quality Authority](#) (ASQA). The organisational unit is responsible for the upfront payment and registration for VET Educators to attend these courses as part of the requirement of their role.

### **3 PROCEDURE**

- 3.1 Adequate appropriate training and development will be provided to employees. A minimum of 2% of the salaries budget of the organisational unit will be allocated overall to training and employee development in accordance with the needs of the unit.
- 3.2 The Performance Review, Planning and Development (PRPD) process (clause 20 of the CQUniversity Enterprise Agreement 2017) will be administered through the Performance Enhancement Program (PEP).
- 3.3 PEP is the tool for determining employee 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 PEP process.

#### **Eligibility to apply**

- 3.4 All continuing employees are eligible to apply for study support. Part-time continuing employees may only apply for study support on a pro-rata basis, calculated according to the proportion of full-time hours they work. Long term (12 months or more) fixed-term employees may be eligible for study support based on the requirements of their role and length of their contract.
- 3.5 The maximum study support available to an eligible employee is four units per annum, or the equivalent for a part-time employee. Where requests fall outside these specifications (e.g. flexible courses without units, etc.) the intent is that approved study should not impact on the ability of the employee to continue to meet expectations of their position within CQUniversity, except where time allocation has been approved as part of this procedure (clauses 3.28 – 3.40).
- 3.6 The Staff Study Support application must be supported by the employee's immediate supervisor with final approval by the relevant Dean/Director/Head.
- 3.7 The chosen unit of study must directly enhance the employee's performance in their current role or in anticipated duties as discussed and agreed as part of the PEP process, and must be aligned with the strategic direction of the University. The study undertaken must be related directly to the employee's current or prospective position within the University.

#### **Approval**

- 3.8 Study Support is limited to units which progress towards the award of postgraduate qualifications, degrees, diplomas, or certificates (including TAFE or other Registered Training Organisations).
- 3.9 The study must be undertaken at CQUniversity, except where the University does not offer a comparable course, unit or discipline. Any staff study support application for alternative institutions will require written justification by the employee with supervisor support. The relevant Dean/Director/Head will then consider and determine these applications for approval on a case-by-case basis as appropriate. Consideration will be given to the relevance of the study to the employee's position.
- 3.10 Employees must seek approval for study support at least one month 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 or satisfactory progress reports for research higher degree candidates) as well as satisfactory performance of duties.
- 3.11 While approval for staff study support applications are forwarded through the immediate supervisor, approving officers should be conscious of the need for equity across their organisational unit and are encouraged to discuss approval/non-approval of applications with their peers.
- 3.12 If an employee changes organisational work units during this time, approval must be sought from the new supervisor for continuation of the study support.
- 3.13 Should an employee's work status or hours of work change, the level of assistance provided by the University will also be reviewed.

## Levels of study assistance

- 3.14 Units of study are categorised under the following criteria:
- 'Category A' - unit of study will directly contribute to the employee's performance of duties or anticipated duties in their current role.
  - 'Category B' - study is not directly related to the specific employment of the employee, but is relevant to other prospective positions at CQUniversity and contributes to the continuing professional development of the employee as an individual.
- 3.15 All eligible applications will be considered. Applications for category B 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

- 3.16 Eligible employees enrolled in an approved unit 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 unit per employee per term/semester
    - where the unit is required as part of the employee's role and it is provided by CQUniversity, the Dean/Director/Head will determine whether the fees are to be paid upfront at the commencement of study and prior to Census Date
  - 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 unit per employee per term/semester
    - where the unit is required as part of the employee's role and it is not provided by CQUniversity, the Dean/Director/Head will determine whether the fees are to be paid upfront prior to 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, and/or
  - academic employees may be able to access up to 20% of their individual workload allocation to dedicate to completion of relevant qualifications such as their research higher degree where agreement can be reached through the PEP process. Agreed completion timeframes will be required.
- 3.17 For employees undertaking research higher degrees, assistance with research study costs and time release will be negotiated on an individual basis.
- 3.18 Part-time employees 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 employees will be eligible for study leave benefits to attend examinations, only at time/s when the employee is scheduled to work.

## Financial assistance

- 3.19 The employee must provide evidence of successful completion of the study period, or in the case of research higher degrees, a letter from the employee's research supervisor indicating satisfactory progress.
- 3.20 Successful applicants for Staff Study Support may be provided with continued support for the duration of their studies provided the units/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 employee's research supervisor indicating satisfactory progress. The decision to provide continued support is subject to the satisfactory completion of study.

- 3.21 Staff Study Support will not be retrospective, but will commence once an application is approved. Fees will not be reimbursed should an employee not achieve successful completion of a unit of study or satisfactory progress towards a research degree.
- 3.22 In cases where fees are paid upfront, employees who fail to complete a unit of study successfully will be required to reimburse the University for Staff Study Support fees paid on their behalf. This will be administered through the Financial Accounting Team.
- 3.23 Study undertaken must be completed, and any reimbursement claimed, prior to the end of the employee's employment. Reimbursement via payroll is retrospective following the successful completion of approved study.
- 3.24 Study assistance will cease upon cessation of employment. In the case where an employee is ceasing employment due to termination, no reimbursement of costs is applicable.
- 3.25 Repayment to the University of staff study support costs are applicable to all employees 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.
- 3.26 In all cases the employee 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. The Dean/Director/Head will review and determine if this is approved on a case-by-case basis.)

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

- 3.27 Where a supervisor determines that special circumstances apply, the level of support provided to the employee may vary from that outlined in section 3.16 up to a maximum of 100% of total cost. Where the employee provides evidence of financial hardship, the supervisor may approve the payment of fees upfront or, where a unit of study is identified in the PEP process as being essential or highly desirable for the employee to undertake, a higher level of support than that proposed may be approved.

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

- 3.28 Time allocation for study during working hours must be approved by the supervisor through the PEP process and, from a resource perspective, by the Dean/Director/Head.
- 3.29 Requests for time allocation for study or to attend classes or residential schools must be negotiated between the supervisor and employee and approved by the Dean/Director/Head prior to the commencement of the study. Where possible, employees are encouraged to attend classes at times which provide minimum disruption to the work area.
- 3.30 Supervisors must ensure that the workload allocations of employees are adjusted to reflect time approved to undertake study.
- 3.31 The accrual of flex time and payment of overtime for professional employees will not be approved for time released from the workplace as Staff Study Support purposes.

### **Study leave**

- 3.32 Paid study leave may be granted for the employee to be released from duties to attend:
- classes or training courses up to a maximum of six hours per week. For Universities, TAFE and other Government accredited educational institutions; time allocation is restricted to study terms/semesters, or
  - compulsory residential schools up to a maximum of 10 working days per annum.

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

- 3.33 Paid study time up to a maximum of six hours per week will be granted by the supervisor to attend classes without loss of pay. The number of hours of paid study time requested must not be more than half the time required to attend classes during standard hours.
- 3.34 Time off in excess of those limits may be granted but the employee may be required to repay that time. Approval will be subject to agreement between the employee and their supervisor on how that is to be done.

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

- 3.35 Paid study time may be granted by the supervisor up to the limits set in section 3.32, but the employee may be required to repay that time.
- 3.36 Requests will be considered on a case by case basis by the relevant supervisor. Approval will be subject to agreement between the employee and their supervisor on how that is to be done.

### **Exam leave**

- 3.37 Paid exam leave may be granted for the employee 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 employee 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 employee may be released for the full day).
- 3.38 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**

- 3.39 Additional study leave (paid or unpaid) may be approved at the discretion of the Dean/Director/Head who will take into consideration the likely disruption to operations within the employee's work area.
- 3.40 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.

### **How to apply**

- 3.41 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 PEP process.
- 3.42 At each stage of the Staff Study Support process, the following procedures should be followed:
- a) The [Staff Study Support Application eForm](#) must be completed annually by the employee one month 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 employee's application is forwarded through the immediate supervisor to the Dean/Director/Head for approval via the automated eForm.
  - c) If the application is approved, an electronic copy of the approved application form will be automatically forwarded to the People and Culture Directorate and to the employee making the application.
  - d) Where applications are not approved, the supervisor should discuss the reason for non-approval with the applicant.

## Payment conditions

- 3.43 The cost of fees provided as Staff Study Support will be met by the relevant organisational area. The ongoing level of assistance will be dependent on the annual allocated budget and will be reviewed on an annual basis to determine ongoing financial sustainability.
- 3.44 Reimbursement for Staff Study Support Fees will be paid through the payroll system as an allowance at the end of each study period and should be made in the year the expense was incurred. 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.
- 3.45 A copy of evidence of successful completion of the unit of study or satisfactory progress towards a research degree will be provided to the immediate supervisor for approval of the proportional reimbursement of any previously approved study support. The employee will submit evidence of successful completion and documentation for reimbursement through their supervisor to the People and Culture Directorate.
- 3.46 In cases of approved upfront payment of fees, these will be processed through Finance. Notification of approval must be provided one month prior to Census Date.
- 3.47 Where employees 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 employees will be required to reimburse upfront fees paid by the University for all units that they do not complete successfully. Should employees need to re-study due to cancellation of units, genuine reasons of hardships, or other valid reasons, employees may submit a written application together with supporting documentation, for variation to these procedures to their supervisor.
- 3.48 The Study Assistance Payment is subject to the following conditions:
- 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.
  - The payment will only be made for courses/units of study passed/achieved. An employee must provide receipts for fees paid and evidence of successful completion of each unit 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.
  - An employee holding a scholarship/award which provides payment of fees may only apply for Study Assistance Payment for fees not met by the scholarship/award.
  - Study Assistance Payment will not be provided for repeat subjects.

## 4 RESPONSIBILITIES

### Compliance, monitoring and review

- 4.1 The Director, People and Culture is responsible for implementing, monitoring, reviewing and ensuring compliance with this procedure.

### Reporting

- 4.2 No additional reporting is required.

### Records management

- 4.3 Employees must manage records in accordance with the [Records Management Policy and Procedure](#). This includes retaining these records in a recognised University recordkeeping information system.
- 4.4 University records must be retained for the minimum periods specified in the University Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule on the [Queensland State Archives website](#).

## 5 DEFINITIONS

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

### Terms and definitions

**Staff Study Support:** assistance available from an employee's organisational area 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

[CQUniversity Enterprise Agreement 2017](#)

[Staff Study Support Application eForm](#) (available to employees only)

[Staff Study Support Allowance Claim Form](#) (provided to employees once study is successfully completed)

[Staff Student Prepayments Form](#)

[Staff Study Support FAQ's](#)

## 7 FEEDBACK

- 7.1 Feedback about this document can be by emailed to [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	Vice Chancellor's Advisory Committee
Administrator	Director, People and Culture
Next Review Date	2/10/2022

Approval and Amendment History	Details
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Notes	