

Professional Employee Educational Assistance

1.0 Purpose

2.0 Scope

3.0 Procedure

3.1 Application process | 3.2 Categories of Educational Assistance | 3.3 Types of Educational Assistance |

3.4 Educational Assistance Allowance Payments

4.0 Definitions

5.0 Information

6.0 Related policy documents and supporting documents

1.0 Purpose

Griffith University is committed to attracting and retaining talented people and providing a working environment that enables career and professional development to develop an employee's knowledge, skills and capabilities through formal study at recognised institutions.

This procedure outlines information for an employee, manager, and a Head of Element about the educational assistance program including the categories of educational assistance and the types of assistance (financial and non-financial) that may be available.

The following types of formal education programs are eligible for educational assistance under this scheme:

- undergraduate and postgraduate programs;
- course or program of study at TAFE/ VET institutions;
- commercial and advanced trade courses which are offered by accredited training institutions; and
- in exceptional cases, employee may be eligible for assistance in undertaking a higher degree research (HDR) program.

2.0 Scope

This procedure applies to continuing and fixed term professional employee with appointment terms of 12 months or more will be eligible to apply for educational assistance.

3.0 Procedure

3.1 Application process

An employee who wishes to undertake study and claim educational assistance must apply each year using the Professional Employee Educational Assistance Scheme Application Form for approval of a course or program of study prior to enrolment.

Applications are to be submitted to the employee's manager for recommendation to the Head of Element no later than four weeks prior to the commencement of study.

Applications are only valid for a period of one year or for the duration of the course or program of study, whichever is the lesser. Employees who require assistance for more than one year must submit an application for educational assistance each year.

The criteria used to determine the level and type of study assistance to be granted is subject to an assessment including the following:

- the relevance of the proposed course or program of study to the employee's current position and duties or anticipated duties;
- balancing the professional development needs of the individual with the needs of the work unit and University;
- the employee's record of performance at the University, existing qualifications, and record of success in previous applications for educational assistance under this or similar schemes;
- the operational controls and available resources within the employee's work unit as determined by the Head of Element; and
- consideration of all applications consistent with the University's equity and diversity goals.

In considering applications for educational assistance in accordance with the above criteria, the Head of Element may:

- approve the application in full (except the approval of assistance to undertake a HDR program which requires endorsement by the Director, Human Resources);
- approve the application in part (e.g., approve only some of the forms of non-financial assistance requested); or
- not approve the application.

In approving an application for educational assistance, the Head of Element agrees to administer the professional staff educational assistance by funding and monitoring progress of the approved program in accordance with 3.4 Educational Assistance Allowance Payments.

For approved applications, it is the employee's responsibility to notify the manager of a change in circumstances (such as withdrawing or discontinuing the course or program of study), and as soon as possible after the results are known, to provide their manager with documentary evidence of completion of the courses/program of study undertaken. Such evidence may include a Statement of Results, an Annual Progress Report or statement from their research supervisor.

Educational assistance in the form of financial assistance will not be paid in the following circumstances:

- where full fees are paid through a scholarship, bursary or similar;
- where an employee has been unsuccessful in completing a course or program of study;
- for a repeat course or program of study that had previously been approved for educational assistance under this or similar scheme;
- where an employee has discontinued or withdrawn from the course or program of study;
- on notification of cessation of employment with the University. An employee may be required to refund the full amount of the education allowance received in the last 12 months of study, unless an exemption has been granted by the Director, Human Resources. an exemption has been granted by the Director, Human Resources.

Where an application for educational assistance has not been approved, the employee should discuss the decision with their Manager in the first instance.

3.2 Categories of Educational Assistance

Applications for educational assistance are categorised under the following criteria in order to determine the types of study assistance offered to approved employee.

Category	Description
A	applies where an employee is required to enrol in a particular course or program of study as a condition of employment. This condition will be explicitly stated in the employee's written offer of employment or is confirmed by Human Resources.
B	<p>applies where the course or program of study will directly contribute to the employee's position, support career development and the employee is consistently performing above expectations.</p> <p>Category B status is awarded where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ courses or programs of study with undergraduate status or lower, 50% of course content directly relates to the employee's current or anticipated duties; ▪ postgraduate and second degree courses or programs of study, 75% of course content directly relates to the employee's current or anticipated duties.
C	Applies where the course or program of study is of a general nature, not directly related to the specific position currently held by the employee, but is relevant to other positions at the University and contributes to the continuing professional development of the employee.

3.3 Types of Educational Assistance

The professional employee educational assistance scheme provides a broad range of support that may be available to approved employees and may include financial and non-financial assistance.

Non-financial assistance may include, but not be limited to: paid work time to attend lectures/tutorials/workshops, exams, compulsory residential schools or mandatory inductions; and reasonable access to resources such as photocopying, printing and computing facilities.

The Educational Assistance allowance covers in part, ongoing education expenses for formal education programs (e.g undergraduate degrees), contributions towards course or program fees, student services and amenities charges, text books and other miscellaneous costs.

The types of assistance available is based on the approved category of educational assistance and is normally provided as a package. There may be a variance in the maximum level of all types of assistance available in all categories as determined by the relevant Head of Element.

Category	Description
A	<p>Financial Assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> up to 100% of up-front course or program fees will only be considered if study is undertaken at the University, except where the course or program of study is not offered by the University. In cases where part or full course or program fees for University courses is approved, the Element will be required to arrange payment under an Internal Scholarship/Sponsorship via Finance; in all other cases, maximum expenditure of up to \$2,500 per annum as an education allowance payment. <p>Non-Financial Assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> subject to approval, assistance may be granted to attend required lectures/tutorials/workshops, residential school or other mandatory attendance components or other class based teaching activities that are only available in standard work hours for up to 50% of the required time. The remainder of time is to be made up from the employee's existing leave entitlements, flexi-time, unpaid leave or other acceptable arrangements. In exceptional circumstances, the Head of Element may approve time off with pay for more than the maximum 50% standard. Leave without pay may be available for full time study or to complete a research based project and is to be negotiated within the Element. Flexibility in working hours to accommodate attendance at lectures/tutorials/workshops, where those activities conflict with normal working hours and can be reasonably accommodated by the work unit; Utilise flexible working policy for study prior to an exam or other form of compulsory assessment activity; paid work time and reasonable travel time to attend exams and/or other forms of mandatory assessment requiring attendance; and access to reasonable computing, printing and photocopying facilities. <p>In exceptional circumstances, and where the University deems a course or program of study essential to the requirements of the employee's role, the Head of Element may forward a submission (on behalf of the employee) recommending full time study release on full or part pay to the relevant Executive Group member for approval.</p>
	<p>Financial Assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maximum expenditure of \$2,000 as an education allowance payment in any one year. Preference is given to study undertaken at the University, except where the course or program of study is not offered by the University. <p>Non-Financial Assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> subject to approval, assistance may be granted to attend required lectures/tutorials/workshops, residential school or other mandatory attendance components or other class-based teaching activities that are only available in standard work hours for up to 33% of the required time. The remainder of time is to be made up from the employee's existing leave entitlements, flexi-time, unpaid leave or other acceptable arrangements.

Leave without pay may be available for full-time study or to complete a research-based project and is to be negotiated within the Element.

- flexibility in working hours to accommodate attendance at lectures/tutorials/workshops, where those activities conflict with normal working hours and can be reasonably accommodated by the work unit;
- flexi-time leave for study prior to an exam or other form of compulsory assessment activity;
- paid work time and reasonable travel time to attend exams and/or other forms of mandatory assessment requiring attendance; and
- access to reasonable computing, printing and photocopying facilities.

Financial Assistance:

- maximum expenditure of \$1,500 as an education allowance payment in any one year. Preference is given to study undertaken at the University, except where the course or program of study is not offered by the University.

Non-Financial Assistance:

- approved leave (either with or without pay) to attend lectures/workshops/tutorials, residential school or other mandatory attendance components for up to three hours per week or by negotiation for longer periods;
- flexibility in working hours to accommodate attendance at teaching and assessment activities that require attendance;
- flexi-time leave for study prior to an exam or other form of compulsory assessment activity;
- paid work time and reasonable travel time to attend exams and/or other forms of mandatory assessment requiring attendance; and
- limited access to reasonable computing, printing and photocopying facilities.

3.4 Educational Assistance Allowance Payments

An approved educational assistance allowance is paid to an employee as a one-off payment after the census date (each semester or trimester) of an approved course or program of study. Human Resources (payroll@griffith.edu.au) is responsible for processing approved educational assistance allowance payments (except for course or program fees which are managed under an Internal Scholarship/Sponsorship via Finance).

The University does not require the production of invoices or receipts associated with a course or program of study in order to pay the approved education allowance, except in the case of Category A approvals where the University may be paying part or full fees for a course or program of study offered at the University or elsewhere.

In the event that an employee is transferred to another budget element during the course of their approved educational assistance allowance, they will continue to have the financial component of their approval met by the approving budget element until the expiry of approval. The employee will be required to negotiate the non-financial assistance requirements with the new budget area prior to, or at the time of, transfer.

4.0 Definitions

Continuing Appointment is employment with the University that is not continuing (contingent funded), fixed term or casual and may be subject to the successful completion of a probationary period.

Fixed Term Appointment is an appointment made for a specified term or ascertainable period for which the employment contract will specify the starting and finishing dates of that employment.

Head of Element means a position that is the designated head of an organisational unit in the University, for example, Head of School or Director of an administrative division.

Relevant Senior Officer means an officer of the University that has an authority to exercise a delegation or act on behalf of the University.

For advice and support contact policy@griffith.edu.au for Governance and Operational policy documents.

5.0 Information

Title	Professional Employee Educational Assistance Scheme Procedure
Document number	2023/0001224
Purpose	This procedure outlines information for employee, managers and Heads of Element in relation to the educational assistance program including the categories of educational assistance and the types of assistance (financial and non-financial) that may be available.
Audience	Staff
Category	Operational
Subcategory	Staff
UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)	This document aligns with Sustainable Development Goal/s: 4: Quality Education
Approval date	7 December 2023
Effective date	7 December 2023
Review date	2026
Policy advisor	Head of Capability and Development
Approving authority	Director, Human Resources

6.0 Related Policy Documents and Supporting Documents

Legislation	N/A
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Policy	Code of Conduct Delegations Policy
Procedures	Delegations Procedure
Local Protocol	N/A
Forms	Professional Employee Educational Assistance Scheme Application Form