Study Time Policy

Last updated: 26 March 2010 Policy assigned to: Director, Human Resources

Overview

This policy sets out the principles and procedures for providing Study Time for eligible general staff to undertake approved courses of study to improve their professional qualifications, skills and capability.

Scope

Study Time is available for general staff who:

- are employed on a continuous basis (either full or part-time) or
- are engaged on a fixed-term basis, and have completed at least 12 months service and their term will continue for at least 12 months beyond the date of their application for Study Time
- and have, in all cases, completed their probation period.

Study Time is not available for casual staff or academic staff.

References

- The University of Sydney Enterprise Agreement 2009-2012
- University of Sydney (Delegations of Authority - Administrative Functions) Rule 2010 (as amended)
- Career Development Leave - General Staff Policy and Procedures

Policy

The University promotes the development of high performing staff in order to contribute to its strategic capability. The University assists in the development of staff through providing a range of learning and development opportunities. This may include time off work for general staff to undertake studies in courses approved by the University where appropriate course attendance is not available outside of normal flexible working hours and/or where staff require time off work for examinations or other forms of assessment.

Study Time is not accruable and is not available during term/semester vacation periods for the course involved. Study Time is also not available during any periods of paid or unpaid leave, but may be taken in conjunction with annual leave subject to appropriate approval.

Full-time staff may utilise Study Time to study on a part-time basis only. Study Time will only be granted for up to a maximum of 50% of an equivalent full-time course load at any time. Part-time staff will receive pro-rata benefits.

Guidelines

1. Criteria

Study Time applications are normally expected to meet at least one of the following criteria:

- it is directly relevant to the staff member's current employment *or*
- it would better equip the staff member for other employment within the University *or*
- it is essential for overseas born staff members to gain recognition of existing qualifications (obtained overseas) or to have such qualifications upgraded to meet Australian requirements.

Continuation of Study Time from year to year depends on the participant making satisfactory progress in his or her studies. Other than in exceptional circumstances (for example, if the participant can prove that the reasons for not passing the subject/unit at first attempt were outside of his/her control) Study Time will not be granted to repeat a subject/unit.

Monitoring of progress will take place through the University's performance management and development framework. The staff member's study will be included in their performance and development plan and the supervisor will monitor and review the staff member's progress during the course of their studies and at each annual performance review.

2. Approved Courses

Study Time may be granted to an eligible staff member to undertake an "Approved Course". An Approved Course will include:

- degree or diploma course at university;
- associate diploma, certificate and post-certificate courses through TAFE;
- School Certificate, Higher School Certificate and Certificate or Diploma Entrance through TAFE
- approved basic literacy and numeracy programs;
- approved English language courses and skills development programs for people of non-English speaking background;
- an approved course at any level, which has been identified and agreed to between the staff member and their supervisor through the Performance Management & Development Program (PM&D), and which has been deemed as relevant to the staff member's current position. (Note: this agreement needs to be endorsed and approved by the Head of School or Organisational Unit/Dean in accordance with the Delegations of Authority);
- higher degree;
- postgraduate diploma;
- an accreditation course or program that leads to a recognised qualification through a certified and professional body such as Certified Practising Accountant (CPA);
- non-degree study including professional accreditation courses or programs, bridging courses or subjects and other nationally accredited courses.

3. Amount of Study Time

The amount of Study Time approved is to be consistent with the arrangements set out in *Attachment 1*.

4. Approval Process

Study Time is approved by the Head of School/Administrative Unit, as appropriate. Study Time applications

are considered on the basis of the staff member's individual circumstances and the operational needs of the faculty/school/unit. The Head of School/Administrative Unit may consult with their HR Advisor in regards to a staff member's eligibility for Study Time and the impact of the Study Time requirements on the staff member's working hours and on the unit.

It is expected that approval would be withheld only if the work of the faculty/unit would be *seriously impeded* by the granting of Study Time to an otherwise eligible staff member.

If a Study Time application is refused, a staff member should be given a timely explanation of the reasons their application was refused.

5. Withdrawal from Study

It is a condition of Study Time approval for a staff member on Study Time to advise their supervisor and Head of School or Administrative Unit/Dean if they have discontinued or withdrawn from a subject/unit and/or course. The supervisor must then advise the Human Resources Service Centre (HRSC) of the staff member's withdrawal from studies. Any Study Time taken after the date of discontinuation or withdrawal will then be processed as annual leave or leave without pay.

The University may refuse any future Study Time applications made by a staff member who has previously failed to inform the University of discontinuation or withdrawal from study in a timely manner.

6. Additional Advice

Staff members are encouraged to contact the University's Learning Centre or their relevant Faculty student information office (or equivalent, at the institution where they are studying) for advice in regards to:

- examining career path options;
- choosing a relevant course of study;
- obtaining information about special admission courses and other aspects of mature age entry to tertiary study;
- selecting individual study skills programs, such as note taking, essay writing and examination preparation;
- planning and developing effective strategies to manage study and work commitments[1];
- planning work programs and discussing study time eligibility with Heads
- developing English language skills for overseas born staff members; gaining recognition of existing qualifications obtained overseas, or to having such qualifications upgraded to meet Australian requirements.
- staff members in the laboratory and animal house occupational streams attending TAFE training courses relevant to their position may consult with their HR Advisor for advice about the reimbursement of compulsory TAFE fees;
- Other forms of assistance for general staff may be covered in the policy ***Financial Assistance for Work-Related Qualifications and Skill Development*** *(currently under development).*

[1] The University's Counselling Service is available to assist students experiencing difficulties with study commitments (or equivalent, at the institution where they are studying).

Procedures

A Application for approval of Study Time

Study time is applied for on the Study Time application form available on the HR Forms website.

Applicants should:

a) Discuss their eligibility and proposed Study Time application with their supervisor at least 6 weeks before the enrolment date of the Approved Course;

b) Complete their Study Time application form at least 3 weeks before enrolment in the Approved Course and submit it to the Head of School/Administrative Unit (Head) with the following paperwork for approval:
   - details of proposed course enrolment;
   - subjects being taken;
   - total hours per week required for lecture attendance;
   - proof of satisfactory progress – i.e. term/semester examination results (if reapplying);
   - date of examination, residential school or graduation ceremonies as soon as they are known.

Information should be provided as far as possible in advance to assist the Head in the planning of work in the unit. Staff members wanting to use flexible working hours to meet course obligations during normal work hours must discuss their needs with their Head. Approval will be based on the staff member's individual circumstance and the operational needs of the faculty/school/administrative unit.

A Study Time application needs to be submitted on an annual basis. Approval is subject to satisfactory progress and consideration of the operational needs of the faculty/school/unit.

c) Once approval is granted by the Head, the staff member completes the course enrolment and submits the approved Study Time application form with supporting paperwork, **including proof of enrolment,** to the HRSC for processing. The HRSC will prepare a letter to the staff member confirming approval for Study Time and eligibility to apply for Study Time.

B Application for Study Type

Once a staff member has received approval for Study Time, an application form is completed on each occasion that Study Time is taken for:

- Online and Distance Education
- Examinations
- Block (Intensive) Attendance
- Continuous Assessment

The applicant should state clearly the purpose for which the Study Time is being requested. If applying for Study Time to attend examinations, documentation confirming the exam timetable should be attached. A staff member will be paid for the time taken off work as approved Study Time.

The applicant should notify their supervisor and Head of any proposed Study Time as soon as it is known to assist in the planning of work in their unit.

Attachment 1
Study Time Summary Table

Study Type		Study Time available	Maximum	Comments
Weekly Study Time (Face to face lectures/classes)				
	Regular classes	0.5 hours paid study time for every 1 hour of lecture time	4 hours study time per week	Can be taken in addition to study time for exam/s or continuous assessment
	Block (Intensive) attendance	0.5 hours paid study time for every 1 hour of lecture time	16 days per annum	Can be taken in addition to study time for exam/s or continuous assessment
Online and Distance Education				**Not eligible for weekly study time**
	Compulsory Residential School	Up to 15 days paid study time per annum	15 days per annum	Can be taken in addition to study time for exam/s, but **not** in addition to study time for continuous assessment. Subject to evidence of the requirement to attend compulsory residential school.
	No compulsory residential school	1 day paid study time per annum per subject	1 day per annum per subject	Can be taken in addition to study time for exam/s **or** continuous assessment (not both)
Assessment				
	Examination	2 days paid study time for each subject with final examination (includes day of exam)	10 days per annum	Cannot be taken in conjunction with study time for continuous assessment
	Continuous assessment (continual form of assessment, eg through assignments with no formal examinations)	1 day for each subject with no final examination	10 days per annum	To be taken **in lieu** of study time for exam/s
Higher Degrees by Research				
	Masters	up to 10 days paid study time per annum	10 days per annum	Cannot be taken in conjunction with any other type of study time
	Other Higher Degrees	up to 10 days paid study time per annum	10 days per annum	Cannot be taken in conjunction with any other type of study time
NOTES	1. Study Time is available for full-time staff to undertake part-time study only, up to a maximum of 50% of an equivalent full-time course load, at any time. Part-time staff will receive pro-rata benefits.			
	2. Staff members may work flexible working hours to accommodate study by mutual agreement with their HOS, HOA or Dean.			
	3. Study Time does **not** accrue and is not available during vacation periods for the course involved.			
	4. A 'Lecture' refers to any prescribed compulsory attendance at classes held during normal working hours or for exam preparation, assignments and travel to classes.			
	5. Study time for higher degrees (ie Masters or PhD) will only be granted for the minimum time given to complete the degree when enrolled part time. Ie, if the minimum time to complete a Masters part-time is four years, then study time will be granted for a period no greater than four years.			

Administration

1. Background

This policy replaces the Study Time policy dated 1998. It was revised by Human Resources and consultation took place with the Office of General Counsel and Faculty Managers. All University staff were provided with the opportunity to provide feedback on the draft policy.

2. Management Responsibility

Director, Human Resources

3. Implementation Responsibility

Head of School/Administrative Unit

4. Dates

Approval (version 1)	01/06/1998
Effect	01/06/1998
Review	2009
Approval (version 2)	26/03/2010
Effect	26/03/2010

5. Approval

Version 1	Vice-Chancellor
Version 2	Dr Michael Spence Vice-Chancellor and Principal

6. Signatures

Approved by:

Name

Dr Michael Spence

Position

Vice-Chancellor and Principal

Date

26 March 2010