



## **PROFESSIONAL, CAREER AND VOCATIONAL STUDY POLICY**

### **Policy Statement No 33 (Issue No 1) October 2008**

#### **1.0 Aims of the Policy**

This policy is designed to provide a consistent approach that can be applied to applications for sponsorship for professional, career and vocational training which leads to formal qualifications. To ensure fair and equal treatment in the provision of training and development opportunities.

#### **2.0 Criteria for approval**

2.1 The following criteria must be taken into consideration when approving a request for sponsorship of professional, career or vocational study:

- Relevance and value to Council's vision, strategic objectives and priorities
- Relevance and value to the applicant's job role, objectives and responsibilities.
- Supports the Council's workforce plan and succession planning (to be developed).
- The course of study is identified as a training and development need or career development from the applicant's annual or mid-year PDR or through management one to ones.
- The applicant is dedicated to the career change (applicable to career development sponsorship).
- The course of study supports the applicant's career development.
- There is evidence of previous evaluation of the applicant's learning and development.
- That effort has been made to apply previous learning and study to the benefit of the Council.
- Due regard is paid to the previous learning and development and/or career development opportunities granted to the applicant.

- The cost of the course must not be excessive in relation to its apparent value.
- Ability of the applicant to undertake and complete the course of training or study.
- The length of the course of training or study.

### **3.0 Sponsorship**

- 3.1 Funding will be available to staff on the successful completion of their probationary period.
- 3.2 Commitment to support a staff member must be reviewed annually in light of financial resources and organisational objectives.
- 3.3 Funding for career development that is unrelated to the person's service area but benefits another service should be agreed between the two Heads of Service taking into consideration succession planning and budget implications.
- 3.4 Funding will be available for the first four years of a formal qualification only.

### **4.0 Exceptional Circumstances**

- 4.1 A Trainee who is appointed on the basis that they attend professional and/or vocational training will be granted sponsorship as agreed at appointment.
- 4.2 There may be situations where applications for external training may not meet the identified criteria. Where an applicant who falls outside the policy guidelines wishes to be considered for support, line managers must automatically seek approval from their manager, and discuss the application with the appropriate Director and HR.
- 4.3 Criteria that might support successful application in these cases could include:
  - Staff members who have shown commitment to the development of others
  - Staff members who have demonstrated commitment to their own training in the past

- Staff members who are required on occasion to “act up” to a post that benefits from or requires a specific qualification.

## **5.0 Financial support**

- 5.1 Part or full sponsorship of the registration, course and examination fees may be available to staff studying for a qualification relevant to their current post. A minimum of £50 towards the cost of books and/or materials will be made on receipt of purchase per academic year.
- 5.2 The actual sponsorship available will be determined by the relevance of the development and training to the applicant’s current role, career development, the Council’s priorities and to the availability of funds as identified in the Service’s Professional training budget.

## **6.0 Time off**

- 6.1 Morning/Afternoon release or day release may be granted dependant on the impact on the applicant’s role, the priorities of the Service and Council.
- 6.2 One days study leave and one days examination leave will be granted per examination paper. No more than 5 days may be granted for study and exam leave in any 12 month period.
- 6.4 Study leave for non exam based courses should be allowed at the manager’s discretion up to a maximum of 3 days in each 12 month period.
- 6.5 Exam and study leave should be booked as special leave and recorded with the line manager.

## **7.0 Procedure for application**

- 7.1 Employees wishing to pursue professional, career or vocational study must first discuss the proposed course of study with their line manager.

- 7.2 Once the training need has been highlighted the applicant should research the course details, dates and cost implications eg course fees, exam fees, books, travel etc.
- 7.3 The applicant should complete an Application for Professional, Career, Vocational Study being sure to address the following questions:
- What they wish to study and the qualification they are aiming to achieve
  - What benefits the course will have on their objectives and personal development
  - How the course will support their career development
  - How does the course support the Council's priorities
  - How does the course support the Council's workforce plan and succession planning (to be developed) (applicable for career development study)
  - How long the course of study lasts/Where will they be studying
  - What assistance are they looking for in terms of financial support and time off
- 7.4 The application should include a copy of the syllabus and/or detailed information about the course.
- 7.5 The application must be sent to their line manager and Head of Service/Director. A copy sent to HR.
- 7.6 If the application is accepted the Professional, Career, Vocational Funding Agreement should be completed and signed. A copy must be sent to HR.
- 7.7 If the Professional, Career, Vocational Funding Agreement is not signed, no fees or expenses related to the application will be paid.
- 8.0 Conditions of Sponsorship**
- 8.1 Signing the Professional, Career, Vocational Funding Agreement commits the individual to the full repayment of fees and expenses if the member of staff withdraws from a course, fails to attend the course, fails to pass an exam without good reason or shows unsatisfactory progress.
- 8.2 The applicant is responsible for the payment of exam and college year resits.

- 8.3 If an applicant leaves East Herts Council within two years of completing a course, a repayment of a proportion of the fees and expenses is payable depending on the number of months worked after completing the course.
- 8.4 For example, if the fees and expenses total £1,000.00, the total is divided by 24 months, £41.67. This figure is then multiplied by the remaining months of the two year deadline. If an applicant leaves 13 months after completion of their course then they would need to repay 11 months of the proportional costs, in this scenario £458.37.

## **9.0 Notification of contract termination or course withdrawal**

- 9.1 Notification of withdrawal from a course, failure to pass an exam, failure to sit an exam or leaving the Council within two years of completion of a course must be given in writing to the Line Manager with a copy of the departmental Director and HR.
- 9.2 If a member of staff leaves they must tick the Training Fees box in the Recovery Information section, when completing the Leaver Notification form.

## **10.0 Policy Review and Amendment**

- 10.1 This Policy shall be reviewed after two years or sooner if necessary and thereafter when changes in guidelines or new information useful to the execution of the policy are made in order to reflect the best level of support and management.



EAST HERTS COUNCIL

Application for Professional, Career, Vocational Study

Name:

Date:

Home Address:

Job Title:

Directorate:

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Name of course applied for:

Level of qualification:

Start date:

Duration:

Venue:

Details of attendance:  
(Eg day release, work based)

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Financial Support:

Registration Fee: £

Tuition Fee: £

Exam Fee: £

Books: £

Travel: £

Other expenses: £

Total expenditure: £

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Please answer the following questions to support your application:

- Reason for applying for training opportunity
- What benefits the course will have on your objectives and personal development
- How does the course support your career development
- How does the course support the Council's priorities
- How does the course support the Council's workforce plan and succession planning (to be developed) (applicable for career development study)

Cont .....

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Signature of Applicant:

Date:

Signature of Line Manager:

Date:

Copy of syllabus/other relevant course information attached:

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**Official Use:**

Is application successful:

Reason for the above decision:

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If successful what percentage of the funding is to be given:      %  
Total amount of funding agreed: £

Any other additional agreements the applicant or East Herts needs to be aware of:

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Signed by Line Manager:

Date:

Signed by Head of Service:

Date:

Signed by Director:

Date:

Copy sent to Human Resources:

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*Successful applicants now need to complete the Professional, Career, Vocational Funding Agreement.*





EAST HERTS COUNCIL

Professional, Career, Vocational Funding Agreement

Name of Successful Applicant:

Date:

Conditions of agreement:

- I hereby agreed to the financial terms and conditions of study as outlined in my Application for Professional, Career, Vocational Study.
- Signing this agreement commits the above to the full repayment of fees and expenses if the member of staff withdraws from a course, fails to sit/pass an exam without good reason or shows unsatisfactory progress.
- If I leave East Herts Council within the two years I agree to repay my fees as per the Professional, Career and Vocational Study Policy.
- I am aware that if the Professional, Career, Vocational Funding Agreement is not signed, no fees or expenses related to the application will be paid.
- I agree that notification of withdrawal from the course, failure to sit/pass an exam or leaving the Council within two years of completion of a course must be given in writing to the Line Manager with a copy of the departmental Director and Human Resources.
- If I leave I agree to tick the Training Fees box in the Recovery Information section, when completing the Leaver Notification form.
- I am responsible for the payment of exam and college year resits.

Applicant Signature:

Date:

Line Manager's Signature:

Date:

Head of Service's Signature:

Date:

Director's Signature:

Date:

**A copy of this agreement must be sent to HR**