

Study Time for Support Staff Vice-Chancellor's Directive

Abstract

This directive sets out the arrangements by which support staff may apply for paid time release in order to undertake courses of study approved by the University.

Dates	Directive approved 01/09/2008 Directive takes effect 01/09/2008 Directive is due for review (up to 5 years) 09/2013
Approved by	Vice-Chancellor
Implementation Officer	Staff Services Manager
Relevant to	All support staff (UTS website)
Related documents	Study time on Staff Connect (staff only) Financial Assistance for Staff Studying at UTS Vice-Chancellor's Directive Handling Staff Grievances Vice-Chancellor's Directive and Supervisor's Guidelines Personal and Community Leave — Guidelines (HR Manual 4.5)
Legislation	None
File number	91/395
Superseded documents	Study Time for Support Staff Policy

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1. Purpose

The University is committed to the development of a skilled and motivated workforce. Staff development is seen as a vital aspect of the growth and effectiveness of both the individual staff member and the University as a whole. The University wants to

ensure that all staff have access to relevant training and development opportunities, and to encourage staff to participate in such activities.

The University believes in assisting its staff to undertake study which will improve their ability to perform their duties.

2. Scope

This directive applies to support staff only and deals with the provision for staff to be released from their duties to undertake courses of study which are approved by the University and which lead to a recognised qualification. Staff in the SSG are not covered by this directive and should discuss study arrangements with their supervisor as part of the work planning and review process.

3. Directive principles

Study-time is paid time release from work for approved courses for the purposes of:

- (a) attendance at compulsory lectures, tutorials, residential schools, field days, etc, where these are held during working hours
- (b) necessary travel during working hours to attend lectures, tutorials, etc, held during or outside working hours
- (c) private study (such as that undertaken in connection with a correspondence course or distance/online learning).

Approved courses are those that:

- (a) lead to a recognised qualification from:
 - i. a university
 - ii. the TAFE system, or
- (b) are special or bridging courses, or
- (c) are any other accredited courses at a tertiary education institution/organisation (eg courses that lead to membership of a registered professional organisation such as CPA).

4. Directive statements

4.1 Eligibility

Support staff on continuing or probationary appointments, or those employed on fixed-term contracts in excess of 12 months, are eligible to apply for study-time.

Staff who are employed on successive fixed-term contracts, which individually are not in excess of 12 months, are also eligible to apply for study-time when they have completed 12 months service, providing there is no break in service.

Part-time staff members may apply for study-time on a pro-rata basis. Casual staff are not eligible for study-time.

4.2 Criteria for approval

Although the general expectation is that study-time should be available to staff, supervisors have a responsibility to ensure that study-time is used efficiently, effectively and flexibly to improve University productivity. The granting of study-time

is at the discretion of the University. Study-time is granted for approved courses only (refer to section 3 above).

Supervisors will consider whether the course will:

- (a) meet the University's skill development needs in relation to meeting the University and faculty/unit priorities
- (b) assist the individual's professional development and/or career development needs
- (c) develop skills relevant to the higher education sector.

4.3 Conditions for granting study-time — general

- (a) Study-time is available for staff enrolled in part-time courses only.
- (b) Study-time may be granted for more than one course at the same time, provided that the two courses together result in a part-time load and the resulting attendance pattern is convenient to the University.
- (c) Regardless of the number of subjects studied at one time, the maximum grant remains four hours per week or five days per semester as outlined in section 4.5, Methods of taking study-time.
- (d) In relation to taking study-time, the approval of a course implies access to the study-time provisions outlined in this directive.
- (e) The hours at which study-time is taken (and which are nominated when applying for study-time) will be agreed between the applicant and his/her supervisor.
- (f) Study-time is available only while lectures are being attended or would be attended if the course was being taken face-to-face. It is not available during vacations or after the last day of lectures.
- (g) Normally study-time will be lost if not used at the nominated time. If an emergency situation arises within the University, a staff member may be required to waive the study-time that is normally granted. Such time may be granted at another time. Cases of this nature should be infrequent.
- (h) Study-time is to be granted for repeat subjects only in those cases where the staff member has not previously been granted study-time for the subject(s) concerned, or where evidence can be provided that failure to complete the subject(s) successfully at the first attempt was caused by circumstances outside the staff member's control. Where a staff member must take time off to attend necessary lectures/tutorials for a repeat subject for which study-time is not granted, all such time is to be made up. Refer to section 4.6, Making up time/leave provisions.

4.4 Conditions for postgraduate study

Where a staff member is undertaking qualifying or higher degree studies by course work only (ie face-to-face instruction), normal study-time can be granted.

In the case of a predominantly research/thesis degree (that is, at least 50 per cent of the course requirements being met through original research and the production of a thesis), staff are entitled to ten days study-time per annum for each year of the research/thesis component of the course. Normal study-time can be granted for the course work component of the course (ie half an hour for each hour of face-to-face attendance up to a maximum of four hours a week). Details of course requirements

with regard to the program of attendance must be submitted with the application for study-time.

4.5 Methods of taking study-time

Staff nominate the type of study-time to be taken at the time of application and prior to the proposed commencement of the academic period. The type of study-time granted is subject to the supervisor's approval and University convenience.

4.5.1 Weekly basis

Students who are required to attend lectures, tutorials, etc, on a weekly basis are entitled to half an hour study-time for each hour of class attendance up to a maximum grant of four hours per week. In cases where attendance at face-to-face classes is not required (eg distance or online learning or a research project), staff may still be eligible for weekly study-time on the basis of the attendance involved in the corresponding face-to-face or on the basis of the subject's study load as determined by the HECS assessment (eg six credit points = three hours face-to-face). At the convenience of the University and with the agreement of their supervisor, staff may choose to accrue their weekly study-time and take it in blocks (see 4.5.2 below).

4.5.2 Accrued study-time

Study-time may be taken in blocks under the following circumstances:

- (a) where regular attendance at lectures, etc, is not required, as with distance or online learning
- (b) compulsory attendance at residential schools or block release
- (c) attendance at field days
- (d) where the staff and supervisor agree that weekly study-time may be accrued and taken at a mutually convenient time
- (e) time off for study and travel purposes in addition to the above may be granted with the supervisor's approval and charged against the staff member's annual or long service leave, flexitime, time-in-lieu or leave without pay
- (f) accrued study-time is granted at two and a half days per subject up to a maximum of five days per semester.

Over the course of a semester, staff members do not accrue study-time during periods of leave in excess of five working days.

4.6 Making up time/leave provisions

As a general rule additional time granted for study purposes must be made up during the week concerned. Up to a maximum of five hours in any one week may be made up.

Where it is not possible to make up time, a staff member may use annual leave, long service leave or, where applicable, flexitime, to offset such amounts. If insufficient leave or flexitime is available then leave without pay must be taken.

Staff may, subject to University convenience, take approved study-time at any time during the flexitime bandwidth. Staff who have been granted study-time may combine weekly study-time with either flexitime or annual leave to cover one full day's absence from duty per fortnight, subject to the supervisor's approval.

Annual leave may also be combined with study-time of a block nature (eg study-time granted for compulsory residential schools, field excursions, accrued study-time, etc).

4.7 Miscellaneous/extension study subjects

Study-time is not normally granted for non-award miscellaneous/extension study subjects. However, each case is to be considered in accordance with section 4.2 on Criteria for approval.

4.8 Examination leave

Examination leave is available for attendance at examinations conducted during working hours, for courses of study undertaken either by face-to-face classes or by correspondence. The period granted is to include time actually involved in the examination and reasonable travel time. Examination leave is not available where an examination is conducted within the normal class timetable during the term/semester, and study-time has been granted to the candidate.

4.9 Attendance at graduation ceremony

Personal leave of up to half a day is available, subject to University convenience, to a staff member who has completed a tertiary course of study, to attend the graduation ceremony. (Refer to the [Personal and Community Leave](#) guidelines.)

4.10 Withdrawal from a course/subject

Staff members are responsible for notifying their supervisor immediately if they discontinue a course or subject for which study-time has been granted. Any study-time taken after discontinuing a course is to be charged to annual leave, flexitime or long service leave or taken as leave without pay.

4.11 Applying for leave

Leave must be applied for when taking examination leave or accrued study-time.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 Responsibilities of supervisors

Supervisors are responsible for:

- (a) assessing the appropriateness of the course proposed
- (b) confirming that staff members are enrolled in the course and subject(s) indicated on their applications, and confirming attendance times
- (c) ensuring that study-time requested is within the relevant limits outlined above
- (d) ensuring that staff members are continuing in the course for which study-time has been granted and that they make up all time that is required of them under the provisions of this directive.

5.2 Authority

Applicant	Authority to approve or reject applications in accordance with directive
Faculty/school staff	Relevant dean or nominee (normally the supervisor)
Other support staff	Relevant head of unit or nominee (normally the supervisor)

5.3 Refusal of study-time application

Where a study-time application is refused, it should be ensured that:

- (a) timely advice is given to the applicant to allow him/her to consider alternatives
- (b) the reasons for refusal are clearly and promptly stated, in writing, to the applicant.

If the applicant is dissatisfied with the decision the applicant may raise a grievance and the procedures in the directive on handling staff grievances are followed.

6. Version control and change history

Date	Version	Approved by, resolution no.	Amendment
19/09/2005	1	Council, COU/05/099	
15/08/2007	1.1	Council, COU/07-4/80	Clarification within definitions that study time is paid time release. Minor editorial corrections.
18/06/2008	1.1	Council, COU/08-3/51	Rescinded by Council effective from the date of issue of a Vice-Chancellor's operational directive.
01/09/2008	2	Vice-Chancellor	Renamed as a directive, title changes and reformatting.