



Essential Reference Paper "B"

East Herts Council

Professional Career & Vocational Study Policy

Policy Statement

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The policy is designed to provide a consistent approach that can be applied to applications for sponsorship for professional, career and vocational learning leading to formal qualifications.
- 1.2 All employees will receive fair and equal opportunity in the provision of learning and development across the council.
- 1.3 The funding for sponsorship of professional, career and vocational learning is managed centrally by Human Resources.
- 1.4 The Council's Organisational Development Strategy sets out the Council's commitment to the development of its employees through learning, professional and personal development. This policy only applies to employees who wish to develop their knowledge, skills and career through a formal qualification. Employees are encouraged to read the Learning and Development Policy for other methods of learning and development opportunities that are available to them.

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:

Council/Service

- Relevance and value to the Council's vision, priorities and values.
- Supports the Council's Organisational Development Strategy and succession plans.
- The cost of the course must not be excessive in relation to its apparent value.
- The length of the course of training or study.
- The Head of Service agrees to the development opportunity.

Employee

- Relevance and value to the employees job role, personal objectives and responsibilities.
- The course of study is identified as learning and development need or career development from the employees PDR, through one to ones or it is a requirement of their employment.
- The applicant is dedicated to the learning and development opportunity.
- There is evidence of previous evaluation of the employees learning and development, which was a benefit to both the Council and the employee.
- Ability of the employee to undertake and complete the course of training or study.

3.0 Sponsorship

- 3.1 Applications for funding are available to employees on the successful completion of their probationary period unless it is a requirement of their recruitment e.g. a trainee position.
- 3.2 Commitment to support an employee will be reviewed annually to consider financial resources and organisational objectives.
- 3.3 Funding for career development that is unrelated to the person's service area but benefits another service will be considered but the funding is not guaranteed. Succession planning and budgets will be considered.
- 3.4 Funding will be available for the first four years of a formal qualification only.

4.0 Exceptional Circumstances

- 4.1 There may be situations where applications for external training may not meet the identified criteria. Where an employee who falls outside the policy guidelines wishes to be considered for support, managers must seek approval from their Director and HR.

4.2 Criteria that might support successful applications in these cases could include:

- Employees who has shown a commitment to the development of others.
- Employees have demonstrated commitment to their own learning and development; and career in the past.
- Employees who are required on occasion to “act up” to a post that benefits from or requires a specific qualification.
- The learning and development is part of a succession and development programme for the team or service.

5.0 Financial support

5.1 Part or full sponsorship of the registration, course and examination fees may be available to employees subject to the terms of this policy.

5.2 A maximum of £50 towards the cost of books and/or materials will be made on receipt of purchase per academic year.

5.3 The actual sponsorship available will be determined by the relevance of the learning and development to the employee’s current role; employee’s training and development needs identified in their performance review; career development; the Council’s priorities and to the availability of funds as identified in the Corporate Professional training budget.

6.0 Leave

6.1 Morning/afternoon or day release may be granted dependant on the impact on the employee’s role, the service and Council.

6.2 One day study leave and one day 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.

6.3 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.

6.4 Exam and study leave should be booked as special leave and recorded with the 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 manager.
- 7.2 Once the learning opportunity has been highlighted the employee should research the course details, dates and cost implications e.g. course fees, exam fees, books, travel etc.
- 7.3 The employee should complete an Application for Professional, Career, Vocational Study form, addressing 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 and values?
 - How does the course support succession planning in their service and/or the Council. 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, including a breakdown of the course costs and fees for each year, material, travel expenses, residential, etc
- 7.4 The application should include a copy of the syllabus and/or detailed information about the course.
- 7.5 The application must be completed by the employee and then sent to the manager/Head of Service to enable them to add any additional information to support the business case. Once signed the application should be sent to the Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development.
- 7.6 Applications are to be received by Human Resources and considered by CMT for approval once a year. This is to ensure

that all applications for sponsorship funding can be considered equally and fairly. Applications must be received by 1 April each calendar year.

- 7.7 Applications made following 1 April may be considered by CMT if funding for the year is still available. If funding is not available in that financial year then the application will be submitted in the following year subject to agreement with the employee and manager.
- 7.8 On receipt of the completed application form Human Resources will discuss the application with both the employee and manager/Head of Service ensuring the policy has been complied with and the employee understands the commitment and contract they are agreeing to.
- 7.9 The Head of HR and OD will submit the applications to CMT for approval following the 1st April. Upon decision the Head of HR and OD will confirm both with the employee and the manager/head of service the outcome of the application.
- 7.10 If the application is approved the employee will be sent a Professional, Career, Vocational Funding Agreement by Human Resources, to be completed by the employee and signed. A copy must be sent to HR.
- 7.11 Upon receipt of the agreement Human Resources will notify the employee and manager that the process has been completed and the employee can proceed with the booking.
- 7.12 Confirmation of the employee's acceptance on to the course should be sent to Human Resources to hold on file.
- 7.13 If the application is unsuccessful, Human Resources will work together with both the employee and manager to explore other learning and development opportunities that are available to the employee.
- 7.14 Applications can be resubmitted in the next period or year, should the reasons for the decline of application have changed.

8.0 Conditions of Sponsorship

- 8.1 Signing the Professional, Career, Vocational Funding Agreement commits the employee to the full repayment of fees and expenses if the employee withdraws from a course, fails to

attend the course, fails to pass an exam without good reason or shows unsatisfactory progress.

8.2 The employee is responsible for the payment of exam and college year resits.

8.3 If an employee 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, 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 employee 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 manager with a copy to the Head of Service and the Head of HR and OD.

9.2 If the employee 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 three 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.



Professional Training Budget – Funding Request

Directorate:

Service:

Employee:

Post:

Qualification/Course details:

Course applied for:

Level of qualification:

Duration of study:

Details of attendance (e.g. day release, work based assessment):

Commencement date:

Financial Support required:

Registration fees per year: £

Tuition fees per year: £

Exam fees: £

Books/materials: £

Approximate travel expenses per year: £

Other expenses: £

Total funding required: £

(Please indicate in the table below the funding required for each business year for the duration of the course)

Name of funding	Business year	Total amount

Supporting statement by employee

Please include the following information to support your application:

- What are the benefits the course will have on your objectives and personal development?
- How will the course support your career development?
- How does the course support the Council's priorities and values?
- How does the course support succession planning in your service and/or the Council?

Business case to support the funding request (to be completed by manager/Head of Service)

Please include the following information to support the application:

- How does the course support the Council's priorities and values?
- What benefits will the course have on the service objectives?
- Is this development opportunity a requirement of the post?
- How does the course support the employees learning and development?
- How will the course support the employee's individual objectives?
- How does the course support the Council's Organisational Development Strategy and succession plans?
- What is the impact of the employee attending this course on the service delivery and employee's ability to complete their objectives?

Signed Employee:

Date:

Signed Manager:

Date:

Signed Head of Service:

Date:

Is a Copy of syllabus/other relevant course information attached? YES/NO

Has the employee read the Professional, Career and Vocational Study Policy and agrees to the terms of the policy and understands that if funding is granted the employee will have to repay the fees should they leave the Council within two years? YES/NO

Has the employee been made aware that if the Professional, Career, Vocational Funding Agreement is not signed; no fees or expenses related to the application will be paid? YES/NO



Professional, Career, Vocational Funding Agreement

Name of Employee:

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 an employee 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 following the completion of the course 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 Manager with a copy to 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.

Signed Employee:

Date:

Signed Manager:

Date:

Signed Head of Service:

Date:

Signed Head of HR and OD:

Date

A copy of this agreement must be sent to HR