



The University of Sydney

Study Time Policy - General Staff

(Updated in relation to Clauses 5, 6 and 7. Policy to be revised in 1998)

1. Introduction

The University has a policy of assisting members of its staff to improve their qualifications. It has approved the following conditions to assist employees undertaking courses approved by the University.

Time off to assist employees undertaking studies is known as 'study time'.

Where to get advice?

Staff are encouraged to contact their College or Division Personnel Services Team, regarding their eligibility for study time under this policy.

Help is available from the Personnel Services Team or the Staff Development Unit to:

- examine career path options
- choose a relevant course of study
- obtain information about special admission courses and other aspects of mature age entry to tertiary study
- select individual study skills programs, such as note taking, essay writing and examination preparation
- plan and develop effective strategies to manage study and work commitments
- plan work programs and discuss study time eligibility with heads of department
- develop English language skills for overseas born employees; gain recognition of existing qualifications (obtained overseas) or to have such qualifications upgraded to meet Australian requirements.

2. How to apply

Applications for study time should be on the special form 'application for study time', available from your Personnel Services Team.

Applications should be:

- i. discussed with your Head of Department/School at least 3 weeks before the commencement of the course
- ii. completed by you and submitted for signature by your Head of Department/School
- iii. sent to your Personnel Services Team.

3. Who can apply?

Study time is available for general staff who:

- are permanent (either full or part-time) or
- are fixed-term or renewable with at least 12 months service and at least a further 12 months appointment in prospect
- have, in all cases, completed their probation period.

Special notes:

- i. part-time staff will receive pro-rata benefits
- ii. staff in the laboratory , animal house and library occupational streams should consider which of the alternatives available to them (study time under this policy or under the provisions of their Agreement) is more beneficial personally.

Staff members who are covered by any of the 'special notes' are encouraged to discuss their individual position with the Personnel Services Team.

4. Your responsibilities in study time

It is the responsibility of the applicant for study time to provide the Head of Department/ School and the Personnel Services Team with:

- proof of course enrolment, subjects being taken, and the total hours per week required for lecture attendance
- dates of examination leave or residential schools as soon as they are known
- information on progress (in the form of term or semester examination results).

Information should be provided as far as possible in advance to assist the Head of Department/School in the planning of work schedules.

5. What are "approved courses"?

A - Initial qualifications or preparation for study

Study time may be granted to an eligible employee for an approved course, at any level which will improve the employee's qualifications. Generally these courses will be in the following categories:

- i. degree or diploma courses at universities, or nationally accredited courses
- ii. associate diploma, certificate and post-certificate courses through TAFE, or nationally accredited courses
- iii. School Certificate, Higher School Certificate and Certificate or Diploma Entrance through TAFE, or nationally accredited courses
- iv. approved basic literacy and numeracy programs

- v. approved English language courses and skills development programs for people of non English speaking background.

B - Further study

Study time may be granted for:

- i. higher degrees
- ii. postgraduate diplomas
- iii. second bachelor's degrees
- iv. post trade certificates
- v. non degree or miscellaneous study.

The criteria which relate to courses in these categories are:

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

It is the applicant's responsibility to prepare an additional statement to be attached to the application to support the application and explain how the proposed course meets the above criteria. The Head of Department may also wish to support the application and this statement should also be attached to the study time application.

6. Study time approval

Study Time is approved by an employee's Head of Department in academic departments, or in the case of administrative departments, the relevant senior manager at HEO level 10.

Any concerns on the part of the individual staff member about the processing of an application may be raised directly with the appropriate PVC or DVC.

It is expected that approval would be withheld only if the work of the department/school would be *seriously impeded* by the granting of study time to an otherwise eligible employee.

7. How much study time?

Eligible employees (see section 3) may be granted a maximum of 4 hours a week study time. The exact amount of study time will be calculated according to this formula: half an hour study time for each hour of lecture time. (For this purpose 'lecture time' includes all periods of prescribed compulsory attendance at classes.)

This study time is then available for the purpose of attendance at classes, where these are held during normal working hours, or for assignment and examination preparation and for travelling to classes.

Study time for higher degrees may be granted up to the minimum time prescribed for part time candidature for the degree involved. Applicants are required each year to support the granting of study time beyond this prescribed minimum.

Staff undertaking a masters degree by research may be granted up to ten days study time per year.

Study time is not accruable and is not available during term/semester vacation periods for the course involved.

8. Distance Education

Residential schools

Members of staff undertaking distance education are not eligible for weekly study time.

They are, however, able to apply for up to 15 days' leave per annum to attend compulsory residential schools for an approved distance education course.

If a course requires attendance at residential schools in excess of 15 days per annum, application can be made for recreation leave. If recreation leave has been exhausted, in some circumstances, leave without pay may be approved.

In addition, staff members are eligible to apply for leave to attend examinations (see section 9)

Travelling time is not included in the calculation of residential school leave granted.

9. Leave to attend examinations

Members of staff undertaking an approved course of study are eligible to apply for up to a maximum of 10 days' examination leave in any one academic year. This will be granted on the basis of two days' leave for each subject in which the employee has a final examination. It should be noted that examination leave is not available for every examination in a subject.

Application for examination leave should be made on a leave form, stating clearly the purpose for which the leave is being requested. A copy of the exam timetable should be attached if possible.

10. Varying working hours

The Higher Education General and Salaried Staff Award provides:

'So long as the number of hours worked in any one week in total are the same as the ordinary hours of duty, an employee may, where it is previously mutually agreed between the University and the employee, work those hours outside the prescribed hours.'

Thus employees can discuss their needs with their Head of Department and by mutual agreement may be able to vary their working arrangements where necessary.

11. Satisfactory progress and loss of study time

Continuation of study time from year to year depends on the participants making satisfactory progress in his or her studies. To achieve satisfactory progress in any one year an employee must pass at least half the courses attempted. Other than in exceptional circumstances study time will not be granted to repeat a subject. An employee who has forfeited the study time, concession in any year, because of unsatisfactory progress, may regain it in a later year following successful completion of study in the employee's own time.

Study time participants who are experiencing difficulty with study commitments are encouraged to contact the Staff Development Unit, for individual assistance.

12. The University's contribution:

Payment of compulsory student organisation fees

Employees of this University are not exempt from paying at enrolment the normal compulsory subscriptions required of university students.

A benefit for staff participating in the study time scheme is, however, the reimbursement of compulsory student organisation fees. The fees being reimbursed will not include any Higher Education Contribution Scheme charges.

Payment of certain TAFE fees

Staff in the laboratory and animal house occupational streams who have had study time approved to attend a TAFE training course relevant to their position, may also apply for a refund of compulsory TAFE fees.

The condition for refund of these fees is successful completion of each year's program of study.

In cases where the staff member has not passed all the subjects undertaken in the year, the compulsory fees will be refunded for those subjects passed, on a pro rata basis.

Fees Claiming Procedure

The procedure for claiming these fees back is as follows:

- i. on payment of the fees, retain the receipts; (you should investigate how the reimbursement of these fees will affect any taxation claim for 'self education expenses')
- ii. obtain and complete a [request for cheque form](#) (including the account details from which the reimbursement shall be made) and forward to your Head of Department for approval

- iii. return the approved form with your receipts and a copy of your final examination results to the Personnel Services Team.

For further information on the provisions of this policy, please contact the Personnel Team for your College or Division.

AMENDMENT TO STUDY TIME POLICY (6/98)

(as approved by the Vice-Chancellor on 1.6.98)

BLOCK (INTENSIVE) ATTENDANCE

Staff who undertake an approved course in which there is compulsory intensive attendance in blocks of time, may be granted a maximum of 16 days per annum study time as follows. The exact amount of study time will be calculated according to the formula: half an hour study time for each hour of lecture time. (For this purpose 'lecture time' includes all periods of prescribed compulsory attendance at classes.)

Members of staff may undertake these programs subject to

- the approval of the supervisor who will consider the needs of the area, and
- there being no comparable alternative that distributes the study time.

A leave form should be submitted for each individual leave occasion. Staff approved under these conditions are also entitled to apply for examination leave.

CONTINUOUS ASSESSMENT

Students on approved study time who are not required to attend formal examinations, but have a continual form of assessment, are eligible to apply for one day study leave per annum for each subject in which they are required to complete a major assignment or project in lieu of examination leave. A leave form should be submitted for each individual leave occasion, and the maximum leave of this type which may be applied for is 10 days per year.

DISTANCE EDUCATION

Members of staff undertaking distance education who are not required to attend compulsory residential school, are eligible to apply for one day study leave per annum for each subject. A leave form should be submitted for each individual leave occasion. These staff are also entitled to apply for examination **or** continual assessment leave.