

Name of Policy	Study Support for General Staff Policy	
Description of Policy	<i>This policy outlines the types of Study Support available, eligibility requirements and procedures involved when applying for Study Support.</i>	
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Description of Revision		

Human Resources Directorate

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1. Background Information

Australian Catholic University is committed to a working environment that enables staff to develop their skills and effectiveness. Staff are encouraged to enhance their skills and knowledge through continuing studies at recognised Institutions, where such studies will be of benefit to both the individual and the University.

2. Policy Statement

The University encourages the personal commitment of general staff to continuous learning by providing those who are undertaking further education courses with Study Support and Financial Assistance. This demonstrates the University's commitment to supporting the personal career development of staff.

3. Policy Purpose

This policy outlines the types of Study Support available to General Staff at ACU, including the eligibility requirements and application procedures for Study Support. There are three types of Study Support available under this policy:

- study time;
- exam leave for examination attendance; and,
- financial assistance to support study.

4. Application of Policy

4.1 Eligibility

4.1.1 Full-time continuing and fixed-term general staff whose appointment term is for a period of six months or more are eligible to apply for study time.

4.1.2 Part-time and fractional continuing and fixed-term general staff are eligible to apply for study time on a pro-rata basis.

4.2 Study Time

4.2.1 Study time may be granted for the following purposes/combination of purposes:

- attendance at compulsory lectures, tutorials or residential schools, etc., where these are held during working hours;
- attendance at compulsory field days and excursions involved in the course where these are held during working hours;
- attendance at summer or winter schools;
- travel during working hours necessary to attend lectures, tutorials, etc. held during or outside working hours;
- weekly private study;
- to enable a period of time off to conduct research associated with the writing of a thesis or for the writing of a thesis; and/or,
- to enable a period of time off prior to or during the examination period for private study purposes.

4.3 Basis of Study Time Grant

4.3.1 Part-time study means up to two subjects per semester (or equivalent).

4.3.2 Study time approval may only be granted to assist staff who are enrolled on a part-time basis. Students otherwise enrolled may be granted study time up to the maximum allowable to a part-time student.

- 4.3.3 Study time is forfeited if not used at the nominated time. Study time may only accumulate where this has been agreed as part of the initial approval.
- 4.3.4 All study time is granted subject to University convenience. Wherever possible, staff should make arrangements to attend courses in their own time with minimal disruption to work responsibilities.
- 4.3.5 In cases of pressing or urgent University operational need, a staff member may be required to forego study time.

4.4 Courses for which Study Time may be granted

4.4.1 Study time may be granted for the following courses:

- University: part-time undergraduate, postgraduate, diploma or certificate courses.
- Technical and Further Education level courses provided by public or private providers: part-time Diploma, Associate Diploma or Certificate courses.
- Other courses deemed to be appropriate by the University, including part-time courses for School Certificate or Higher School Certificate.

[NB: Study time will not normally be granted for incidental subjects where these subjects are not directly relevant to an applicant's position or for subjects that do not lead to the acquisition of an accredited certificate/diploma/degree.]

4.5 Modes/Amounts of Study Time Available

4.5.1 There are four modes of Study Time currently available that staff may access, depending on their circumstances and the needs of the work unit:

- **Weekly Study Time** - on the basis of one half-hour for each full hour of lecture to a maximum of 4 hours per week.
- **Accrued Study Time** - to a maximum of 3 days per semester or 6 days per year.
- **Compulsory residential schools** - up to a maximum of 6 days per year in respect of each subject or up to 3 days per semester (in respect of courses studied on a semester basis). (This may be combined with either Weekly study time or Accrued study time.)
- **Study Time Support for study/research** - to the equivalent of 15 days over the course of the degree as required by the staff member.

A staff member must nominate how the study time will be taken at the time that an application for study time is made.

4.5.2 Amount of Study Time Available for each Mode

The University may grant Study Time for recognised courses undertaken in any of the following ways:

4.5.2.1 Internal (Face to Face) Students

Weekly study time may be approved at the following rates:

EITHER

- half an hour for every hour of lecture and/or tutorial attendance up to a maximum of four (4) hours study time per week,

or

- accrued Study Time of up to 1.5 days per subject per semester (for a maximum of 2 subjects per semester) or for attendance at Summer and Winter School.

4.5.2.2 Open/Distance Education (including correspondence and web supported courses) Students

- Study time may be taken as follows:
 - Weekly - up to two (2) hours a week (up to a maximum of 32 weeks a year)
 - OR
 - Accrued - up to 3.5 days per semester or 7 days per year.
- Open/distance education students who are required to attend compulsory residential schools or practical sessions may be granted study time up to a maximum of 7 days per year (in the case of annual subjects), and up to 3.5 days per semester (in respect of courses conducted on a semester basis).
- An open/distance education student will not be granted weekly study time for any subject in which she/he is granted study time to attend a residential school or practical session.
- Any additional time required for study purposes will be charged against annual leave, time in lieu accumulated under student and client focused working arrangements, or in exceptional circumstances leave without pay.

4.5.2.3 Summer School and Winter School

A staff member who is undertaking courses held in a summer or winter school may be granted study time up to a maximum of 3 days per Summer or Winter School.

4.5.2.4 Study and Research

Where a staff member is undertaking qualifying or higher degree studies by course work, study time may be granted.

Where a staff member is undertaking qualifying studies for a higher degree entirely by thesis or by research and thesis, the equivalent of 15 days study time over the course of the degree may be granted. This may be taken as required by the staff member and with prior approval subject to University convenience.

Where a staff member is undertaking higher degree studies which involve course work followed by the preparation of a thesis necessitating further research and experimental work, normal study time may be granted for the course work and the equivalent of ten days study time during preparation of the thesis. Such study time is to be taken, with prior approval, as required by the staff member and subject to University convenience.

4.5.2.5 Indigenous Staff Training and Development Support

To specifically support and assist general staff members of ACU who are of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background, the University will grant an extra 50% of study time to support pursuit of accredited fee-based courses that are approved in line with this policy and relevant to the University and staff member.

4.6 Availability of Study Time

Approved study time applies only during the relevant academic period. For face to face lectures, this period will coincide with the period during which lectures are being attended. For distance education, this period will coincide with the academic period which applies to the provider of the course of study being undertaken.

Study time is not granted for vacations or, in the case of face-to-face lectures, after the last day of lectures, other than for Summer or Winter Schools, or residential programs held in vacation time.

Where a lecture/tutorial/field work, etc. is cancelled (eg. on a public holiday), study time in that week will be proportionately reduced by the number of hours forgone. Study time will only be granted for one course of study at a time.

4.7 Additional Time to Support Study

Any additional time-off required by the staff member to undertake studies must be:

- able to be accommodated in the Organisational and/or Functional Unit;
- applied for in advance; and,
- charged against annual leave, time-in-lieu accumulated under student and client-focused working arrangements, or in exceptional circumstances, leave without pay.

4.8 Repeat Subjects

4.8.1 Study time for subjects which are being repeated will only be granted in those cases where the staff member has not previously been granted study time for those subjects. If a staff member must take time-off to undertake a repeat subject for which study time has previously been granted, such time-off is to be made up or taken as annual leave, time-in-lieu accumulated under student and client-focused working arrangements or in exceptional circumstances, as leave without pay.

4.9 Exam Leave

4.9.1 Exam leave to attend examinations in a course of study for which study time has been approved will be granted where such attendance necessitates absence from duty. Such leave includes reasonable travel time.

4.10 Financial Assistance to Support Study

4.10.1 The University will provide financial assistance to general staff who successfully complete accredited fee-paying courses that are approved in line with this Policy and that are relevant to the University and staff member.

4.10.2 Where a staff member has been *granted study time* to undertake the studies for which they are seeking reimbursement, financial assistance shall only be paid on the basis of :

- prior Study Time approval in line with this Policy at the commencement of the study period;
- provision of official results indicating successful completion at the end of the study period;
- the subject is not a repeat subject for which study time has been granted previously; and
- an official Tax Invoice (receipt) issued by the relevant Institution as proof of enrolment and evidence of payment of tuition fees.

4.10.3 Where a staff member has undertaken studies but *has not required or taken any study time* during working hours, financial assistance shall only be paid on the basis of:

- approval of the nominated supervisor and relevant Executive Team member;
- provision of official results indicating successful completion;
- the subject is not a repeat subject for which study time has been granted previously; and
- an official Tax Invoice (receipt) issued by the relevant Institution as proof of enrolment and evidence of payment of tuition fees.

4.10.4 Financial assistance will be paid to a staff member at the rate of \$300 per unit on successful completion of each unit or equivalent (up to a maximum of two subjects per study period), or the actual amount, if the cost to the staff member is less than \$300

for each unit or equivalent (up to a maximum of two subjects per study period). This financial assistance will be paid in the form of salary and subject to income tax.

4.11 Utilisation of Time Credits for Training and Development Purposes

4.11.1 Where operationally permissible, the University intends to allow general staff to utilise time credits earned under the University Flexible Working Arrangements to allow attendance at accredited fee-based courses that are approved by and relevant to the University.

Such arrangements are to be formally agreed and recorded at the workplace level between the staff member and supervisor; signed by the member of staff and manager; and, a copy of the signed agreement is to be placed on the staff members' personal file.

Accountability for ensuring that the University Flexible Working Arrangements are being appropriately utilised at work site level is to rest with the nominated supervisor.

5. Procedures

5.1 Application for Study Time

5.1.1 Study time may be granted provided that University operational and customer service needs are appropriately met.

5.1.2

5.1.3 Staff who wish to apply for study time, as outlined in Section 4, must complete the required application form (See Attachment 1). Enquiries regarding eligibility for study time should be referred to the nominated supervisor of the staff member in the first instance and, if subsequently needed, the Learning and Development Unit.

5.1.4 An Application for Study Time must be supported by documentary evidence of:

- an official Tax Invoice (receipt) issued by the relevant Institution as proof of enrolment and evidence of payment of tuition fees;
- declaration that the unit(s) being applied for is(are) not a repeat subject; and,
- the current semester/term timetable / compulsory School timetable.

5.1.4 In situations where formal evidence is not available at the time of applying, provisional access to study time will be provided. If the required documentary evidence is not provided within three weeks of notification of the granting of provisional study time, the study time application will be declined.

5.1.5 An application for Study Time together with the documentary evidence outlined in Sub-clause 5.1.3 must be provided to the Learning and Development Unit within six weeks of the payment of course fees. Applications received later than this will not be accepted.

5.1.6 Study time may only be taken once an application has been approved / provisionally approved. Staff may not take study time on the assumption that an application will be approved. Where an application has been declined, the staff member's supervisor will consult with the applicant and provide a reason in writing.

5.1.7 A separate application for study time must be submitted either:-

- each semester for semester-based subjects or equivalent;
- each year for annually-based subjects or equivalent; or,
- for each Summer or Winter School attendance.

5.1.8 Once an application is approved / declined by the Executive Staff member responsible for the Organisational or Functional Unit in which the staff member is employed, it is

forwarded to the Learning and Development Unit. Following processing, the staff member will be advised of the outcome of her/his application. A copy of the documentation will be retained in the Learning and Development Unit and referred to should a staff member apply for financial assistance to support successful study. The original application is placed on the applicant's personal file.

5.1.9 A staff member may not vary the terms on which study time is granted without the prior approval of their supervisor.

5.2 Application for Financial Assistance to Support Successful Study

5.2.1 Staff wishing to apply for financial assistance in the form of reimbursement as outlined in Section 4.10 must submit to the Learning and Development Unit an Application Form for Financial Assistance to support successful study.

5.2.2 Where Study Time was approved at the commencement of the study period, the application for Financial Assistance must be accompanied by the following:

- an official Tax Invoice (receipt) issued by the relevant Institution as proof of enrolment and evidence of payment of tuition fees; and,
- documentary evidence of official results.

5.2.3 Where no study time was taken during the study period, the application for Financial Assistance must be accompanied by the following:

- the nominated supervisor's and Executive Team Member's approval;
- an official Tax Invoice (receipt) issued by the relevant Institution as proof of enrolment and evidence of payment of tuition fees; and,
- documentary evidence of official results.

5.2.4 The Application is to be lodged no later than one month after formal advice of the successful completion of the unit/s. Applications for financial assistance lodged after this date will not be accepted.

5.2.5 The Learning and Development Unit will process the application and confirm approval of the application with the staff member.

5.3 Other Leave Associated with Approved Study Time

Staff are required to submit a request in the normal manner when applying for exam leave to attend examinations, or for any recreational leave which is being taken in combination with study time.

5.4 Discontinuance of Approved Study

Staff who discontinue a subject/s for which study time has been granted must immediately advise their nominated supervisor within five days of withdrawal from such studies and the Learning and Development Unit immediately thereafter. Utilisation of study time for the discontinued subject(s) ceases immediately on withdrawal.

6. Policy Review

The University may make changes to this policy and procedures from time to time to improve the effectiveness of its operation. In this regard, any staff member who wishes to make any comments about this Policy may forward their suggestions to the Director, Human Resources.

7. Further Assistance

Any staff member who requires assistance in understanding this Policy should first consult their nominated supervisor who is responsible for the implementation and operation of these arrangements in their work area. Should further advice be needed, they should contact the Human Resources Consultant responsible for their campus.