

STUDY LEAVE AND ASSISTANCE POLICY

PC16

Policy Title:	Study Leave and Assistance Policy		
Policy Type:	People and Culture Policy		
Policy Owner:	Chief Executive Officer		
Policy Custodian:	People and Culture Manager		
Document ID:	24952	Version:	3.0
Approval Date:	21/06/2024	Next Review Date:	21/06/2027

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure West Daly Regional Council (Council) promote and support the professional development and training for employees.

Scope

This policy refers to employees wishing to undertake further professional development and studies.

Policy Statement

1. Policy Principles

- 1.1. Council wishes to encourage its employees to undertake short courses and higher education where there is a clear benefit and relevance to the Council.
- 1.2. It is a condition of any financial assistance for the “Highly Desirable” and “Support the role” courses will be on a reimbursement basis only and totally dependent on a successful study outcome, i.e. completion and graduation of the course. Reimbursement must be based on the production of cash receipts.
- 1.3. It is a primary requirement that study assistance may only be provided to permanent employees who have successfully completed their initial probation period.
- 1.4. Council study assistance may be in the form of
 - financial reimbursement of costs or payment of fees in advance and/or;
 - Time off (paid or unpaid leave)
- 1.5. Employees wishing to gain Council support and possible assistance must have their intended course of study approved prior to commencement of the course.

2. Study Leave

- 2.1. The Chief Executive Officer may approve an application for paid or unpaid study leave to permit an employee to attend lectures or tutorials (including time of travel to and from the location where the lectures or tutorials are being given).
- 2.2. The Chief Executive Officer may approve an application for paid study leave to permit an employee undertaking an approved course of study as an external student to comply with a residential requirement of the course.
- 2.3. Study leave will be for a total period not exceeding 15 working days.

3. Financial Assistance

- 3.1. Where an employee is undertaking an approved course of study for the “Highly Desirable for the role” and “Support the role” courses the employee may apply for reimbursement of fees incurred in respect of that study on a unity by unit basis or at the conclusion of the course.
- 3.2. In considering reimbursement applications, the following will be taken into consideration:
 - The employee’s current designation;
 - The course being studied;
 - Relevance of the qualification to be gained on course completion; and
 - Length of, and application to, their employment with Council.
- 3.3. The Chief Executive Officer will determine the rate of reimbursement using the table below as a guide.

Course Specific	Reimbursement Level	Form of the financial support
Essential for the role	100%	Council will cover the fee in advance
Highly Desirable	50% - 100%	Based on the reimbursement
Supports the role, professional development of general nature	25% - 50%	Based on the reimbursement
Not Required	Nil	Nil

- 3.4. To be eligible for reimbursement, the employee must:
 - i. Have gained prior written approval from the Chief Executive Officer to undertake the course
 - ii. Have successfully graduated from the course; and
 - iii. Produce evidence of payment of costs associated with the course.
- 3.5. The Chief Executive Officer shall not authorise reimbursement of fees which are graduation fees, late fees payable as a result of failure by the employee to enrol by a specified time or date, accommodation or activities associated with attendance at residential institutions or any other fees paid by another organisation.

- 3.6. In the event the employee ceases, for whatever reason, to remain in Councils' employ for at least twelve (12) months following the date of actual reimbursement, then Council may seek full or partial reimbursement of fees paid.

4. Application Process and Terms of Assistance

- 4.1. Employees seeking study assistance must follow the prescribed application process before enrolling in any relevant educational course.
- 4.2. The application should be made in writing to the employee line Manager endorsement and must include, wherever possible, the following details:

Category	Details
Course Name	The title of the course for which assistance is being requested.
Type of Qualification	The specific qualification being pursued (e.g., Certificate, Diploma, Degree).
Educational Institution	The name of the institution where the course will be undertaken.
Course Duration	The length of the course, specifying if it will be completed on a part-time, full-time, or distance learning basis.
Course Subjects and Contents	A list of all subjects included in the course along with a brief summary of the contents of each subject
Itemised Costs	A detailed list of the costs associated with completing the course, including course fees and other expected expenses such as textbooks, travel, and time. Evidence to confirm these costs should also be provided.
Relevance to Job and Career Development	An explanation of how the course of study directly relates to the employee's current or prospective job description and responsibilities, and how it will contribute to the employee's career development.
Relevance to Council's Objectives	An explanation of how the course of study aligns with and is relevant to the business objectives of the Council.
Financial Assistance Request	Specific amount of financial assistance being requested, itemising costs such as course fees, textbooks, travel, and other related expenses.
Time-Off Request	Details of any time-off needed to attend the course, including the number of days/hours and whether this time-off will be on a part-time, full-time, or other basis.

- 4.3. The Employee's line Manager will forward the application to the People and Culture Manager and the Chief Executive Officer for review.
- 4.4. The final decision and approval are at the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer, including any advance payments or reimbursements of fees.
- 4.5. The decision will be communicated to the employee in writing.

5. Repayment of Educational Assistance Costs

- 5.1. If an employee's service is terminated for any reason by the Council while undertaking further education, or within two years of completing the education (or any part of it) for which the employee has received reimbursement or had fees paid by the Council, the employee may be required to repay the Council according to the following scale:

- i. Up to 12 months from the date of the relevant reimbursement: 100% of the costs reimbursed by the Council.
- ii. From 12 months to 18 months from the date of the relevant reimbursement: 50% of the costs reimbursed by the Council.
- iii. From 18 months to 24 months from the date of the relevant reimbursement: 25% of the costs reimbursed by the Council.

5.2. If the Council, at its absolute discretion, decides to pay further education costs on behalf of an employee in advance, and the employee subsequently withdraws from the education program, the employee agrees to immediately repay the Council the portion of the education costs that have been paid by the Council up to the date of withdrawal.

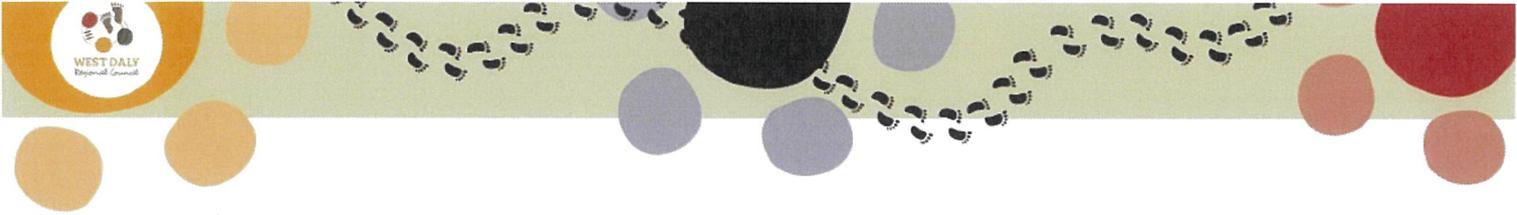
References

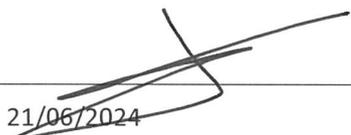
Local Government Act 2019
West Daly Regional Council Enterprise Agreement

Definitions

- **Essential for the Role:** Training or study programs that are critical and mandatory for performing the duties and responsibilities of the position. Without this knowledge or skill, the employee cannot effectively fulfil their role. This training is usually specified in the job description and is necessary for compliance with legal, regulatory, or organisational requirements.
- **Highly Desirable for the Role:** Training or study programs that, while not mandatory, significantly enhance the employee's ability to perform their duties and responsibilities. These programs improve job performance, efficiency, and effectiveness, and provide a competitive advantage in the role. They are strongly recommended and can lead to better career progression opportunities within the organisation.
- **Supports the Role, Professional Development of General Nature:** Training or study programs that contribute to the employee's overall professional growth and development but are not directly tied to their specific job duties. These programs foster a broader set of skills, knowledge, and competencies that benefit the employee and the organisation as a whole, such as leadership training, communication skills, or general industry knowledge.
- **Not Required:** Training or study programs that are not necessary for the employee's current role. These programs do not directly contribute to the performance of job duties and are not needed for compliance or operational purposes. They may be of personal interest to the employee but are not supported by the organisation as part of the professional development policy.

Review History				
Version Number	Approval Date	Policy Number	Policy name	Minutes ref./resolution no.
2.0	30/01/2019	HR23	Study Leave and Assistance	013/2019
3.0	21/06/2024	PC16	Study Leave and Assistance Policy	OCM-2024/66 ID: 24952



Endorsement	
Signature of Endorsement:	
Date:	21/06/2024
Name and Position:	John Thomas, Chief Executive Officer