



## Studies Assistance Guidelines

1. Studies assistance consists of study leave and financial assistance in accordance with clauses 58.2-58.6 of the Enterprise Agreement and these Guidelines.
2. Training or courses provided under the professional development program at clause 58.1, or ad hoc learning and development opportunities at clauses 58.7 and 58.8 of the Enterprise Agreement do not qualify for studies assistance and are considered to be time on duty.
3. Applications are open all year round to accommodate semester, trimester or yearlong studies.
4. Consider including your study details into your Performance Agreement.

## Definitions

5. **Course** means a program of study undertaken for a qualification at an Australian tertiary institution under the Australian Qualifications Framework (e.g. Certificate III, Bachelor Degree, Graduate Diploma and Masters Degree).
6. **Component of a course** means a discrete subject or unit of a course.
7. **Semester or period of study** means the period over which a component of a course is undertaken, commencing on the first day of coursework (or the receipt of coursework or commencement of the component of the course, whichever is earlier) and ending on the last day of formal assessment of that component of the course (e.g. the final date for submission of assessment or of a take-home or online examination, or the date of a final examination).

## Eligibility

8. Employees are not required to seek approval for studies assistance prior to the commencement of the relevant semester. It is best practice however, for applications to be submitted as soon as possible to reduce the potential financial risk prior to formal approval (i.e. the employee will be liable for study costs where studies assistance is not supported by the employing Member and approved by Finance). Employees are not eligible for and cannot access financial assistance or study leave until their application is supported by the employing Member or Authorised person, and

approved by Ministerial and Parliamentary Services within department of Finance (Finance).

9. An employee considering applying for studies assistance is encouraged to discuss their application with Finance before the commencement of each component of the course. The final decision to approve or not approve studies assistance rests with Finance. If Finance does not approve an application, the reason for this decision will be provided in writing to the employee.
10. Studies assistance includes financial assistance and/or study leave (absences from work for study purposes). Employees cannot access studies assistance while they are on any form of leave without pay (LWOP). Where an employee is on any form of LWOP during a period of study, any reimbursement of study costs will be reduced by pro rata, based on the proportion of the LWOP taken within the study period.
11. An approval for studies assistance is only valid for the period of MoP(S) Act employment with the employing Member who supported the application. If an employee commences with a different employing Member during the period of study, a new approval will be required. Requests for any new approval should be received by Finance within four weeks of the change of employment.

## Applying for studies assistance

- [Refer to Online form - Application for Studies Assistance and Study Leave](#)
12. An application for studies assistance for a period of study (or concurrent period of study) must be submitted through the online web form (link above). The application must include both the employee and employing Member (or Authorised person's) approval and justification for the qualification being directly related to the employee's current role.
  13. Applications for subsequent periods of study each require a new application.

## Criteria for approval of studies assistance

14. The employing Member, in considering an application for studies assistance, may wish to discuss the application with Finance prior to giving their agreement. When considering an application for studies assistance, Finance may also consult with the employing Member. Both the employing Member and Finance may take the following issues into consideration:
  - a. employee's past/current performance
  - b. whether the employee has studied previously and to what level
  - c. whether the further education is directly related to the employee's duties and/or whether it will provide any additional benefit to the employing Member
  - d. whether the proposed course is one which is more likely to be offered as part of the options provided for at clauses 58.1, 58.7 and 58.8 of the Enterprise Agreement and, therefore, does not qualify for studies assistance

- e. career and professional development needs and goals of the employee
- f. strategic and operational needs of the employing Member and the knowledge and skills required by the employee for current or likely future duties; and
- g. any other relevant matter.

## Financial assistance

- 15. The maximum amount of financial assistance which may be reimbursed per financial year to a full-time employee is \$10,000AUD.
- 16. The maximum reimbursement for part time employees, is pro-rata and applied in accordance with the average number of hours worked per week during the periods of study in that financial year, as specified in their employment agreement.

**Example:** The formula to calculate the **pro rata maximum reimbursement** threshold per financial year is as follows:

$$\text{Average weekly work hours (19hrs)} \times \$10,000 / 38 \text{ hours} = \$5,000 \text{ can be claimed}$$

The formula to calculate a **pro rata reimbursement** per period of study is as follows:

$$\text{Average weekly work hours (19hrs)} \times \$\text{amount of financial reimbursement claimed } (\$3,000) / 38 \text{ hours} = \$1,500 \text{ reimbursement amount}$$

- 17. Where an employee commences MoP(S) Act employment after the commencing study period date, the reimbursement threshold will be pro rata based on the employee's commencement date within that period of study.

**Example:** an employee who commences employment under the MoP(S) Act 4 weeks into a 10 week semester with final study costs of \$2,000, may be eligible to be reimbursed 6 of the remaining 10 weeks ( $6/10 \times \$2,000 = \$1,200$ ).

The maximum financial year reimbursement threshold will be  $6/10 \times \$10,000 = \$6,000$ .

- 18. Following are the type of costs that are reimbursable by Finance subject to prior approval of financial assistance and satisfactory completion of the relevant component of the course:
  - a. compulsory tuition and course fees
  - b. Higher Education Loans Program (HELP)
  - c. examination and assessment fees.
- 19. The following costs will not be reimbursed:
  - a. sports and/or student union fees
  - b. general/administrative fees
  - c. bank surcharge fees

- d. fees for components of a course not successfully completed
- e. travel and/or accommodation expenses (e.g. to get to the educational institution or when residing on/or required to attend campus)
- f. books, journals, newspapers, stationery and other materials
- g. costs of producing material for the course being undertaken
- h. graduation ceremony and regalia hire cost.

## Claiming reimbursement

- 20. Claims for reimbursement must be lodged with Finance. Reimbursement will only be made to the employee on satisfactory completion of the component of the course.
- 21. Claims must include:
  - a. all relevant receipts (or evidence of the study costs deferred to the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP)) including providing a Commonwealth Assistance Notice (CAN); and
  - b. a certified copy of the results (e.g. transcript or letter from the educational institution, or a printout of web-based results certified as a true copy) for the component of the course.
- 22. Reimbursement will not be made where an employee is not a current MoP(S) Act employee on the completion of the component of the course. Note, as defined above for studies assistance purposes, a period of study (or semester) during which a component of a course is completed ends on the last day of formal assessment.
- 23. All claims for the reimbursement of study costs must be submitted within 12 months of the successful subject/unit completion or before the employee's cessation date, whichever comes first.

## Study leave (paid absences from work for approved study purposes)

- 24. Paid study leave is a form of other leave under clause 43.1(c) of the Enterprise Agreement.
- 25. The Enterprise Agreement provides paid study leave of up to five hours per week for full-time employees. Approved study leave may be pooled and accessed over the period of study. Unused hours from one period of study cannot be carried over to another period of study. It is important to note that study leave taken is to be managed between the employee and their direct manager and must not exceed what has been approved in the studies assistance application. This can be reflected in the employee's time sheet by submitting a miscellaneous leave request to track agreed leave for study purposes.

**Example:** if a full-time employee is approved for study leave and the course runs over **13** weeks at X **5** hours per week, the study leave pool available will be 65 hours. This can be used at any time over the 13 weeks. Pooled study leave should be tracked and accessed as agreed between the employee and employing Member.

26. Study leave for part-time employees will not be granted for hours in excess of their actual hours worked and cannot exceed the 5 hours a week, e.g. if a part-time employee works three hours per week, the maximum amount of study leave to be provided cannot exceed three hours per week.
27. Study leave will be provided no earlier than the first day of the period of study.
28. Study leave will end on the last day of the period of study, i.e. the last day of formal assessment of that component of the course.
29. Study leave will not be accumulated during academic breaks in the period of study, e.g. mid-semester holidays.
30. Leave without pay under clause 49 of the Enterprise Agreement may be approved by an employing member to utilise for study purposes allowing additional leave for the employee. However, financial assistance is not paid in periods of leave without pay.
31. Approved study leave is to be recorded in PEMS. Apply for study hours in PEMS prior to taking the leave. Employees and the direct manager have the responsibility to maintain the compliance of study leave hours.

*Open PEMS>Leave Requests>Leave nature: Miscellaneous Leave With Pay>Leave type: LWP-Other>Complete as required with dates>sent to approver.*