



Australian Government

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development and Local Government

EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURE

Title: Study Assistance

Reference: Clause B2

Effective Date: 10 March 2010

Clause B2 of the *Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Enterprise Agreement 2009-2011* (Enterprise Agreement) contains the Department's conditions that apply to study assistance.

PURPOSE

1. Study assistance provides support for employees to undertake courses of study that will contribute to the improvement of their professional skills and knowledge relevant to the business of Infrastructure and the broader Australian Public Service.
2. Study assistance approval is discretionary. Access to study assistance is not an automatic entitlement. Study assistance support should be identified on the employee's Development on a Page and discussed at the biannual performance management discussions.
3. Applications should be considered in conjunction with the Enterprise Agreement and/or a determination made under section 24(1) the *Public Service Act 1999* or a common law contract and in particular with an individual's approved Development on a Page.
4. The study assistance provisions are designed to:
 - foster a learning culture;
 - encourage learning that addresses business needs;
 - provide a framework for transparent and effective decision-making;
 - encourage equitable access to learning; and
 - support learning activities that can be accommodated within the team's budget and work commitments.

Who can apply?

5. Ongoing Infrastructure employees are eligible to apply for study assistance.

6. Probationers, including participants of the Infrastructure Graduate Program, are not eligible for study assistance until they have successfully completed their probation period.

PROCESS

New to Infrastructure or moving within Infrastructure

7. Infrastructure is not obliged to comply with any study assistance approvals given by another agency. Employees transferring into Infrastructure must apply for assistance under the Infrastructure study assistance policy.
8. Employees moving within Infrastructure do not need to seek re-approval of their current semester's study assistance agreement. However, the employee's new supervisor must be notified of their study arrangements.

What are approved courses?

9. Tertiary, professional or technical subjects in the areas relevant to the operational needs of Infrastructure are eligible for support under study assistance. Examples of courses of study which may be approved are:
 - Secondary school certificates;
 - Certificates;
 - Diplomas;
 - Degrees;
 - Graduate Certificates and Diplomas;
 - Higher degrees;
 - Bridging courses; and
 - English as a second language.
10. All other training to enable the employee to gain a specific skill including single units, short courses, seminars, conferences and Australian Public Service Commission programs are external to the study assistance arrangements and are covered under the Infrastructure learning and development arrangements.

What are approved areas of study?

11. The areas of study eligible for study assistance are those relevant to the business needs of Infrastructure and, in some cases, the Australian Public Service.

Factors the Supervisor should consider when recommending study assistance

12. The criteria against which applications should be considered are:
 - the skills and specific knowledge required by the work unit;
 - the impact on the workload of the work unit;
 - the effective work performance of the employee;
 - the relevance of the course of study to the employee's future employment within Infrastructure;

- whether the study has been identified in the employee's Development on a Page;
- confirmation with the manager of the cost centre that the budget is available; and
- the ability for the applicant to undertake the study commitments out of normal working hours, where offered; and what level of support will be provided (i.e. student status only; study leave and/or financial support).

Factors the Delegate should consider when approving Study Assistance

13. The criteria against which applications should be considered are:

- whether the supervisor has supported the application;
- equity issues across the Branch;
- budget; and
- approval is not retrospective.

The Delegate

14. The employee's General Manager or equivalent is the employee's delegate for approval of study assistance.

LEVELS OF APPROVAL

15. The delegate has the discretion to grant three separate levels of approval, either individually or collectively but these are not automatic entitlements. In most cases, approval is for a semester/term rather than an entire study program and can be granted for:

- Level 1: approval as a student to undertake study;
- Level 2: leave for study purposes; and/or
- Level 3: financial assistance.

Note: Level 1 approval may be granted alone or included with Level 2 and/or Level 3 approvals. Level 2 and Level 3 approvals cannot be granted without a Level 1 approval.

Level 1 - Approval as a Student

16. Approval as a Student for study assistance will provide the employee with workers compensation cover while undertaking study activities, such as attending compulsory examinations. The employee is not covered for workers compensation when undertaking approved study while on Leave Without Pay.

17. Approval limited to Student status only (i.e. study leave and financial assistance not included) may be applicable when:

- the area of study is of only marginal relevance to the Department;
- the employee has already had a significant amount of study assistance in the past;
- a large proportion of employees in the area are already accessing assistance for the semester applied; or
- there are budgetary constraints.

Level 2 - Approval to take Study Leave

18. Study assistance is a joint commitment by the employee and the Department to further develop the capability of individuals and the organisation. As such, employees are encouraged to undertake their class and lecture commitments outside of normal working hours where these are offered and this is manageable for the employee. However, the Department recognises that some staff have fixed commitments outside work hours.
19. The delegate may approve up to a maximum of eight hours paid leave per week to enable an employee to travel to and from lectures. If the employee has had study leave approved the employee should, in advance, negotiate with their supervisor an agreed amount of leave and travel time to complete the study. Study leave is flexible and should mutually accommodate the employee, their duties and the operational requirements of the workplace.
20. Study leave can be:
 - taken weekly to attend a course or contact session that occurs during business hours;
 - taken in the case of distance or intensive study, accrued to cover attendance at course residential;
 - taken to attend briefings, intensive sessions etc that occur during business hours; or
 - accrued over the course of study and used to prepare assignments or study for exams.
21. Study leave does not:
 - carry forward from one semester to another;
 - apply to employees on leave without pay for full-time study;
 - equate to or be converted to, another form of leave;
 - accrue during personal circumstances leave or mid-semester breaks.
22. The table below is a guide only and suggests an equitable approach to study leave and travel that the supervisor and delegate may wish to consider in their deliberation:

Part-time Weekly Contact Study		Part-time Distance or Intensive Study	Full-time Study
Study Leave (part-time employees are eligible pro-rata)	We suggest 3 hours per unit, per week to attend contact sessions, study and/or research.	We suggest 1 to 1 1/2 hours a subject weekly for study or research plus time required to attend a compulsory residential or intensive component held during normal working hours.	Full-time study is usually undertaken as leave without pay. Employees can apply for leave and are normally required to return to duty between academic years. Delegates may grant leave with full pay, or a proportion, if an applicant can provide a strong written case and has the support of their supervisor.
Travel Time (part-time employees are eligible pro-rata)	An agreed amount of time each week to travel to their contact sessions and return to Infrastructure	An agreed amount of time, to travel to and from a compulsory residential or intensive component, if the travel occurs during normal working hours.	

	(not to their home).		
Exam Time	Employees can be granted an agreed amount of time to attend exams of approved subjects plus travel to and from Infrastructure and the exam venue.		
Employees with a Disability or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Employees	An additional 5 hours per week study leave in recognition of their particular needs, as defined by the Government. Infrastructure Diversity Coordinator can assist with individual advice.		

Level 3 - Approval to receive financial assistance

23. Delegates are authorised to spend public money in relation to their administrative responsibility in accordance with Schedule 1 of the Chief Executive's Delegations. Delegates can decide the number of subjects an employee will be funded per semester.
24. Levels of support are subject to individual negotiation and the supervisor and delegate's discretion. The level of financial assistance is determined on a case-by-case basis with reference to the following levels of support:

Indicative level of financial support	Relevance	Examples
Up to 100%	Directly related to the employee's current work function.	An employee in LGRD undertaking project management.
25% to 50%	Related to the work of the Department or the APS in areas other than where the employee is currently employed	An employee in Infrastructure undertaking Chinese language studies.
0% (support in the form of time off and/or approval as a student may be granted).	Relevant to the employee's private development.	An employee in Infrastructure undertaking Art Appreciation.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

25. If an application for study assistance is not approved, the delegate must advise the employee and supply the employee with written comments and feedback on the reasons the employee's application was declined.

26. If an applicant is not satisfied as to the reasons for refusal of study assistance after receiving feedback they can seek a review of decision in the Collective Agreement under the 'Review of decisions and preventing and settling disputes' (Section E) This process commences with discussion with their supervisor. Where a dispute is not resolved after that discussion, the dispute will be referred to more senior levels of management and the employee or their chosen representatives for resolution. If the matter is not resolved after these initial processes, the applicant should refer to the Enterprise Agreement for further information.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

27. Employee Responsibilities

- Referring to the study assistance employment procedures and discussing the proposed study with the supervisor prior to applying for study assistance on the study assistance application form;
- Submitting the completed form to the study assistance officer in the People and Performance Branch for statistical and reporting purposes and for retention on the personnel file;
- Submitting evidence of successful completion of the agreed study to the supervisor and to the study assistance officer in the People and Performance Branch for statistical and reporting purposes and for retention on the personnel file; and
- Submitting original receipts to the supervisor and a photocopy to the study assistance officer in the People and Performance Branch where payment of fees has been approved.

28. Supervisor Responsibilities

- Discussing the study assistance application with the employee;
- Referring to the study assistance employment procedure when considering the relevance of the proposed study and the level of support to be recommended;
- Recommending to the delegate the appropriate level of support; and
- Monitoring the progression of approved study through the employee's Development on a Page biannual performance management discussions.

29. Delegate (the employee's General Manager or equivalent) Responsibilities

- Providing the employee with reasons in writing if an application for study assistance is declined;
- Making a decision on study assistance applications after consideration of the supervisor's recommendation, the study assistance employment procedures and funding availability;
- Determining the level of support; and
- Ensuring Branch or equivalent commitments are reported to their Executive.

30. People and Performance Branch Responsibilities

- Providing advice and guidance on the study assistance policy;
- Administration in relation to collection of statistics and reporting on participation across Divisions; and

- Tracking overall commitment under these guidelines, including quarterly reporting on:
 - divisional expenditure on Study Assistance; and
 - number of study assistance approvals.

Reimbursement

31. Where an employee voluntarily resigns during the period of study assistance (and not due to extenuating circumstances such as, but not restricted to and on a case-by-case basis, illness, redeployment, retrenchment or redundancy), or has their employment terminated due to misconduct within 12 months of the date of financial assistance, the Department may seek reimbursement of up to 100% of the financial assistance from the last recorded payment in SAP
32. To apply for Study Assistance a Study Assistance Application must be completed for each semester of study. To be approved the application must be supported by the applicant's supervisor and approved by the delegate.
33. Following approval the employee must send the ORIGINAL signed Application to the Learning and Development Team of the People and Performance Branch for recording and retention on the employee's Personnel File. A photocopy should be kept by the applicant for their personal records.

Payment of Fees

34. Payment of fees will be in accordance with the level of financial support agreed on the study assistance application.
35. For those studies that are directly linked to the employee's current work function, the Department will approve upfront payment either directly to the institution or as reimbursement of the fees paid by the employee.
36. Reimbursements of study assistance payments that have been approved for **upfront** payment are to be sought by completing a Claim for Payment form with relevant receipt(s) attached. The Claim for Payment form should be processed in line with normal Branch processes and forwarded to the Accounts Payable Section.
37. Reimbursement of fees for study assistance that has been approved for payment **following successful completion** of the study are to be sought by completing a Claim for Payment form with relevant receipt(s) and proof of successful completion of the study attached. The Claim for Payment form should be processed in line with normal Branch processes and forwarded to the Accounts Payable Section.

Payment of Invoices Direct to Institution

38. A payment direct to an institution is made following normal procedures for paying invoices i.e.
 - under \$5,000 by Departmental corporate credit card; or
 - if over \$5,000, by a Claim for Payment form, with ORIGINAL invoices attached. Claims should be processed through normal processes to the Accounts Payable Section.
39. Multiple receipts can be reimbursed on one Claim for Payment. In the field marked "Invoice No" fill in "REIMB" followed by the date the payment was made, eg: "REIMB300607".

Cost Centre, General Ledger and Tax Codes

40. It is important to ensure that Cost Centre and General Ledger codes are listed against each item and that they are separated into taxed and non-taxed items.

	General Ledger	Tax Codes
CSP (previously HECS)	45220	GST Inclusive P1 GST Exempt P2
All Other fees (eg books/administration)	45225	GST Inclusive P1 GST Exempt P2

Study Leave

41. Employees should record Study Leave on their Flex sheets or attendance record. For guidance on completion of flex sheets, refer to the Department's *Working Hours Employment Procedures*.

FORMS

42. The [Claim for Payment form](#) is used to make any payment (not limited to paying bills, also includes reimbursements, grant payments, etc). Completed forms and attachments should be returned for processing to:

Financial Services Team
Accounts Payable Section
Level 5, 62 Northbourne Ave
Canberra

43. The accounts payable register on SAP will then be updated. The form and supporting documentation are filed for auditing purposes.
44. Employees should keep copies of all their study assistance documentation.

Author: People and Performance Branch

Date: 5 February 2010

Authorised by: Secretary

Date: 10 March 2010

STUDY ASSISTANCE APPLICATION FORM

When completed and signed by your supervisor and delegate, please forward the **ORIGINAL** form to the **Study Assistance Officer, Learning and Development Team, (Level 6 West, 62 Northbourne Ave - Ext 7359)**. Where applicable, you must attach a copy of your academic transcripts or results for the previous semester. Documents are placed on your personnel file.

1. Applicant's Details

Full Name: AGS Number:

APS Level:..... Business Division: Branch:

Phone: Employment Status: Full Time Part Time: (No of hours)

2. Proposed Study

Title of the unit to be studied this semester:.....

Is this unit part of a Degree or Certificate, if so please name:

Name of study institution:

Anticipated date of completion:

Has the proposed study been included in your Plan on a Page: **YES / NO**

Form of Study:

- By weekly course attendance
- Distance study with a residential component
- Distance study without a residential component
- Intensive irregular contact sessions
- Full-time Study
- If full-time study, will you access **leave without pay?** **YES / NO**

3. Contact / Attendance Schedule

Weekly Institutional Contact Sessions:

Subject	Attendance Day/s	Session Length	Travel Time (mins)

Residential Contact Sessions:

Subject	Attendance Dates	Location	Hours /Days of Attendance

Intensive Contact Sessions:

Subject	Attendance Dates

4. Study Period

Course Starts:/...../..... and Ends:/...../.....

No. of Weeks:
(do not include study or semester breaks)

Exam/Assessment Period:/...../..... to/...../.....

5. Financial Support Sought

Please refer to Department’s *Study Assistance Employment Procedure* for information on the levels of financial support.

100% Tuition fee or 80% of CSP liability	\$.....
Compulsory admin or registration fees	\$.....
Books/Materials	\$.....
TOTAL	\$.....

Which financial year do these fees apply?
Which quarter of the financial year do these fees apply: Q1, Q2, Q3 or Q4?

6. Calculation of Potential Leave Liability

This table enables your Delegate to make a more informed decision based on your requirements. If this cannot accurately reflect your study needs, attach a separate page.

	PURPOSE FOR LEAVE	HRS PER WEEK		WEEKS IN COURSE (Excl breaks)		TOTAL - for this course of study or Semester	
Part-time Weekly Contact Study	To attend contact sessions (if applicable)		X		=		+ ↓
	To travel to attend contact sessions (if applicable)		X		=		+ ↓
Part-time Distance or Intensive Study	To attend any compulsory residentials or intensive components that occur <u>during normal working hours</u> over course of this study				=		+ ↓
	To travel <u>during working hours</u> to and from venues for compulsory residentials or intensive components over course of this study				=		+ ↓
All Students	Leave for study or research		X		=		+ ↓
All Students	Time (including travel) to undertake exams				=		+ ↓
TOTAL STUDY LEAVE REQUESTED FOR SEMESTER <i>Part-time Officers receive Study Assistance leave on a pro-rata basis</i>							

7. Applicant's Signature

Signed: Date:

In signing this Application, I agree to abide to the agreement negotiated between myself, my Supervisor and my Delegate for Study Assistance and set out in this Application. I have read and understand the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Study Assistance Guideline and agree to adhere to the principles and my responsibilities contained therein.

8. Supervisor's Recommendation

Is there any study leave recommended? If so, how much?

Is there any financial support recommended: If so, how much?

Supporting Statement: *(if insufficient space, please provide an attachment)*

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Signed: Date:

Printed Name: Position:

In signing, I support this Study Assistance Application and the negotiations outlined above and agree to abide by the principles and responsibilities for Supervisors outlined in the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Study Assistance Guidelines.

9. Delegate's Approval

Approval for Study Assistance Applicant as student **YES / NO**

Approval for Applicant to take the periods of leave agreed to and listed under Section 6 for course attendance, travel, study time and exams **YES / NO**

Approval for Applicant to receive the financial assistance sought **YES / NO**

Comments: *(if insufficient space, please provide an attachment)*

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Signed: Date:

Print Name: Position:

In signing, I approve this Study Assistance Application, consent to the negotiations outlined, and agree to abide by the principles and responsibilities for Delegates outlined in the Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government Study Assistance Employment Procedures