**Study Assistance (CIT Staff) Procedure**

## Associated Policy

This Study Assistance (CIT Staff) Procedure has been developed in conjunction with the Study Assistance Policy.

## Introduction

Under the Strategic Compass, the Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) is encouraging, enabling and investing in the learning and development of its employees with the aim of attracting, retaining and enhancing the performance of talented people that are capable and committed to meeting the CIT’s strategic and business outcomes.

Study Assistance encourages employees to undertake formal courses of study at tertiary and higher education institutions and other vocational education courses. Subject to the approval of the delegate, support provided to employees can include approval as a student, paid or unpaid study leave and/or financial assistance.

This procedure is designed to inform both employees and managers alike and should be read in conjunction with the Shared Services Study Assistance documents available through the [Shared Services Customer Service Portal](https://itsm.act.gov.au/sharedservices/?id=knowledge_article&sys_id=dbd8477ae1edb204bd6d13d57115773c).

## Eligibility

Approval of Study Assistance is discretionary and is not an entitlement.

Employees who are eligible to apply for Study Assistance in CIT include:

* permanent officers; and
* temporary employees with fixed term contracts of 12 months or longer.

Study Assistance does not apply to temporary employees with contracts less than 12 months (unless special consideration is given). Casual employees, cadets, trainees, contractors, apprentices and employees on probation are ineligible for Study Assistance.

Study Assistance for part-time employees will be determined on a pro-rata basis.

## Considerations

There are a number of considerations that delegates should take into account when assessing an employee’s application for Study Assistance. These are outlined as follows.

## *Levels of Assistance*

The Study Assistance delegate has the authority, within their budget, to approve Study Assistance under the following options:

1. Approval as a Student

Approval as a student entitles an employee to:

* take paid leave to sit examinations (including travel time); and
* be covered by Worker’s Compensation while attending classes or examinations, as well as for travel between work and study activities.

Approval as a student must be obtained before study leave or financial assistance can be approved.

1. Study Leave (paid or unpaid)

Study leave provides the approval for an employee to take leave (paid, unpaid or a combination of both) from the workplace to undertake study or other related activities which are essential to the successful completion of the course.

1. Financial Assistance

Financial assistance allows the employer to reimburse an employee for the recognised cost (or part thereof) of a course of study. The level of financial assistance provided is dependent on the delegate’s decision in accordance with the principles contained in this guide and is paid for out of the approving area’s allocated budget.

In addition to an employee’s reasons for wanting to access Study Assistance, delegates should consider the following factors before approving an application:

* Applicant’s length of service;
* Resources of the College/Division;
* CIT learning and development priorities and the direction of the organisation;
* Broader CIT and ACTPS skill needs and priorities;
* Relevance and cost of the course of study;
* Applicant’s current and future development needs as identified in their Setting My Direction plan;
* Access and equity;
* Where the employee is a teacher, whether the employee is utilising their Individual Learning and Development Allocation to assist in covering the cost of the program;
* Applicant’s success in previously approved Study Assistance applications; and
* Impact on the workplace, including implications for other team members.

Each application should be assessed on a case-by-case basis and will need to be reapproved for each individual study period.

Financial assistance is usually only paid where the employee passes each unit of study.

## Assessing Hours of Study Leave

In assessing an application for study leave, the delegate should consider the number of hours required by the course of study (whether face-to-face or home study) and the time required to participate in other activities related to the course of study (for example, research).

Study leave, with or without pay, may be approved for classes or other activities during the employees normal hours of duty. Approved leave may include reasonable travel time.

A reasonable allocation of leave for a full-time employee studying two units might be up to 5-6 hours of study leave per week plus travel time (if relevant) giving a total of up to 8 hours per week. These amounts are a guide only and not a direct entitlement. The delegate should consider operational requirements and equity amongst staff before determining an appropriate number of hours.

Allocations may also be adjusted for part-time employees or where the application is for a different number of units. Unused approved study leave hours do not accrue.

Consideration should also be given to reasonable adjustments that could be made to provide equal opportunity to employees where appropriate.

Study leave may also be approved as a block release arrangement to undertake study-related activities which may include study towards a thesis, examination or other assessment, or attendance at a residential program. Study leave as a block release may be granted with pay or without pay.

## Assessing the Level of Financial Assistance

The level of assistance is determined by the delegate taking into consideration the operational resources and the degree of relevance of the course to the business unit and the CIT. Delegates should be guided by the following table in assessing the appropriate level of financial assistance:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Tier** | **Criteria** | **Percent Reimbursement** |
| **Tier 1** – **Mandatory or legislated** training that is required for applicant’s **current position** | A required course of study to be able to perform the role, for example, an industry requirement.  Participation is at the request/direction of the employer.  A specific, mandatory skill set that is not possessed within the work area. | Up to  **100%** reimbursement |
| **Tier 2** – Study which is of **direct relevance** to the applicant’s **current work area** and responsibility | Course is directly related to the applicant’s current work area and will develop the applicant’s and work area’s capability.  Recognised as a required skill to be able to advance within the work area or Directorate. | Up to  **75%** reimbursement |
| **Tier 3** – Study which is **relevant to the skills and knowledge needs of the CIT and/or ACTPS** and directly contributes to the applicant’s career development and/or capacity for mobility within the ACTPS | An area of study that would be of benefit to the wider ACTPS but may not directly relate to the applicant’s current role.  In determining the level of reimbursement, consider the contribution the course would have on the applicant’s current skill set and career. This should not be used for complete career realignment. | Up to  **50%** reimbursement |

The above table is provided as a guide only to ensure a level of equity and consistency across the CIT. The level of financial assistance is ultimately at the discretion of the delegate and is dependent on the circumstances.

Delegates may only approve financial assistance for the payment of compulsory course and enrolment fees. Other costs such as the ones listed below, can only be approved by an Executive Director in special circumstances:

* books, journals and newspapers;
* late fees or disciplinary fines;
* fees for subjects not successfully completed (except in extenuating circumstances);
* study costs for any periods of study that commence after an employee leaves CIT to work in another ACTPS directorate;
* travel and accommodation expenses;
* child care expenses;
* library joining fees;
* graduation fees; and
* parking fees and fines.

## Procedures

## *Applications*

A new application is required for each period of study and should be submitted to the employee’s immediate manager for consideration at least 3 weeks prior to the commencement of the course.

Employees must provide the following documents with their application:

* a completed Study Assistance Application form (available on the [Shared Services Customer Service Portal](http://sharedservices/actgovt));
* proof of enrolment; and
* proof of course costs (if applying for financial assistance) and proof of payment prior to claiming costs after successful completion of study.

The employee’s immediate manager will forward the application for Study Assistance (with the relevant supporting documents) together with their recommendation to the delegate for consideration.

If approved by the delegate, the delegate will then forward the employee’s application (original - not copy) to CIT Human Resources for recording purposes.

Approved study leave counts as service for all purposes. There is no need for study leave to be recorded in the pay system, however employees must record all study leave on their attendance flex sheets or diaries.

## *Results*

On completion of each study period, employees must provide their manager with a copy of their results for the period. A copy must also be forwarded to CIT Human Resources for audit and reporting purposes.

## *Financial Assistance*

Employees who have been granted approval for financial assistance should refer to the [Study Assistance - How to Claim Financial Reimbursement](https://itsm.act.gov.au/sharedservices/?id=knowledge_article&sys_id=c8088a9a557c36805c7e5dba11851fd9) factsheet available on the Shared Services Customer Service Portal. Reimbursement claims should be forwarded to relevant Business Support Managers in CIT Corporate Finance and Business Support.

In normal circumstances reimbursement of fees cannot be sought until the end of the study period, and is conditional upon the employee passing each unit of study. CIT will not reimburse fees for units of study in which the employee has not achieved at least a ‘pass’ grade.

In special circumstances, a delegate may approve the payment of course and enrolment fees in advance of the commencement of study. Delegates should note that such advance payments are not recoverable if the employee should fail or does not complete the program of study.

## Changing Work Areas/Directorates

Where an employee is changing work areas, whether within CIT or to another ACTPS directorate, discussion should occur about study arrangements with the new manager/directorate prior to commencement. A new work area has no obligation to match current Study Assistance arrangements.

Arrangements post transfer should be managed as follows:

*Approval as a Student and/or Paid or Unpaid Leave*

If the new work area agrees to continue the employee’s approval as a student and/or provide the employee with any form of study leave, the employee will need to advise CIT Human Resources of the new arrangements by completing the [Study Assistance Amendment Notification Form.](https://actssoldprod.service-now.com/sharedservices/?id=knowledge_article&sys_id=dbd8477ae1edb204bd6d13d57115773c)

*Financial Assistance*

If the employee’s move to another work area occurs midway through an already approved period of study and the employee had already been granted approval for financial assistance for that study period, the financial assistance should be paid for out of the approving area’s (i.e. the original work area’s) allocated budget.

Financial assistance for any subsequent study periods would then be subject to the new work area’s approval and would be payable from the new work area’s allocated budget.

## Cessation of employment

Employees will not be reimbursed where they leave the employment of the ACTPS before the end of their approved study period.

## Reviews

Where an employee is dissatisfied with a decision taken by the delegate, they should in the first instance speak with the delegate regarding the decision. If the matter is unable to be resolved, the employee should then refer to the Internal Review Procedures outlined in the relevant Enterprise Agreement.

## References

[Study Assistance (CIT Staff) Policy](https://cit.edu.au/policies/study_assistance_policy)

[Study Assistance Application Form](https://actssoldprod.service-now.com/sharedservices/?id=knowledge_article&sys_id=dbd8477ae1edb204bd6d13d57115773c) (CIT Employees only)

[Study Assistance Amendment Notification Form](https://actssoldprod.service-now.com/sharedservices/?id=knowledge_article&sys_id=dbd8477ae1edb204bd6d13d57115773c) (CIT Employees only)

[Instructions for Completing the Study Assistance Application Form](https://actssoldprod.service-now.com/sharedservices/?id=knowledge_article&sys_id=dbd8477ae1edb204bd6d13d57115773c) (CIT Employees only)

[Study Assistance - Frequently Asked Questions](https://itsm.act.gov.au/sharedservices/?id=knowledge_article&sys_id=b0e34e93e1f4b680bd6d13d5711577e6) (CIT Employees only)

[Study Assistance - How to Claim Financial Reimbursement](https://itsm.act.gov.au/sharedservices/?id=knowledge_article&sys_id=c8088a9a557c36805c7e5dba11851fd9) (CIT Employees only)

Study Assistance Flow Chart

Skills for development and/or a program of study is identified in staff member’s Learning and Development Activity Plan (Setting My Direction)

Staff member enrols in a program of study.

Applicant submits completed Study Assistance application form to supervisor with necessary documentary evidence of study attached. Applicant should also save a copy of the completed application form.

Supervisor ensures application is consistent with the policy and procedure and, if appropriate, recommends application to delegate for approval/not for approval, giving justification for this recommendation and the implications for the workplace.

*Delegate either approves or does not approve the application based on the policy and guidelines, organisational needs, learning and development needs and priorities and recommendations of the supervisor.*

*Delegate does not approve application*

*Delegate approves application*

Delegate advises the applicant in writing of the decision and explains the applicant’s right of review. A copy of the applicant’s unapproved application should be included.

*Delegate advises the applicant in writing of the decision. Delegate keeps a copy of the application, sends a copy to the applicant’s supervisor and submits the approved application to CIT Human Resources to place in TRIM.*

*Where financial assistance has been approved, an employee may claim reimbursement of approved study costs at the successful completion of each unit/activity by providing all invoices/receipts to the financial delegate.*

*Applicant may discuss reasons for the application not being approved with the delegate. If still dissatisfied, the applicant may request an Internal Review of the decision under the relevant Enterprise Agreement.*

*If the pass mark requirements are met, the financial delegate approves payment and forwards papers to the appropriate Finance Officer for processing.*

*To ensure continued Study Assistance applicants must provide their supervisor with evidence showing successful completion of each unit/activity of study.*