



Australian Government  
Australian Transaction Reports  
and Analysis Centre

# Policy Studies Assistance



**Policy version control sheet**

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# 1. Background

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AUSTRAC is committed to the professional development of its employees. Studies assistance is an investment in skills and knowledge to extend individual capability and organisational effectiveness, which in turn helps AUSTRAC to achieve its operational and strategic objectives.

Study assistance supports employees to access professional development opportunities that lead to a qualification recognised under the Australian Qualifications Framework.

Where employees wish to undertake study provided by an organisation outside of Australia we would seek to establish if the qualification is recognised by a similar body to the AQF.

Attendance at internal or external non-award development programs are not covered by this Policy.

AUSTRAC's Study Assistance Policy is designed to:

- satisfy needs for skills and knowledge to increase the Agency's capacity to achieve its corporate goals, manage change and build organisational competence;
- provide skilled employees for specific current and future workforce requirements
- assist employees with their professional and career development, and
- improve future job performance.

# 2. Policy

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Part C Section 61 of the AUSTRAC Enterprise Agreement 2016-2019 states that:

The CEO may grant study leave up to a maximum of 120 hours per calendar year or financial assistance up to a maximum of \$4,000 per calendar year, or both, to an employee undertaking formal study. The CEO will grant paid or unpaid time off for approved students to attend compulsory examinations.

## 3. Process

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Studies assistance is available to all employees who meet the requirements set out in this policy.

Studies assistance will be available from the date of approval of the approved study. Applicants should submit their applications to allow enough time (10 working days to process) to obtain approval prior to course commencement. Applications cannot be submitted retrospectively, approval must be granted before taking time off or submitting claims for reimbursement of expenses.

Employees seeking study assistance must apply for approval to study each semester.

Managers should ensure there will be a return to AUSTRAC of the investment in supporting study when reviewing applications for study assistance. They should also take into consideration whether the employee:

- is on probation, and whether approval as a student may inhibit successful completion of the probation period.
- is a current graduate or trainee as they will be undertaking study relevant to their development program.
- is a non-ongoing employee, as sufficient return on investment is less likely.
- is temporarily transferred or seconded to AUSTRAC for a period of less than twelve months, as a return on investment is unlikely.
- has failed or withdrawn from previously approved study. Consideration must be given to the employee's commitment to completing the proposed study
- has failed to fulfil any obligations of previous study assistance approvals, or
- has received adverse performance feedback, has been rated as less than 'fully effective' through their Performance Management Agreement, or
- any other circumstances that may affect their ability to reach and maintain expected performance standards.

### 3.1. *Eligible type of study*

Proposed study must be relevant to operational requirements or the APS.

Eligible courses of study are courses that lead to either nationally recognised qualifications or a Statement of Attainment under the [Australian Qualifications Framework](#).

Courses that are not nationally recognised are not covered by this policy. Employees wishing to attend a non-award course should discuss attendance with their manager.

### 3.2. *Applying for Studies Assistance*

Employees wishing to apply for Studies Assistance should complete an [application form](#) and submit it for approval by the employee's manager. Applications will then go to the Organisational Development delegate for final approval.

Applications must be submitted by the closing date for each semester. Closing dates are published on the [intranet](#).

### 3.3. *Approval of applications for Studies Assistance*

The Organisational Development delegate, under delegation from the CEO, holds all necessary powers to decide all aspects of applications for Study Assistance.

Study assistance applications will be assessed against the Study Assistance Policy by the relevant manager. Final approval rests with the Organisational Development delegate.

#### **Approval of Study Leave**

Approved students may be granted a maximum of 60 hours of paid leave per semester up to a maximum of 120 hours per calendar year during standard working hours for approved study activities. Study leave is available for study activities relating to approved courses of study only. Total hours which have been approved but not accessed during the semester may be used for assignment and exam preparation periods. The intended usage of this leave will need to be discussed and approved by the employee's manager and take into account operational requirements. Travel time is not included in approval of leave and is not covered by this policy.

Study activities approved under this category may include:

- formal tuition, e.g. face-to-face lectures, tutorials, practical and field work, and residential segments of courses, or
- essay preparation and research work associated with the study.
- exams.

If any leave, including annual leave, personal leave and miscellaneous leave, is taken while on study leave then the entitlement to study leave attributable to the period the other leave is taken is forfeited. Any study activities engaged in will be undertaken under the other form of leave.

Managers have the discretion to reduce or withdraw study leave approval at any time to meet operational requirements.

## Approval of financial assistance

Depending on the scheme of study and the institution, a variety of fees and charges may be involved. Travel costs are not included in financial assistance and are not covered by this policy. Financial assistance is available for:

- registration and administration fees (including Student Administration Fees)
- general services fees
- course fees
- text books
- examination fees, and
- Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS-HELP) or Higher Education Loan Program (FEE-HELP).

The level of financial assistance approval, subject to satisfactory completion of the study, is made known to the applicant at the time that status as an approved student is granted.

Financial assistance cannot be applied for retrospectively because of budgetary and planning considerations.

The amount of financial assistance available will be up to \$4000 per calendar year.

Payments for financial assistance are only made following successful completion of the approved study.

If an employee ceases employment at AUSTRAC prior to completion of a unit of study, no financial assistance will be granted. In extenuating circumstances (e.g. involuntary redundancy) financial assistance may be considered.

### 3.4. *Review of decision*

If an employee (other than an SES employee) believes action taken against them in accordance with this policy was unfair or unreasonable, they may seek a review of the decision in accordance with AUSTRAC's [review of actions policy](#).

## 4. Payment of financial assistance

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Students are required to claim study assistance within two months of receiving notification of results of study to facilitate the management of the Studies Assistance budget.

Financial assistance for a unit of study or subject which has not been successfully completed by reason of failure or withdrawal may only be provided at the discretion of the OD delegate. The delegate must be satisfied that personal circumstances (e.g. illness, injury, bereavement), pressure of work or other extenuating circumstances apply contributed to the failure or withdrawal.

To claim a reimbursement for study assistance, an approved student will need to:

- complete the [staff reimbursement form](#).
- provide evidence of successful completion of a unit of study

- provide an invoice or receipt issued by the education provider together with a copy of their approved study assistance application.

## 5. Review of Studies Assistance

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If an employee's work performance is poor or has declined while undertaking study, their approval for study assistance may be revoked. In extenuating circumstances such as illness or injury of the employee or a family member, approval to study may be continued.

Where approval of study assistance has been revoked, periods of study leave or financial assistance used for previously completed units of study will not be affected.

## 6. Responsibilities

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The employee is responsible for:

- discussing the proposed study with their manager and ensuring the proposed study complies with this policy
- submitting the completed Study Assistance application form with relevant evidence included, and
- seeking reimbursement in accordance with Section 6 of this policy.

The Manager is responsible for:

- discussing the study assistance application with the employee, referring to the policy to consider the relevance of study, the employee's job performance, the impact on the work area and level of support to be recommended
- vetting of study assistance application against this policy
- completing the supervisor's approval via Studies assistance form, including recommending to the delegate the level of support, hours applied for and financial assistance sought. Where approval is not recommended, feedback must be provided, and
- monitoring the employee's performance and progression of study.

The Organisational Development delegate is responsible for:

- reviewing the Manager's recommendations and availability of funding. Where approval is not granted, feedback must be provided.