

# Greater Dandenong Policy

## Study Assistance Policy

|                |             |                      |                |
|----------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------|
| File Number:   | 98-00378-01 | Directorate:         | P&P            |
| Authority:     | CEO         | Responsible Officer: | P. Rosenkotter |
| Policy Type:   | OD          | Version Number:      | May 2017       |
| Approval Date: | June 2001   | Review Date:         | May 2021       |

### 1. Purpose

Council is committed to encouraging lifelong learning and the ongoing professional development of staff. In supporting and encouraging this, Council offers Study Assistance to employees to study whilst balancing work responsibilities. Study Assistance consists of two components;

- Paid leave during working hours to attend study commitments; and
- Financial support to assist with course fees;

### 2. Scope

#### Application of policy

Study Assistance is available to all permanent employees who have completed a minimum of 12 months service with Council. Permanent part time employees are eligible for Study Leave on a pro-rata basis proportional to the equivalent full-time entitlement. Study Assistance also applies to temporary employees engaged in long term appointments, i.e. greater than two years duration, who will complete the proposed study within their employment period.

#### Types of Study

Study Assistance is provided to staff undertaking an approved course of study including; degree, diploma, post-graduate, certificate or other course authorised by the manager.

#### Delivery method

Council recognises that the delivery method for courses may vary. It may include, but is not limited to;

- On Campus study;
- Residential;
- Correspondence;
- Online courses;

Study Assistance may be granted for these delivery methods or any combination thereof, provided that the method of delivery selected does not unfairly advantage or disadvantage an employee's entitlements under this policy.

# Greater Dandenong Policy

## Applications

Applications for Study Assistance must be submitted each calendar year to, and approved by the relevant manager in advance of subjects being commenced. Wherever practicable, as many study components as possible should be undertaken outside of normal working hours. Approval of prior subjects or previous years of Study Assistance does not guarantee approval of assistance for subsequent subjects or future years of Study Assistance.

Managers must assess all applications on their merits each calendar year in the context of:

- the benefit to Council;
- the benefit to the employee; and
- future department budgetary and operational constraints;

This assessment includes current satisfactory work performance by the employee. See 'Application process' below for details.

## Appeal process

If an application for Study Assistance is denied, the employee may seek to resolve the matter in accordance with the Grievance Procedure.

## Not covered

Study Assistance provisions do not apply to department or role required training or to corporate training, e.g. Corporate Induction or other organisation specific topics. This policy does not apply to job related training that an employee is directed to complete, training that may be offered and agreed at annual PDP discussions or other training that may be offered under the corporate training programs, e.g. LGMA or LG Pro developmental courses and/or activities. Where Council has initiated study / training for an employee (as the skill or knowledge is required for the staff member to undertake their current role at Council) then, Council will pay the complete costs and provide assistance in the form of time away from substantive duties and resources such as course materials.

## 3. References

### Further information

- Victorian Local Authorities Award, 2001 and any other relevant Awards
- Greater Dandenong Enterprise Bargaining Agreement
- Greater Dandenong Welcome Aboard Handbook
- Study Assistance Application Form (available on WebStar)

## 4. Background

### Benefits for Employees

Through the support offered by Study Assistance, staff have the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge in fields of interest that contribute to their future careers. Staff may derive personal satisfaction from undertaking and completing further study which can also enrich their working relationships and provide greater job satisfaction. Where possible, opportunities to step into acting roles to practice acquired skills and knowledge can also lead to greater career choices into the future.

### Benefits for Council

Council benefits from employees who bring increased skills and knowledge to the workplace, contributing these to their current role and team. This can enhance productivity and creativity across Council when these are applied on an ongoing basis. Increased skills and knowledge can also support and enhance retention of corporate knowledge over the longer term. This can occur when the skills and knowledge gained from the study are fully implemented through opportunities to apply continuous improvement, step into acting roles and/or apply for future vacancies.

## 5. Study Assistance

### Study Leave

Eligible staff who are undertaking an approved course of study are entitled to:

- a maximum of 4 hours per week of Study Leave during working hours to travel to and attend lectures and tutorials (face-to-face or online). In place of attending regular classes, equivalent time to the cumulative value of this entitlement may be spent attending seminars, residential study events, block study sessions or similar as part of the course;

### Exam Leave

- leave to travel to and attend examinations which are held during working time;
- half day paid leave immediately prior to the end of year/semester exam or equivalent assessment task(s) for study purposes;

### Part time employees

- Study Leave and/or Exam Leave for eligible part time employees will be pro-rata and granted where time off is required during working hours of a day on which the employee would normally be rostered to work;

# Greater Dandenong Policy

## Reimbursement of fees

- reimbursement of fees (including HECS and PELS) to a maximum of \$2,000 per calendar year are subject to evidence of satisfactory completion of the subjects to which the fees apply. Semester dates for face to face or correspondence subjects must be indicated on the Study Assistance application to determine which calendar year subjects will be attributed to for reimbursement purposes. Satisfactory completion requires the minimum of a pass mark as set out by the Institution. Reimbursement of fees may include compulsory course specific texts or materials but does not include general stationery, subscriptions, internet access, student union fees, etc. Please note that Council will only reimburse fees for subjects that are repeated if the relevant manager has agreed to those subjects being included in a subsequent Study Leave application;

## Additional leave

- Any other absence from work for study purposes will be negotiated with the immediate Manager and typically debited against annual leave, RDO entitlements, time in lieu or taken as approved unpaid leave. Access to leave is subject to operational requirements and any other requirements associated with the agreed leave type;

## Criteria for approval

The granting of Study Assistance is at Council's discretion and is approved by the department manager after taking into consideration:

- a. The degree of relevance of the course to the employee's duties, and/or current or identified future career path;
- b. The impact on the immediate team and services provided by the department / business unit including but not limited to applications within the same department competing for funds, including where these funds must also be allocated to cover department or role required training. Evidence of study commitments, e.g. course schedules, seminar or block study dates, must be provided with the leave request when submitted so that the manager can assess whether operational requirements can still be met; and
- c. The availability of lectures and tutorials outside business hours, i.e. wherever possible and practicable, these should be attended outside of normal working hours;

## Application process

1. Study assistance is applied for by completing a "Study Assistance Application Form" found on WebStar;
2. Discuss and develop your application with your Manager or Business Unit Leader;
3. If the Study Assistance application is declined the manager will discuss this decision with the employee

# Greater Dandenong Policy

---

4. Once approved by the Manager the employee is notified that the application is accepted and the forms should be forwarded to Organisational Development for processing;
5. At the successful completion of each subject or semester in that calendar year, copies of receipts for fees (including HECS and PELS) together with copies of results should be given to your Manager or Business Unit Leader to arrange reimbursement from department budgets;
6. Reimbursement is then processed such as via a cheque requisition form or electronic funds transfer (EFT) per Finance department procedures;

## Responsibilities

### Employees are required to:

- enter a leave application for all Study Leave hours taken at the time of accessing the leave. All details are to be recorded promptly and accurately in UConnect;
- seek advice in relation to any impact of the provisions of this policy on personal tax matters;
- attend all study sessions and undertake all assignments / exams to the best of their abilities;
- Submit documents and receipts to Organisational Development;
- provide confirmation of attendance, where deemed appropriate by the manager, within three (3) months of completing course requirements for the applicable year of study. If this does not occur it may delay payment of a reimbursement or result in Council declining payment if the delay extends beyond the budget period for the approved application;

### Managers are required to:

- satisfy themselves that the Study Assistance application is appropriate in accordance with this policy;
- budget for the agreed commitment from department resources;
- approve documentation in a timely manner when all agreed requirements have been met;
- set expectations and offer support to ensure operational requirements are met and service delivery is not adversely affected;

### Organisational Development is required to:

- advise and support employees and managers to develop practical Study Assistance arrangements;
- process paper work in relation to approval of Study Assistance and reimbursement in a timely manner etc;

# Greater Dandenong Policy

---

## Applicant Checklist

Applicants may wish to use the following prompts to prepare for the discussion with their manager about their preferred choice of course for Study Assistance:

- Have you previously discussed this course or related development during your Performance Development Process (PDP) with your manager?;
- Have you been granted Study Assistance in recent years?;
- Is the course an approved certificate, diploma, degree or similar relevant to your current role or career path?;
- What benefits and skills will be gained from this study that may complement or enhance your contribution to Council?;
- Can the course or part thereof be undertaken out of your normal rostered hours?;
- Will participation require more than 4 hours per week of your rostered hours of work to attend the requirements of the course?;
- What ideas do you have regarding managing your role requirements whilst you are studying?;
- Do you have course details including the proposed study schedule, e.g. class, seminar, block study, and/or exam dates/times?;

| Applicant to complete form & attach course details                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                          |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Name                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |         |                                                                                | Department                                                                                               |                                                          |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Date joined CGD                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |         | Status <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time - |                                                                                                          | hrs per week                                             |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 1. NAME OF COURSE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |         |                                                                                | 2. MODE OF STUDY ATTENDANCE <input type="checkbox"/><br>CORRESPONDENCE / ONLINE <input type="checkbox"/> |                                                          |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3. CALENDAR YEAR OF STUDY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |         | SEMESTER DATES                                                                 |                                                                                                          | TO                                                       |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4. NAME OF INSTITUTION & CAMPUS                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                          |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5. WHAT STUDY ASSISTANCE ARE YOU REQUESTING?<br>(SEE WEBSTAR / HR CONNECTION –/CAREER DEVELOPMENT / STUDY ASSISTANCE FOR FURTHER DETAILS)                                                                                                                                                                          |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                          | Approval<br>J / }        |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Days / Hours per week for travel / attendance (please insert the number of hours)</b><br>(a <b>maximum</b> of 4 hours per week for full-time staff to travel to and attend lectures during working hours. Pro-rata for part-time staff proportional to the equivalent full-time hours) |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Monday</th> <th>Tuesday</th> <th>Wednesday</th> <th>Thursday</th> <th>Friday</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>                                                                                   |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                          | Monday                   | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Monday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Tuesday | Wednesday                                                                      | Thursday                                                                                                 | Friday                                                   |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                          |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Reimbursement of course fees including HECs &amp; PELs</b><br>(up to a maximum of \$2,000 per <b>calendar year</b> , claimable on submission of evidence of satisfactory completion of the subjects to which the fees apply)                                                           |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Half-day paid study leave immediately prior to the end of year/semester examination</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Leave to travel to and attend examinations (or equivalent time where assessment tasks replace exam) held during working time</b>                                                                                                                                                       |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 6. REASON FOR STUDY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                          |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 7. HAVE YOU APPLIED FOR STUDY ASSISTANCE BEFORE? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO                                                                                                                                                                                                          |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                          |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 8. IF YES, WHEN?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                          |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| NAME<br>Position                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |         |                                                                                | SIGNATURE<br>Date                                                                                        |                                                          |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| SUPERVISOR TO COMPLETE                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                          |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 9. IS THE APPLICANT <u>ELIGIBLE</u> FOR STUDY ASSISTANCE? (REFER STUDY ASSISTANCE POLICY)                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 10. IS THE APPLICANT MEETING THEIR CURRENT ROLE REQUIREMENTS?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 11. DOES THE COURSE MEET THE RELEVANT CRITERIA OUTLINED IN THE STUDY ASSISTANCE POLICY?                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 12. IF THIS APPLICATION IS APPROVED, CAN OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS <u>STILL</u> BE MET?                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          | <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| I RECOMMEND STUDY ASSISTANCE IS GRANTED AS I HAVE INDICATED ABOVE:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |         |                                                                                |                                                                                                          |                                                          |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| NAME<br>Position<br>Account Number                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |         |                                                                                | SIGNATURE<br>Date                                                                                        |                                                          |                          |         |           |          |        |  |  |  |  |  |  |