

GENERAL STAFF EDUCATION ASSISTANCE SCHEME PROCEDURES

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Policy Adviser:	For advice on this policy, contact your Group HR Staff

Description of the Procedure:

The purpose of this document is to provide procedures in the consistent application of the General Staff Education Assistance Scheme (the Scheme).

Related Policies, Procedures & Forms:

[General Staff Education Assistance Scheme Policy](#)

[General Staff Education Assistance Scheme Application Form](#)

[Salary, Wages and Allowances Overpayments Recovery - Policy and Procedure](#)

This document is available in Word format for downloading. Click [here](#) to download this document.

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1.0 Introduction

This document provides information for staff and supervisors in relation to the levels of assistance which may be made available, both financial and non-financial, for staff education assistance applications. The staff member must have their application approved prior to accessing assistance under the scheme, whether financial or otherwise.

The University will consider applications for assistance on a case-by-case basis.

2.0 Scope

This Scheme applies to all continuing, continuing on probation and fixed term general staff.

3.0 Application

The Scheme provides a broad range of assistance that may be available to general staff including leave, an education allowance and access to resources such as photocopying, printing and computing facilities.

Assistance, when granted, will be on the basis of a package depending on the category into which the course or program of study falls as assessed by the supervisor.

The 'package' of assistance may consist of one or more of the following:

- Leave (paid and unpaid);
- [Flexi time](#);
- Education allowance;
- Other forms of assistance eg access to photocopying, printing and computing facilities.

3.1. Education Allowance

Applications for assistance are categorised under the following criteria to determine the appropriate level of assistance to be offered to staff members where support has been approved.

3.1.1 Category A

A high priority application where the [course](#) or [program](#) is a necessary component of a position for an existing staff member, or is made a requirement through the policy of an

Element. Financial assistance will be available up to the maximum allowable under these procedures, for example:

- Maximum Standard Financial Component
 - up to 100% up front course fees where a staff member is studying an approved [course](#) or program at Griffith University
 - up to 100% up front course fees where a staff member is undertaking an approved [course](#) or program not available at Griffith University
 - in all other cases, maximum expenditure up to \$2500 as an education allowance in any one year
- Maximum Standard Non Financial Component
 - leave with pay for up to 50% of the total required attendance at lectures/tutorials;
 - flexibility in working hours to accommodate lectures/tutorials. Only available where lectures/tutorials conflict with normal working hours and can be operationally accommodated.
 - up to a half day flex time leave for study prior to an exam;
 - leave with pay to attend exams; and
 - access to computing, printing and photocopying facilities.

In exceptional cases under Category A and where the University deems a [course](#) or program essential to the requirements of the position, full time study release on part or full pay may be approved, to existing staff members, by the relevant Pro Vice Chancellor or Deputy Vice Chancellor.

3.1.2 Category B

A medium priority application where the [course](#) or [program](#) will directly contribute to the staff member's performance of duties. Assistance granted in this category would be less than that available in Category A.

- Maximum Standard Financial Component
 - maximum expenditure up to \$2000 as an education allowance in any one year
- Maximum Standard Non Financial Component
 - leave with pay for up to 33% of the total required attendance at lectures/tutorials;
 - flexibility in working hours to accommodate lectures/tutorials. Only available where lectures/tutorials conflict with normal working hours and can be operationally accommodated.
 - up to a half day flex time leave for study prior to an exam;
 - leave with pay to attend exams;
 - reasonable access to computing, printing and photocopying facilities; and
 - in the case of staff undertaking Higher Degree Research (HDR), leave with pay to attend induction and compulsory peer assessment days.

3.1.3 Category C

A low priority application where the [course](#) or program is not directly related to the specific employment position of the staff member, but has some relevance to their existing position at Griffith University and contributes to the continuing development of the staff member. It is expected that if assistance is given it would be a reduction in the assistance given to Category B.

Maximum Standard Financial Component

- maximum expenditure up to \$1500 as an education allowance in any one year

Maximum Standard Non Financial Component

- leave without pay to attend lectures for up to three hours per week;
- flexibility in working hours to accommodate attendance at exams;
- up to a half day flex time leave for study prior to an exam;
- limited access to computing, printing and photocopying facilities;
and
- in the case of staff undertaking Higher Degree Research (HDR), leave with pay to attend induction and compulsory peer assessment days.

3.1.4 Applications for an Education Allowance

The following outlines key factors relating to the grant of assistance under the Scheme.

- most applications will fall into either Categories B or C;
- there is a variance in the maximum level of all types of assistance available in all categories;
- all assistance is based on a normal University part-time study load ie. normally two courses per semester.
- staff members who undertake less than a normal part time load or who are part time employees will be considered for assistance on a pro-rata basis.
- staff members who complete greater than a normal part time load, eg. a full time study load, will have their applications for assistance considered at the normal part time load rate.
- a staff member holding a scholarship providing for payment of fees will only be paid for fees not met by the scholarship.
- the University will not reimburse student contribution amounts to staff who elect to pay fees through the taxation system (HECS-HELP or similar).
- the University will not reimburse monies to staff engaged in postgraduate study who elect to defer fees to the FEE-HELP program.
- all fees must be paid up front.

3.1.5 Payment of an Education Allowance

An education allowance may be paid to a staff member as a one-off payment after the census date each semester of an approved course or program of study. This allowance is to cover in part, ongoing education expenses for formal education programs (degrees, diplomas, associate diplomas, certificates, etc.) such as [Student Contribution Charge \(SCC\)](#), course fees, student services charges, books and other miscellaneous costs.

This allowance is taxable at the applicable marginal tax rate and it is the staff member's responsibility to meet the relevant tax obligations. The University does not require the production of invoices or receipts associated with a course or [program](#) in order to be eligible to receive an education allowance.

The amount of this allowance, which will be determined by the relevant approving authority, will be dependent on the approval criteria.

3.2. Leave and Flexi Time Arrangements

The following outlines the maximum provisions for leave available under these procedures. The consistent application of these arrangements will be guided by the category of assistance into which an application falls.

3.2.1 Standards for Leave Entitlements

- Flexibility in working hours to accommodate study is negotiable within the School's or Office's parameters for flex time operation.
- Time off with pay up to a maximum of 50% of the time required to attend tutorials/lectures that are only available in working hours. In exceptional circumstances the line manager may approve time off with pay, greater than the above maximum.
- Examination leave with pay for the time of the examination and reasonable travelling time of normally one half day.
- Leave with pay for required attendance at induction, normally up to one half day.
- Compulsory residential school leave with pay for attendance at compulsory residential schools or compulsory practicum is negotiable within the Element, up to a maximum of 50% of the total requirement. The remainder to be made up from the staff member's existing leave entitlements.
- Full time study leave without pay may be available for full time study or to complete a research based project. This is negotiable within each Element.

3.2.2 Other Leave Considerations

The application of these arrangements will be guided by the category of assistance into which an application falls:

- compulsory residential school leave with pay for attendance at compulsory residential schools or compulsory practicum is negotiable within the Element, up to a maximum of 50% of the total requirement. The remainder to be made up from the staff member's existing leave entitlements.
- full time study leave without pay may be available for full time study or to complete a research based project. This is negotiable within each Element.

3.3. Applications for Education Assistance

Requests for assistance under the General Staff Education Assistance Scheme will be made by the individual staff member concerned normally at least 4 weeks prior to the commencement of the course or program of study. A staff member wishing to receive assistance should complete a [General Staff Education Assistance Scheme Application Form](#) and forward the form to their line manager. It may be necessary to provide further information (such as timetabling details) when available. Staff members completing the application forms should:

- define the educational or developmental goals to be achieved; the career objectives to be pursued, or specific work needs to be met. These should come from the staff member's annual performance and development discussions.
- identify personal skills, knowledge and qualifications necessary to fulfill the career objectives and work needs.
- select courses or programs of study appropriate to developing the identified skills, knowledge and qualifications.
- supply information such as handbook extracts, timetable details etc.

Staff members who wish to continue receiving assistance under the policy should re-apply each year normally 4 weeks prior to commencing study. Where details of specific courses or subjects to be undertaken are not known, the staff member should still apply and provide further information in relation to the application at a later date.

3.3.1 Element's Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the staff member's Element to administer the General Staff Education Assistance Scheme for participating staff, and to monitor the staff member's use of the forms of assistance approved.

3.3.2 Staff Member's Responsibility

Each staff member will make their own arrangements for enrolment in the teaching institution and for the payment of any fees and/or charges.

3.4 Criteria for Approval

The application for assistance will be considered by the relevant approving authority who will, if applicable, consult the staff member's supervisor/s. The criteria for approval will include:

- the availability of funds and resources in the Element;
- whether or not the qualification is necessary for the position;
- the relevance of the course or program of study to the staff member's current work;
- the needs of the Element and the University generally, for such education to be undertaken;
- the needs for personal development of the individual as identified in the performance review and of the likely contribution of the proposed program of study to that development;
- the staff member's record of performance in the University;
- the capacity of the staff member's work area to operate effectively with the likely absence;
- previous assistance granted to the staff member, under this or previous policies, and whether such study was successfully completed; and
- consideration of applications consistent with the University's equity and diversity goals.

The extent of assistance approved will usually vary depending upon the need within the staff member's Element and having taken into account the other factors listed above.

The relevant approving authority may:

- approve the application in full;
- approve the application in part (for example, approve only some of the forms of assistance requested); or,
- reject the application;

If the application is unsuccessful, the staff member will be given the opportunity to discuss the decision taken with the approving authority.

3.5 Duration of Approval

Approval will be granted for a period of one year or for the duration of the [course](#) or program whichever is the lesser. Further assistance will require another application which will be subject to the same criteria outlined in this document.

3.6 Notification of Progress and Results

As soon as possible after the results of a [course](#) or program are known, staff members receiving assistance must provide the line manager with documentary evidence of completion of the subject(s)/course(s) undertaken. Higher degree research students will also be required to provide evidence of satisfactory progress eg. an annual progress report or a statement from their supervisor. It is the responsibility of the staff member to advise the supervisor of results.

3.7 Unsuccessful Completion or Discontinuation of a Course or Program of Study

Staff members, who are receiving assistance and who do not meet the requirements for successful completion of a course or program of study, or for any reason discontinue a course or program of study, must notify their line manager in writing immediately.

3.8 Staff Member Transferred to another Budget Area

A staff member who has had their education assistance package approved will retain the approved entitlement to any education allowance until the expiry of approval. The approving budget area will be responsible for all financial assistance due to the staff member. Leave and flex time should be negotiated between the staff member and the new budget area at the time of the transfer.

3.9 *Resignation of a Staff Member who has received an Education Allowance*

Assistance under this Scheme will cease upon notification of cessation of employment with the University. A staff member who resigns from employment with the University within 12 months of receiving an education allowance may be required to refund the full amount of the education allowance received in the last 12 months of study. Exemption from this provision may be granted by the Director, Office of Human Resource Management in consultation with the relevant manager.

3.10 *Costs of Approved Packages of Assistance*

The relevant Element will meet any costs associated with the approval of packages of assistance as outlined in this document.

3.11 *Grievances*

In the event that a dispute arises in the application of this policy, the parties will follow the relevant steps of the University's Individual Grievance Resolution Procedures.

4.0 Delegated Authorities

The [Head of Element](#) may approve the category of assistance and the package of assistance for applications from staff members in their area.

The Director, Office of Human Resource Management may approve the exemption from repaying an education allowance on resignation.
