

# Staff Education and Study Assistance Policy



Town of Cottesloe

## 1. Objectives

- a. The Town of Cottesloe is committed to their employee's academic and personal development in order to maintain knowledgeable, efficient workforce as well as assisting with staff retention.
- b. All employees have equal access to training and development opportunities promoted by the Town and/or identified in the staff performance review process.
- c. This policy provides guidance in administering an employee's request for further education and specifies what the Town will reimburse employees for expenses incurred as well as leave allocation while undertaking approved courses of study, as part of their career planning.

## 2. Principles

- a. The Town of Cottesloe supports and encourages employees to undertake studies appropriate to the needs of The Town.
- b. The Town recognises that employees will from time to time aspire to upgrade their knowledge and skills.

## 3. Issues

The Town of Cottesloe's Enterprise Agreement 2011 permits employee time off at the ordinary time hourly rate to attend compulsory approved study and examinations. It also refers to reimbursement of tuition fees incurred when undertaking a course of study relevant to his/her employment after passing each subject on a semester/term basis.

## 4. Policy

- a. Education (being acquisition of general, tertiary and professional skills and qualification) is the responsibility of the individual employee.
- b. The Town will provide regular opportunities for employees of the Town to upgrade and enhance their skills.
- c. This policy only applies to Full time and Part time employment. Employee who are a trainee, apprentice, casual and employees on a temporary contract of 12 months or less will not be eligible to apply.
- d. The employee's manager is required to advise the Chief Executive Officer in writing of their support for the course of study that is being proposed and/or undertaken by the employee. The employee must gain the Manager and Chief Executive Officer's approval of the course prior to seeking assistance under this Policy.

- e. The Town is supportive of employees who seek further education and, through the Chief Executive Officer, an application may be consider and/or approved under the following considerations:
  - i. the employee is genuinely intending to return to work after such studies.
  - ii. the studies are relevant to the current position or potential future career development.
  - iii. the extent to which the employee's department/section will be inconvenienced.
  - iv. any future projects or Town of Cottesloe objectives which the study may impact upon.
  - v. the employee's past work performance and behaviour.

#### **4.1 Opportunities for Development approved by Council**

- a. University and other nationally recognised post secondary studies.
- b. Technical and Further Education (TAFE) and technical college or equivalent.
- c. Any approved course of study offered by a recognised institution or organisation, for example Australian Institute of Management (AIM), and Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA)

#### **4.2 Leave arrangement**

The Town will provide the opportunity for an employee to take time off (study leave) from work with the following conditions:

- a. For full-time Employees: The Town will provide time off with pay (study leave) of up to a maximum of five (5) hours per week depending on course contact time and is inclusive of travel time to attend lectures.
- b. For Part-time Employees: Part-time employees will receive pro-rata of up to a maximum of five (5) hours of study leave depending on course contact time and is inclusive of travel time to attend lectures and is based on the hours worked.
- c. Correspondence and Online Courses: For the purpose of calculating time for any person studying by correspondence or via online learning then the Town shall rely on the time recommended by the learning institution for the course to be covered, provided that it does not exceed the time allocated for on campus studies, but will be no greater than five (5) hours per week (part-time employees as per above).
- d. Examinations: Leave will be granted to enable the employee to attend examinations relating to the course of study being undertaken but will be no greater than 5 hours per week (part-time employees as per above). Should the employee wish to take a whole day off then that would require the use of other types of leave (example annual or personal leave) or comply with the Flexible Working Hours rules and be approved by the Manager.

- e. Block Leave: Courses requiring block leave instead of weekly attendance will receive up to a maximum of 5 hours of study leave (depending on course contact time) per week (pro- rata for part time employees) over the course of the semester. The employee will be allowed to accrue the weekly study leave allocation for later use while attending the block period of study. The weekly study leave accrual cannot exceed the block leave. For any shortfall in time, the employee will be required to take some other type of leave. The period of study is the normal semester or study period as defined by the learning institution.

#### **4.3 The Town's Contribution to Fees**

When it is financially advantageous to do so the Town will consider paying the fees incurred upfront providing a Deed of Agreement is entered into with the employee. The Deed of Agreement will include the following items:

- a. The Town may pay in advance for employee who wishes to pay their fees up front in order to receive the discount offered by their respective Educational Institution.
- b. Employees who receive this assistance from the Town will be required to pay back 100% of the Town's contribution should they leave the Town's employment within 12 months service following the completion of each unit of study.
- c. Should an employee leave the Town part way through completion of a unit(s) of study, the employee will be required to pay back the entirety of the Town's contribution made available to the employee for that unit of study.
- d. If necessary the Town to deduct 100% of the contribution from an employee's termination pay, if they leave prior to 12 months service following the completion of each unit of study, and 100% for any incomplete unit of study. Any payments made by the Town for incomplete units of study will be recovered in full from the employee.
- e. The employee pays for the fees and thereafter provides a copy of their receipt and statement of results at the end of semester at which time the Town will repay the employee 100% upon proof of completion and passing of the course. A Statement of results as well as a copy of the payment receipt is required before reimbursement will be issued and will be recorded on their personnel file.

The Town will not make any contribution towards the books, parking, campus fines, memberships, guild fees, travel costs or other costs associated with the course of study undertaken (for example, no mileage will be paid).

All requests for assistance from the Town should be made and approved within a financial year and not be carried into a second financial year.

The need for an employee to repeat a unit shall be deemed to be unsatisfactory performance and the employee will not receive further assistance from the Town.

Any employee who is granted time off for study or who receives a financial contribution from the Town in support of their personal commitment to study must accept that it has been granted within the framework of the Town's overall training program. Accordingly, it must be accepted that while they are in receipt of any of the benefits that are provided for by this Policy, they may not be the beneficiary of any other sponsored training provided by the Town.

Fees paid to employees who work part-time hours will be calculated on a pro-rata system calculated as a percentage of a full time equivalent figure based on the employee's normal hours of work.

All costs, other than salaries, incurred under this Policy will be costed against the Town's training and conference budget and the administration of this Policy and the guidelines that apply to it will be the responsibility of the Executive Services, which will ensure that any arrangements entered into, are properly documented recorded and processed.

Adopted	28 May 2012
Expected date of review	