

# Study Leave and financial support Policy (for support staff)

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Form: [Study Leave and Financial Support \(for support staff\) form \(Office document, 136kB\)](#)

## **1. Introduction**

The University is committed to enabling individuals to meet their full potential in the workplace. Managers are encouraged to consider the development potential of individuals and the longer term needs of the School/Division/Faculty when considering requests for study support. Where relevant and appropriate, individuals will be supported to further their education and career development through part-time study as outlined below.

There is no right for individuals to receive support, but all cases will be judged on their own merit and will be dealt with as fairly and equitably as possible.

Managers are encouraged to discuss development needs and potential as part of the Staff Review and Development process.

## **2. Eligibility**

All employees of the University can request time off for any form of training which they believe will improve their effectiveness in the organisation or the performance of the organisation. This may take the form of either accredited programmes leading to a qualification or unaccredited training to help them develop specific skills relevant to their job.

### **2.1 Time off for training**

Employees with at least 26 weeks' continuous service have a statutory right to request time off where they think the study or training will help them do their job better and help their employer's business.

There is a statutory procedure which employers must follow when considering such requests (see Section 3 below)

Where a request is agreed, there is no right to be paid for the time off, nor is there any requirement for the costs of the training to be met by the employer.

## **2.2 Financial support during training**

Although there is no statutory obligation, the University may, at its discretion, agree to provide either full or partial financial support in some circumstances where time off for training has been agreed.

It is anticipated that full support (as outlined in 2.2.1 below) will be provided by the Faculty/School Division in the following scenarios:

- where attainment of a professional or other qualification is a requirement of the role; or
- where individuals wish to study part-time for a professional or other qualification directly related to their role, where this is deemed appropriate and beneficial by the manager, and where there is sufficient funding available.

Where individuals wish to study part-time for a professional or other qualification that is less directly related to their role and/or seen as only partially beneficial/relevant, they may exceptionally be given some partial support, agreed on a case by case basis by the School/Faculty Manager/Divisional Head, depending on the circumstances and the precise nature of the course. See 2.2.2, below.

Requests will be considered by the Faculty/School Manager (in conjunction with Heads of School/Dean) or the Divisional Head, advised by the relevant HR Manager.

### **2.2.1 Full support**

Staff provided with full support for part time study will normally be given paid time off to attend college (where this clashes with their normal working hours).

Where college requires part-day attendance, staff will be required to work as normal for the rest of that day.

Staff will also usually be given paid time off (where necessary) for formal examinations, and for each half-day examination will normally be provided with an additional half-day revision time to be taken within two weeks before the exam (at a time agreed with the line manager).

Staff will be expected to complete assignments/essays and other continuous assessment activity outside of their working time, although it is

recognised that meetings with other staff for the specific purpose of collecting information for assignments etc., may occasionally need to take place within working hours. However, managers may require individuals to 'make up' lost working time where this has become more than an occasional requirement.

Staff fully supported will normally have all course fees paid in full by their Faculty/School/Division although the provider must provide a fully certified and recognised course.

### **2.2.2 Partial support**

Partial support might take a variety of forms, depending on the circumstances and degree of relevance of the programme. This might include full or partial payment of fees (by the Faculty/School/Division); full or partial time off to attend development days; or flexibility of working pattern to facilitate attendance at development days.

Where an unpaid leave arrangement is agreed, this may have pension implications due to a change in your reference pay. Staff may wish to contact the Payroll and Pensions Team to discuss how their individual circumstances will impact their pension scheme entitlements: [pensions-uob@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:pensions-uob@bristol.ac.uk).

## **3. Procedure for making and considering applications**

This procedure is based on the statutory procedure for requesting time off for training and it is therefore important that the following timescales are followed when considering requests for time off. However, it should be noted that provision of financial support falls outside of the statutory framework and that decisions on full or partial financial support may take longer to conclude due the University's budgetary decision-making timescales.

Members of staff who wish to make a request for support under this policy, whether for time off for study, or for full or partial financial support, should complete Part A of the [Study Leave and Financial Support \(for support staff\) form \(Office document, 136kB\)](#) and forward it to their line manager.

On receipt of the application, the line manager should have a discussion as soon as possible with, as appropriate, the School/Section Manager and/or Faculty manager and/or Head of School, seeking advice from HR as needed.

The following broad areas should be considered by the line manager and any other relevant parties during the decision-making process:

- the relevance of the course of study to the individual's role
- the potential benefits of the training or study to the organisation
- budgetary constraints
- the cost of the study/training leave to the organisation
- the ability of the organisation to continue to meet its core commitments to students and other stake-holders
- the impact on performance and quality
- the impact on other staff in the team/organisation
- the timing of the request in relation to any planned structural changes

All requests should be considered in accordance with the [University's Equality and Diversity Policy](#).

Within 28 days of receipt of an application, the line manager will hold a meeting with the individual to discuss their request. The individual has the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a trade union representative or colleague.

Immediately following the meeting the line manager should refer the proposed outcome to the School/Section manager and/or the Head of School/Division/Faculty manager as appropriate before a final decision is reached regarding the request.

The statutory procedure requires the final decision regarding the request for time off to be communicated to the individual within 14 days of the meeting although decisions regarding financial support fall outside of the statutory framework and may take longer to conclude. The line manager should complete Part B of the application form and return it to HR as soon as possible to enable HR to write to the individual to confirm the outcome formally within the timescale.

The letter to the individual from HR will either:

- confirm that the request has been agreed and detail the level of support, appropriate arrangements and effective date; or
- confirm details of any amended arrangements that have been agreed; or
- confirm that the request cannot be accommodated, giving a short explanation of the reasons and setting out the appeal procedure.

Confirmation of whether the University is able to provide full or partial financial support may follow at a later date.

## **4. Appeal Procedure**

Individuals with at least 26 weeks' continuous service have a statutory right to appeal a decision under the Study Leave policy.

- If a member of staff wishes to appeal a decision they must write to the HR Director within 14 days of receiving written notification of the decision. The individual's letter of appeal must be dated and must state the grounds for appeal.
- The HR Director will arrange for the appeal to be heard by an Appropriate Manager who has had no prior involvement in the case. The appeal hearing will be a review of the decision and will be supported by HR.
- The individual will have the right to attend the hearing and to be accompanied by a friend, trades union representative or other representative. The manager who made the initial decision regarding the request may also attend if appropriate.
- The decision may be given at the appeal hearing and will in any event be confirmed in writing with 14 days of the hearing.

The decision following the appeal shall be final

## **5. Study not relevant to work**

Where an individual wishes to follow a course of study that has little or no relevance to work, they can submit an application for [flexible working](#) from day one of employment (which may or may not be agreed).

## **6. Recovery of Fees Paid**

In situations where the member of staff leaves within 2 years of completion of their course, and where financial support has been provided, the normal expectation is that fees paid by the University will be recovered in full from staff leaving. Where an individual withdraws from the course without completion the University reserves the right to recover fees.

## **7. Fees for attendance on University of Bristol programmes**

Please note that full fees are charged for staff attendance on any University programmes, but eligibility for support will be considered in the same way as for any other provider.