

Policy Name	Study Leave and Assistance
Policy Type	Human Resources
Policy Number	HR23
Version	2
Approval Date	January 2019
Renewal Date	January 2022



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**Policy Name**             **Study Leave And Assistance**

## SUMMARY

West Daly Regional Council is supportive of the professional development and training for employees. This policy refers to employees wishing to undertake further professional development and studies.

Council encourages employees to further their skills through short courses, higher education and study. Council may provide financial and other support such as study leave where there is an outcome that will have benefit to the employee and the activities of Council. The intent of this policy is to establish standard conditions for all employees wishing to undertake approved accredited courses of study that are recognised by the Chief Executive Officer as being relevant to the West Daly Regional Council. While local government is not essentially an education or training organisation, it is committed to supporting its employees, regardless of current occupation or designating, to undertake further study, especially in those areas relevant to local government.

## POLICY STATEMENT

### a. General Policy

1. Council wishes to encourage its employees to undertake short courses and higher education where there is a clear benefit and relevance to local government.
2. Subject to the discretion of the Chief Executive Officer or delegate, Council may provide full or partial reimbursement towards study fees, tuition fees and text books. It is a condition of any assistance that any financial support will be on a reimbursement basis only and totally dependent on a successful study outcome, i.e. completion and

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- graduation of the course. Reimbursement must be based on the production of cash receipts.
3. Where the cost of any text books is reimbursed by Council, such books will become the property of Council.
  4. It is a primary requirement that study assistance may only be provided to permanent employees who have successfully completed their initial probation period.
  5. Council assistance may be in the form of financial reimbursement of costs or time off (paid or unpaid leave) to attend lectures or examinations. Where study leave is granted, this will not affect employee credits for other types of leave, e.g. annual or special Leave. Annual leave credits will continue to accrue where an employee utilises approved Study Leave.
  6. Employees wishing to gain Council support and possible assistance must have their intended course of study approved prior to commencement of the course. Employees must not presume Council assistance will be automatically forthcoming.
  7. Applications for study leave or financial assistance must be recommended by the relevant Manager or Human Resources Department for approval by the Chief Executive Officer.

## **b. Study Leave**

8. 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) so long as the leave does not extend beyond five hours per week.
9. 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. Study leave will be for a total period not exceeding four (4) weeks in any year including travel time. This leave may be taken, with appropriate approval, in a number of short periods to a total absence not exceeding four (4) weeks in any year including travel time.
10. The Chief Executive Officer shall not approve an application where the lectures or tutorials for a course are available outside normal working hours. Study leave may only apply to attendance at lectures, tutorials or examinations available only during working hours.
11. Approved study leave will be accepted as continuity of service with Council for Long Service Leave requirements.

### c. Reimbursement of course Fees

12. Where an employee is undertaking an approved course of study, 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.
13. In considering reimbursement applications, the following will be taken into consideration:
  - I. The employee's current designation;
  - II. The course being studied;
  - III. Relevance of the qualification to be gained on course completion to local government; and
  - IV. Length of, and application to, their employment with Council.
14. In considering Clause 13 (III) and Clause 14, successfully completed studies in such areas as accounting, public administration, civil engineering, community development or similar which are highly regarded within local government will be considered “**essential**” as will trade studies. Preferred trades are those which have community relevance, e.g. construction trades, animal health and environment. “**Highly desirable**” will be those professions or occupations which are the responsibility of other agencies such as health but are relevant to community needs. “**Desirable**” or “**not required**” will be applied to studies in arts and sciences.
15. The Chief Executive Officer will determine the rate of reimbursement using the table below as a guide.

<b>Course Specific</b>	<b>Reimbursement Level</b>	<b>Included</b>
<b>Essential</b> (Studies utilised in Local Government or community)	100%	Course and text book costs and examination attendance on full pay to a maximum of five hours per week inclusive of travel time.
<b>Highly Desirable</b> (Studies of community value)	50%	Course and text book costs and examination attendance on full pay to a maximum of five hours per week inclusive of travel time.
<b>Desirable</b>	25%	Course and text book costs and examination attendance on full pay to a maximum of five hours per week inclusive of travel time.

<b>Not Required</b> (or not prior approved)	Nil	Nil
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To be eligible for reimbursement, the employee must:

- Have gained prior approval from the Chief Executive Officer to undertake the course with Council support;
- Produce evidence of successfully meeting all study requirements as determined by the educational institution or course provider;
- Have successfully graduated from the course; and
- Produce evidence of payment of costs associated with the course.

16. 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.

17. Where financial support has been substantial, e.g. an approved degree or post degree course where course fees have been reimbursed to a minimum of at least \$5,000 per year, it will be a condition of the reimbursement that the employee would remain in the employ of the Council for at least an additional twelve (12) months after the actual reimbursement. 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. Any decision to seek reimbursement will be given favourable consideration if the employee gains ongoing employment with another Northern Territory Local Government Agency.

## TERMINOLOGY AND REFERENCES

### REFERENCES

*Local Government Act*

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

*Human Resources Advisor*

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