



**ACT**  
Government

Chief Minister, Treasury and  
Economic Development

# Study Assistance Guidelines

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## Introduction

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The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) is committed to investing in learning and development by providing opportunities for employees to undertake professional development that will assist to increase the efficiency of the ACT Public Service (ACTPS), job satisfaction and the adaptability of its employees.

Study Assistance encourages employees to undertake formal courses of study at tertiary and higher education institutions and other vocational education courses. Support provided to students can include approval as a student, paid or unpaid study leave and/or financial assistance, subject to the approval of the delegate.

## Application

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This policy is designed to inform both employees and managers alike and should be read in conjunction with the Shared Services Study Assistance documents available through the [Shared Services Customer Service Portal](#).

Approval of Study Assistance is discretionary and is not an entitlement.

Employees who are eligible to apply for Study Assistance in CMTEDD include:

- permanent officers; and
- temporary employees with fixed term contracts of 12 months or longer.

This policy does not apply to temporary employees with contracts less than 12 months (unless special consideration is given) or casual employees, cadets, trainees, contract staff, apprentices and employees on probation as these employees are generally not eligible for Study Assistance.

Special consideration may be given to employees who do not meet the eligibility criteria at the discretion of the delegate.

Study Assistance for part-time employees will be determined on a pro-rata basis.

## Considerations

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Powers for the approval of Study Assistance have in most cases been delegated to contract executives at a minimum, however this delegation may be retained at a higher level in some work areas dependent on local arrangements. The [CMTEDD HR Delegations Schedule](#) / and the relevant contract executive should be consulted to determine the level of delegation applicable to a particular work area.

There are a number of considerations that delegates should take into account when assessing an employee's application for Study Assistance. These are outlined as follows.

### Levels of Assistance

The Study Assistance delegate has the authority, within their budget, to approve Study Assistance in any one, or a combination of the following options:

## **Approval as a Student**

Approval as a student must be obtained before study leave or financial assistance can be approved. Approval as a student entitles staff to:

- take paid leave to sit examinations (including travel time);
- be considered for study leave and financial assistance; and
- be covered by Worker's Compensation while attending classes or examinations, as well as for travel between work and study activities.

## **Study Leave (paid or unpaid)**

Study leave provides the approval for an employee to take leave (paid, unpaid or a combination of both) from the workplace to undertake study or other related activities which are essential to the successful completion of the course.

## **Financial Assistance**

Financial assistance allows the employer to reimburse an employee for the recognised cost of a course of study. The level of financial assistance provided is dependent on the delegate's decision in accordance with the principles contained in this guide and is paid for out of the approving area's allocated budget.

In addition to an employee's reasons for wanting to access Study Assistance, delegates should consider the following operational factors before approving an application:

- employment status;
- length of service;
- work environment and tempo;
- previous study and development approvals and support provided;
- alignment with priorities agreed in personal performance and development discussion;
- access and equity;
- relevance of study; and
- availability of budget.

Each application should be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will need to be reapproved for each individual study period.

## **Assessing Hours of Study Leave**

In assessing an application for study leave, the delegate shall consider the number of hours required by the course of study (whether face-to-face or home study) and the time required to participate in other activities related to the course of study (for example, research).

Study leave, with or without pay, may be approved for classes or other activities during the student's normal hours of duty. Approved leave may include reasonable travel time.

A reasonable allocation of leave for a full-time employee studying two units might be up to 5-6 hours of study leave per week plus travel time (if relevant) giving a total of up to 8 hours per week. These amounts are a guide only and not a direct entitlement. The delegate should

consider operational requirements and equity amongst staff before determining an appropriate number of hours.

Allocations may also be adjusted for part-time employees or where the application is for a different number of units. Unused approved study leave hours do not accrue.

Consideration should also be given to reasonable adjustments that could be made to provide equal opportunity to employees who identify as a member of an Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) group.

Study leave may also be approved as a block release arrangement to undertake study-related activities which may include study towards a thesis, examination or other assessment, or attendance at a residential program. Study leave as a block release may be granted with pay or without pay.

### Assessing the Level of Financial Assistance

The level of assistance is determined by the delegate taking into consideration the operational resources and the degree of relevance of the course to the business unit and the ACTPS.

Delegates should be guided by the following table in assessing the appropriate level of financial assistance:

Tier	Criteria	Percent Reimbursement
<p><b>Tier 1 – Mandatory or legislated training that is required for applicant’s current position</b></p>	<p>A required course of study to be able to perform the role, for example, an industry requirement.</p> <p>Participation is at the request/direction of the employer.</p> <p>A specific, mandatory skill set that is not possessed within the work area.</p>	<p>Up to <b>100%</b> reimbursement</p>
<p><b>Tier 2 – Study which is of direct relevance to the applicant’s current work area and responsibility</b></p>	<p>Course is directly related to the applicant’s current work area and will develop the applicant’s and work area’s capability.</p> <p>Recognised as a required skill to be able to advance within the work area or Directorate.</p>	<p>Up to <b>75%</b> reimbursement</p>
<p><b>Tier 3 – Study which is relevant to the skills and knowledge needs of the ACTPS and directly contributes to the applicant’s career development and/or capacity for mobility within the ACTPS</b></p>	<p>An area of study that would be of benefit to the wider ACTPS, but may not directly relate to the applicant’s current role.</p> <p>In determining the level of reimbursement, consider the contribution the course would have on the applicant’s current skill set and career. This should not be used for complete career realignment.</p>	<p>Up to <b>50%</b> reimbursement</p>

The above table is provided as a guide only to ensure a level of equity and consistency across the Directorate. The level of financial assistance is ultimately at the discretion of the delegate.

Financial assistance is only available for compulsory course and enrolment fees. This does not include:

- books, journals and newspapers;
- late fees or disciplinary fines;
- fees for subjects not successfully completed (except in extenuating circumstances);
- study costs for any periods of study that commence after an employee leaves CMTEDD to work in another directorate;
- travel and accommodation expenses incurred while attending residential components;
- local travel expenses;
- postage and telephone calls;
- child care expenses;
- library joining fees;
- graduation fees; and
- parking fees and fines.

## **Procedures**

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### **Applications**

A new application is required for each period of study and should be submitted to the employee's immediate manager for consideration at least 3 weeks prior to the commencement of the course.

Employees must provide the following documents with their application:

- a completed Study Assistance Application form (available on the Shared Services Customer Service Portal);
- proof of enrolment; and
- proof of course costs (if applying for financial assistance) and proof of payment prior to claiming costs after successful completion of study.

The employee's immediate manager will forward the application for Study Assistance (with the relevant supporting documents) together with their recommendation to the delegate for consideration.

If approved by the delegate, the delegate will then forward the employee's application (original - not copy) to the ACT Government Workforce Learning and Development Unit for recording and processing.

Approved study leave counts as service for all purposes. There is no need for study leave to be recorded in the pay system, however employees must record all study leave on their attendance flex sheets or diaries.

### **Results**

On completion of each study period, employees must provide their manager with a copy of their results for the period. A copy must also be forwarded to ACT Government Workforce Learning and Development Unit for audit and reporting purposes.

## **Financial Assistance**

Employees who have been granted approval for financial assistance should refer to the [Study Assistance - How to Claim Financial Reimbursement](#) factsheet available on the Shared Services Customer Service Portal. Reimbursement of fees cannot be sought until the end of the study period, and is conditional upon the employee passing each unit of study. CMTEDD will not reimburse fees for units of study in which the employee has not achieved at least a 'pass' grade.

## **Changing Work Areas/Directorates**

Where an employee is changing work areas, whether within CMTEDD or to another ACTPS directorate, discussion should occur about study arrangements with the new manager/directorate prior to commencement. A new work area has no obligation to match current Study Assistance arrangements.

Arrangements post transfer should be managed as follows:

### **Approval as a Student and/or Paid or Unpaid Leave**

If the new work area agrees to continue the employee's approval as a student and/or provide the employee with any form of study leave, the employee will need to advise ACT Government Workforce Learning and Development Unit of the new arrangements by completing the [Study Assistance Amendment Notification Form](#).

## **Financial Assistance**

If the employee's move to another work area occurs midway through an already approved period of study and the employee had already been granted approval for financial assistance for that study period, the financial assistance should be paid for out of the approving area's (i.e. the original work area's) allocated budget.

Financial assistance for any subsequent study periods would then be subject to the new work area's approval and would be payable from the new work area's allocated budget.

## **Reviews**

Where an employee is dissatisfied with a decision taken by the delegate, they should in the first instance speak with the delegate regarding the decision. If the matter is unable to be resolved, the employee should then refer to the Internal Review Procedures outlined in Section I of the [Enterprise Agreements](#).

## Responsibilities

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There are a number of people who have responsibility under this policy. Along with adhering to the general principles and associated supporting documentation, employees, managers and delegates should be aware of the following specific responsibilities:

### Manager and Delegate

Both managers and delegates have the responsibility to:

- promote Study Assistance ensuring equitable access;
- ensure that study is aligned with the employee's individual performance and development discussion;
- endorse or decline Study Assistance applications in writing and provide justification/reasons for support or otherwise; and
- ensure records are maintained detailing hours of the study leave taken and retain a copy of the employee's application for Study Assistance.

### Applicant

Applicants have the responsibility to:

- consult with their immediate manager and delegate in advance of submitting a Study Assistance Application. Discussion should include information about the level of assistance being sought and the relevance of the study;
- submit and maintain a current and accurate application for study in line with all guiding principles, including advising their manager if study circumstances change during the study period and completing a Study Assistance Amendment Notification Form;
- record all study leave absences within standard hours on a flex sheet or, where a flex sheet is not used, in a separate record/diary (this ensures employees are covered for worker's compensation purposes); and
- complete all required coursework with a view to passing each unit of study.

### ACT Government Workforce Learning and Development

The ACT Government Workforce Learning and Development Unit will:

- administer the ACT Study Assistance Application form;
- notify the applicant in writing of the delegate's decision and provide a copy of the final signed application;
- advise applicants how to claim for Financial Reimbursement – as claims and payments are made through Shared Services Finance; and
- keep electronic records of applications in accordance with the *Territory Records Act 2002*.

## References

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[Study Assistance Application Framework](#)

[Study Assistance Application Form](#)

[Study Assistance Amendment Notification Form](#)

[Instructions for Completing the Study Assistance Application Form](#)

[Study Assistance - Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Study Assistance - How to Claim Financial Reimbursement](#)

[CMTDD HR Delegations Schedule](#)

## Further Assistance

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Contact Corporate People and Capability Branch via email to [CMTEDDCorporatePeopleandCapabilityBranch@act.gov.au](mailto:CMTEDDCorporatePeopleandCapabilityBranch@act.gov.au) for further information and assistance.

## Document control

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<b>Prepared for</b>	Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate
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### Revision

This Framework must be reviewed and updated on an annual basis (or more frequently following major change to business operations and/or priorities).

Revision	Description	Date	Author
1.0	Final endorsed	April 2016	Senior HR Advisor
2.0	Final endorsed	January 2017	Senior HR Advisor
2.1	Minor Amendment	June 2017	HR Advisor

### Authorisation

[Original Signed]

4 April 2016

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Michelle Wicks  
Director, Corporate People and  
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Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic  
Development Directorate

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Date