



University of
South Australia

Staff Study Support Guidelines (Academic, Professional, Security, Grounds Staff)

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OVERVIEW

The University of South Australia is committed to the continued learning and growth of our staff and provides an environment and opportunities for them to develop and maintain professional knowledge, skills, and expertise.

The Staff Study Support initiative aims to support our staff in pursuing a program of study that is relevant to their current position and ongoing performance conversations, and maximises their contribution to the achievement of the University's objectives.

Support for staff studying an approved UniSA program consists of one, or both, of the following:

- Financial Support
- Study Release

This guideline reflects the preferred practice of the University and guides effective and transparent decision making relating to the approval of financial support and study release for staff engaged in an approved program of study.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The principles that guide the provision of resources to staff engaged in study are underpinned by the [University's Performance Management Policy \(HR 25\)](#) that supports the growth of our staff through:

- A strong commitment to the development of our people
- Recognition that development and performance are intrinsically linked
- The provision of adequate developmental opportunities to enable optimum performance
- Consideration of a staff member's personal goals and career aspirations, and aiming to connect them with the overall goals of the University

ELIGIBILITY

These guidelines apply to all UniSA staff employed on a full time or part-time continuing basis or fixed term contract of twelve months or more in accordance with:

- The University of South Australia Senior Staff Collective Agreement 2006
- The University of South Australia Enterprise Agreement 2019

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Financial support is currently offered through a 33% upfront discount for UniSA staff studying UniSA programs that are directly related to their current position and responsibilities, and form part of their regular performance conversations with their line manager/supervisor.

4.1 Upfront Discount

Eligible staff enrolled in an approved program of study at UniSA may receive a 33% upfront discount on program fees, following verification of eligibility and approval of the application by the People, Talent & Culture team.

Eligible staff need to discuss proposed study plans with their line manager/supervisor and ensure they fulfil the following criteria before submitting an application for financial support:

- Proposed study is directly related to the staff member's current position and responsibilities
- The staff member has received approval by their line manager/supervisor to undertake the study for which the fee discount is being claimed
- They are maintaining the required level of work performance

If these requirements are met, staff may complete the [HRIS O31 Financial Support Application form](#) and submit it together with the [Internal Payment Request form](#) to their line manager for approval.

Further information on the process and administration of the fee discount is outlined in the [Staff Study Support Procedure](#).

4.2 End of Employment

By engaging in a Staff Study Support arrangement, the staff member commits to remaining employed by the University for at least one year after the completion of the funded study.

Where a staff member resigns from the University within one year of completing study that forms part of a Staff Study Support agreement, the staff member will be required to repay the fees paid by the University for the current year.

If employment ends due to the expiry of a contract or if the University terminates their employment (other than on grounds of unsatisfactory performance or misconduct) the condition to repay funded study will not apply.

STUDY RELEASE

Staff enrolled in approved programs of study may be able to access Study Release to attend lectures/tutorials on or off campus, attend summer/winter schools, or to meet external study requirements.

5.1 Conditions for Granting Study Release

When considering an application for Study Release time, line managers/supervisors will need to consider:

- the staff member's capacity to manage both study and work commitments
- the business requirements and likely impact on other staff in the local work area
- how the level of service provision can be maintained in the staff member's absence
- the number of requests from other staff for Study Release and how this can be managed fairly and equitably in line with local work area requirements.

Study Release is usually approved for one study period at a time. Continued support of Study Release arrangements will be dependent on a satisfactory level of work performance and evidence of successful progress with studies.

5.2 Study Release Provisions

To be considered for the maximum Study Release provision, staff must be undertaking at least a 0.25 equivalent fulltime student load (EFTSL) in the study period for which Study Release is sought. Where the study load is less than this, or the staff member is working part time, Study Release will be adjusted on a pro rata basis accordingly.

For full details on the study release provisions, staff can refer to the [Staff Study Support Procedure](#).

5.2.1 Provisions for Study Not Requiring On Campus Attendance

Staff enrolled in an approved program of study not requiring on campus attendance may be granted up to ten days Study Release across the academic year. Where study does not require on campus attendance, the staff member and the line manager should discuss and agree on the timing and method of Study Release.

5.3 Study Release Restrictions

Study Release cannot be used to repeat a course, except in exceptional or compassionate circumstances. Requests for this consideration must be provided in writing to the senior manager of the local work area with the Vice Chancellor's Authorisation.

If a staff member withdraws from a course, the Study Release arrangement and provisions are considered forfeited, and new arrangements will need to be discussed and agreed upon between the staff member and their line manager/supervisor as part of the performance conversations.

Study Release through weekly leave and travel time is only available during official study periods, and will not be available while the staff member is on other forms of leave, e.g sick, recreation or parental leave.

Study Release should not be approved if it will result in the replacement of staff, paid overtime or a request for leave in lieu of overtime.

5.4 Examination Leave

In addition to the Study Release provisions, staff may negotiate Study Release for the period of an examination held during customary hours of work. Arrangements relating to examination leave must be discussed and agreed upon between the staff member and their line manager/supervisor as soon as details of examinations become available.

5.5 Submitting an Application for Study Release

Study Release agreements are negotiated during performance development and management conversations, and formalised by completing the [HR 8.1 Study Release Application form](#), which is forwarded with the relevant documentation, to their line manager/supervisor for approval.

If the application is not approved the line manager/supervisor will provide the reason in writing to the staff member.

Further information on the Study Release provision and application process is outlined in the [Staff Study Support Procedure](#).

APPEALS

Staff members are referred to the [Staff Appeals Policy HR - 6.4](#) or procedures contained in the applicable industrial instrument with respect to grievances regarding financial support or study release.

RESPONSIBILITIES AND AUTHORITIES

STAFF MEMBER

All staff are expected to actively contribute to performance discussions and complete any applications for financial assistance in accordance with this procedure

LINE MANAGER/SUPERVISOR

The line manager/supervisor is responsible for facilitating performance development conversations and aligning plans to support growth of UniSA staff with local area business needs.

LOCAL PEOPLE, TALENT AND CULTURE (PTC) TEAM

Local PTC teams provide advice and support to staff and managers in relation to the Staff Study Support guidelines and procedures.

STUDENT FINANCE TEAM

The Student Finance team is responsible for processing the Internal Payment Request form and periodic reporting on staff study completions.

PEOPLE, TALENT AND CULTURE (PTC) UNIT

The PTC unit is responsible for the development and continuous improvement of these guidelines.

REFERENCES

- [University of South Australia Enterprise Agreement 2019](#)
- [Senior Staff Collective Agreement 2006](#)
- [HR 25.1 – Performance Management Policy](#)
- [HRIS O31 Financial Support Application form](#)
- [Internal Payment Request](#)
- [HR 8.1 Study Release Application form](#)
- [HR 6.4 - Staff Appeals Policy](#)

FURTHER ASSISTANCE

Staff and managers may seek further advice from:

- Their immediate line manager/supervisor
- Their [PTC Business Partners](#)
- The People, Talent and Culture Unit
- The People, Talent and Culture Website

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