



AIATSIS
AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF
ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT
ISLANDER STUDIES



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PRINCIPAL'S INSTRUCTIONS

Institute's study assistance guidelines - Policy and Procedures

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*Note this review date is the minimum date by which this policy must be reviewed. If there are significant changes in the area of this policy prior to the next scheduled review date, a full review must be performed at that time.

Russ Taylor
Principal

Date: _____



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1. Background and Purpose

The Institute's Corporate Plan includes a strategy of "Recruiting, training and developing staff to maintain a diverse, highly skilled and committed workforce". One of the ways this is pursued is to provide employees with the opportunity to acquire additional skills and experience, including through formal training programs.

The objectives of the Institute's Human Resource Development Plan are as follows:

- To ensure that Institute employees have the skills and knowledge base to meet existing objectives and to respond to changing circumstances and demands;
- To ensure that employees have the appropriate competencies to meet their work responsibilities;
- To ensure that all employees have access to development opportunities which are consistent with their needs, as perceived by themselves and their managers, in the context of the Institute's priorities; and
- To encourage leadership and create an environment that promotes professionalism and achievement.

The study assistance scheme is an investment in skills and knowledge to extend individual ability and organisational effectiveness. This in turn will assist the Institute to achieve its corporate goals and objectives.

2. Policy Statement

- Satisfy needs for skills and knowledge to increase the Institute's capacity to achieve its corporate goals, manage change and extend organisational competence;
- Provide trained employees for specific current and future work force requirements;
- Enhance the personal and career development of employees;
- Increase adaptability and mobility of employees, within the Institute and across the APS; and
- Improve current and future job performance.

Employees should identify their study needs as part of the Performance Feedback Scheme. Study Assistance does not cover short non-award courses, internal or external training, conferences and seminars. These particular needs are also identified through participation in the Performance Feedback Scheme.

3. Legislation

- Public Service Act (1999)

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Approved students are responsible for:

- Including study assistance in individual performance plans;
- Following the approved timetable, study activity and examination commitments;
- Advising their supervisor of any changes to the approved study arrangements;



- Discussing with their supervisor any work commitments that conflict with approved study arrangements; and
- Negotiating the use of Study Assistance credits.

4.2 Supervisors are responsible for:

- Discussing study assistance in the development of individual performance plans;
- Discussing applications for study assistance with potential students;
- Supporting approved students through their attendance at approved study activities; and
- Discussing any work commitments that conflict with approved study arrangement

4.3 Delegates are responsible for:

- Reviewing applications for study assistance and discussing with the applicant and their supervisor;
- Determining if a course of study is in the interests of the applicant's career development;
- Giving consideration to applications and discussing reasons for non-approval with the applicant and their supervisor.

5. Acronyms and Definitions

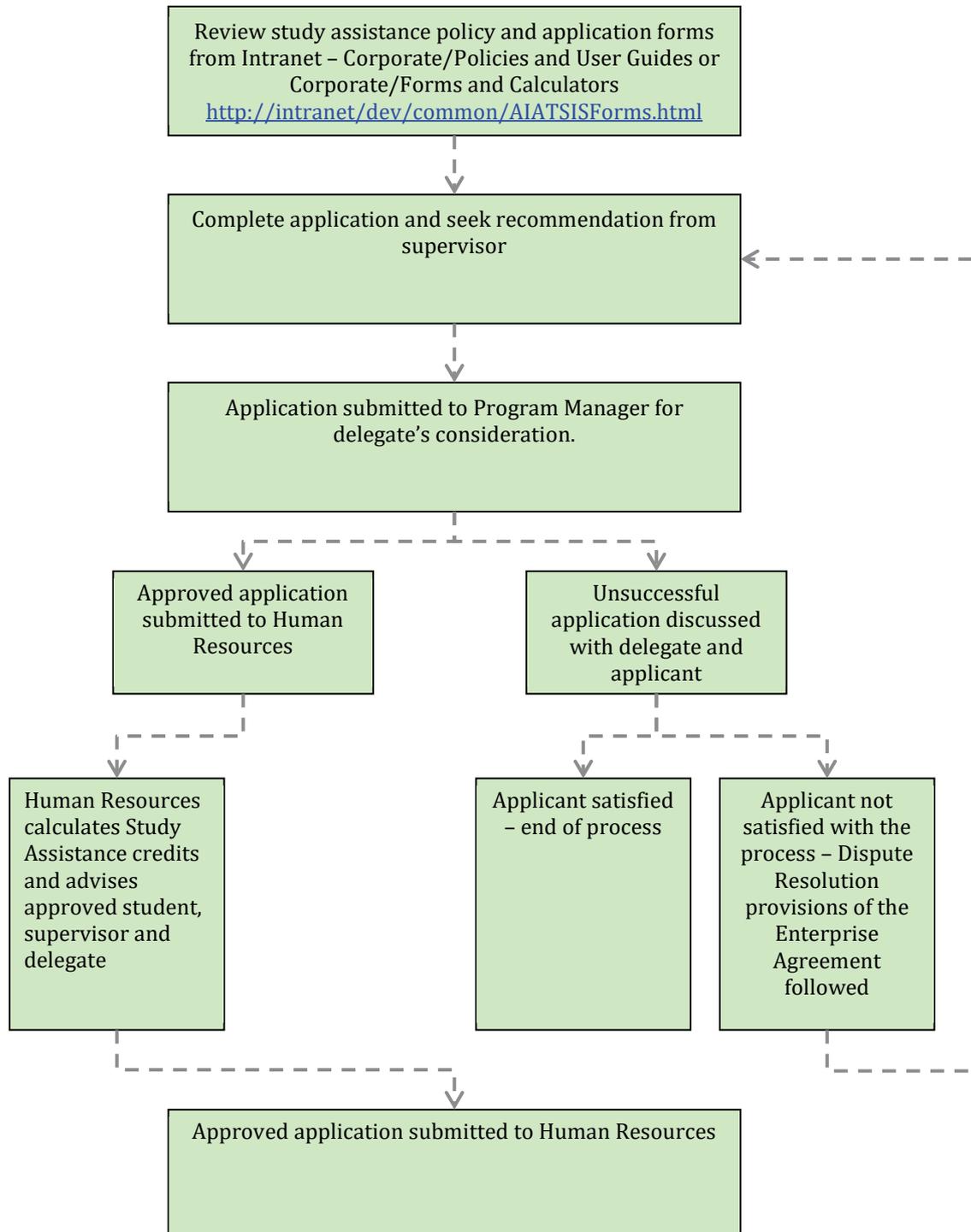
- Approved student – An approved student is an employee on the Institute that has been deemed eligible for study leave.
- Approved scheme – Employees should identify their study needs as part of the Performance Feedback Scheme. An approved Scheme as well as being on the Performance Feedback Scheme it should relate to the needs of the unit, AIATSIS or the APS.



6. Procedures

6.1 Flow chart for applications

The following guide should be used when considering an application for Study Assistance





There are three components to Study Assistance:

- Approval as a student;
- Study leave; and
- Financial assistance.

Study Assistance may be approved at the discretion of program managers. Employees do not have an automatic entitlement to approval as a student, approval of leave or financial assistance. Applications are considered for approval in accordance with these guidelines, after considering resource capacity and operational requirements.

6.2 Approval as a Student

All on-going employees, except those in cadetships and traineeships, are eligible to apply for study assistance. Part-time employees are eligible for study assistance.

Non on-going employees are not normally eligible for study assistance unless there are at least 12 months remaining on their contract term. This however, is at the delegate's discretion.

Schemes of study referred to in these guidelines include on-campus and external study in Australia and overseas (as applicable), and may include courses at pre-tertiary, undergraduate and post-graduate levels. A scheme of study can be a course or program of study, a single subject or unit, research instruction or training.

Study may be undertaken at Australian universities, institutes of technical and further education and technical schools, or their overseas equivalent or any other institution approved by the Delegate.

When evaluating a scheme of study the delegate will consider the appropriateness of the proposed study and the providing institution to the needs of the applicant and the Institute.

When assessing an application for approval as a student the delegate will consider the:

- Strategic and operational needs of the Institute;
- Skills needs of the Institute and the APS;
- Career and personal development needs of the individual, including any special needs relevant to the Institute's Human Resource Development Plan, Indigenous Recruitment and Career Development Plan and any issues relevant to cultural diversity; and
- Any other factor considered relevant.

Applications for assistance under Study Assistance must be submitted in the first instance to your supervisor, who will forward it to the delegate if approval is recommended. Application forms are available from the Intranet site.

Employees who have been granted approval as a student and then move to another agency or department will need to renegotiate both approval and the terms of that

6.3 Approval with Their New Agency.

Approval as a student entitles an employee to workers' compensation coverage for all paid leave approved under Study Assistance to attend or undertake study activities at the educational institution. Approved students on leave without pay are not entitled to workers' compensation coverage.



6.4 Approval of Study Leave

Only approved students are eligible for study leave, but the status of “approved student” does not automatically entitle the student to this leave.

Study Assistance allows the delegate discretion to approve paid study leave or leave without pay to approved students so they may undertake study activities related to their scheme of study. These study activities may include formal tuition, such as lectures, tutorials, practicals, field work, work placements and residential segments of external courses or other related study activities, such as essays, thesis or examination preparation and research.

Study leave may be granted to approved students to undertake their scheme of study on a full-time or part-time basis.

Approved students who do not require or are not granted study leave maintain access to other forms of assistance available under Study Assistance e.g. financial assistance.

Leave for part-time study may involve:

- Attendance at formal tuition on a regular basis;
- Attendance at classes, residential, summer schools and the like on an occasional or irregular basis, as in the case of external students. (External students may also be known as correspondence or distance-learning students.); and
- No formal tuition attendance requirements, as in the case of some thesis or external students.

Under Study Assistance, paid leave of up to 5 hours per week may be granted during standard working hours to approved students for approved study activities. In addition, up to 3 hours paid leave for travel to and from the place of study (but not to home) may be approved.

Delegates have the discretion to approve this leave based on:

- The amount of time required to attend approved study activities; and
- The day-to-day operations of the work area;

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander employees who are approved students may be granted up to 13 hours per week paid study leave to attend and to travel to and from approved study activities which occur during normal working hours. This additional time is available in recognition of:

- Government policies, the objectives of the Aboriginal Education Development Policy, the Institute’s Corporate Plan and the Institute’s Indigenous Recruitment and Retention Strategy; and
- The Institute’s Workplace Diversity Program.

Employees with a disability may seek approval for paid leave of up to 13 hours including travelling time where it can be demonstrated that the previously mentioned leave provisions are not adequate to meet the needs of an individual.

Study leave may not be taken prior to approval being granted and can’t be granted retrospectively due to compensation considerations. If any leave is taken prior to approval for study leave being granted it must be flex, recreation or some other form of leave: such leave is not covered by workers’ compensation coverage.

Paid study leave to repeat a scheme of study or subject which has not been successfully completed due to failure or withdrawal may be granted at the discretion of the delegate, especially in cases where personal circumstances (for instance, bereavement, illness or injury) or other extenuating circumstances apply.



Some schemes of study may require work placements outside of the Institute. This should be discussed by the approved student and the delegate so that the delegate is aware of the implications of the approval and the student is confident of continued support throughout the scheme of study.

In the case of external students and thesis students the Institute recognises that special provisions should be available. External students may access study leave as follows:

- Paid study leave may be granted to travel to and from and to attend a residential course or any other study activity which is essential to the successful completion of the scheme of study;
- Additional paid study leave of up to three hours per week may be granted for other approved study activities. This additional leave may be used on a weekly basis or in another way agreed by the student and their supervisor and approved by the delegate; and
- Students maintain access to study credits, if available.

An approved student is entitled to paid leave to attend examinations and a graduation ceremony. Applications for examination leave should be sent to your supervisor as an email. A decision should then be sought from the delegate.

Specific needs of permanent part-time employees, such as family care responsibilities which may prevent study activities from being arranged outside of the employee's working hours, will be taken into consideration when assessing approval for leave.

In cases where the maximum amount of study leave available per week is not being utilised, the difference accrues as study credit for each period of approval, that is, each semester or academic year. For example, an on-campus Indigenous student who is approved for five hours paid study leave per week may accrue a study credit at the rate of eight hours per week.

Study leave credits may be used within the following framework:

- Study credits may be used for an approved study activity from the beginning of an approved study period, at the discretion of the delegate;
- Applications for paid study leave under the study credit provision must be made. Previously approved study leave which was not actually used does not accrue;
- Study leave credits may carry from Semester 1 to Semester 2, but not from one academic year to the next;
- Study leave credits do not accrue during flex or their leave of one full day or more.

The Delegate's approval of an application to use study leave credits is based on the proposed use of these accrued credits. Students are required to discuss the additional times leave may be taken with their supervisors.

6.5 Leave For Full-Time Study

Under Study Assistance there is the option for assisting employees with full-time study by way of leave without pay for study purposes.

Leave without pay for study purposes may be granted to approved students for up to three consecutive years to undertake full-time study. An extension beyond three years is at the discretion of the delegate.

While there is no minimum length of service required for leave without pay, it is generally considered that officers will have at least completed their probationary period.



A student who wishes to take more than one full year of leave without pay for study purposes may:

- Apply for separate grants of one year; or
- Apply for a single grant of two or three years.

Except in extenuating circumstances, such as illness, bereavement or injury, leave is granted on the basis that each year of study is successfully completed. For study undertaken within Australia, students are normally expected to return to work between academic years.

Leave without pay for full-time study counts as service for all purposes except accrual of recreation leave. Students on leave without pay for study purposes do not have workers' compensation coverage.

Employees who have not gained approval as a student for leave without pay for study purposes may apply for leave without pay for other purposes for up to one year through the relevant delegate. Any extension beyond one year is at the discretion of the delegate.

Leave without pay for other purpose does not count as service for any purpose and officers granted such leave cannot elect to pay superannuation.

Employees who move to another agency prior to the commencement of leave without pay will need to renegotiate their leave with the new agency consistent with that agency's Studies Assistance Scheme.

6.6 Work Related Training

If the Institute requires an employee to complete training or higher education so the employee can better perform their job they may be entitled to work related training leave which does not count as study leave. For more information please see the HR team in Corporate Services or email at HRteam@aiatsis.gov.au

6.7 Financial Assistance

Only approved students are eligible for financial assistance under Study Assistance, but being an approved student does not automatically entitle the student to reimbursement of educational expenses.

The following financial assistance is available under Study Assistance:

- Full reimbursement of registration and administration fees; course fees; general service fees; examination fees; or tuition fees;
- 50% reimbursement of Higher Education Contribution Scheme contributions, on a unit-by-unit basis, provided the HECS fee is paid upfront; and
- A text book/essential materials allowance of up to \$100 per semester on the production of receipts.

Financial assistance is available subject to the following conditions:

- The applicant must be approved as a student;
- The study being undertaken must be an approved scheme of study;
- The study being undertaken is successfully completed within the prescribed period;
- The applicant must provide proof of the successful completion of their studies, that is provide a copy of their results; and



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- The students must provide all necessary receipts, in order for reimbursement to be made.

Financial assistance is not available for payment of Student Union and/or Sports fees.

Financial assistance for a scheme of study or subject which has not been successfully completed because of failure or withdrawal will be considered at the discretion of the delegate where personal circumstances (that is, illness, injury or bereavement), pressure of work or other extenuating circumstances apply.

An employee who gains approval for financial assistance for a prescribed period, but moves to another agency before reimbursement is received should be aware that the new agency's Study Assistance policy may not provide for financial assistance. An employee who has approval for financial assistance for a prescribed period at another agency, but who joins the Institute before reimbursement is received, must re-apply for access to this assistance under the Study Assistance provisions. Assessment will be made having regard to the Institute's usual criteria.

Probationary employees who have approval for financial assistance, but have their appointment annulled for other than health reasons, are not eligible for reimbursement of costs during their probationary period.

7. Guidance Documents

AIATSIS Enterprise Agreement 2012 – 2014

8. Related Documents

<http://intranet/dev/common/AIATSISForms.html>

9. Contact

If you need more information about study allowance, please email HRTeam@aiatsis.gov.au

This Policy will be reviewed every 24 months or as required.