



Support for Professional Studies Policy and Procedure

CONTENTS

Section 1	Introduction
Section 2	General Principles
Section 3	Eligibility
Section 4	Granting the Costs
Section 5	Application Procedure
Section 6	Completion of the Programme of Study
Section 7	Unsuccessful Completion of the Programme of Study
Section 8	Leaving the College after Study

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Lincoln College is fully committed to ensuring that all employees, irrespective of role or grade are given the relevant knowledge, skills and experience to enable them to perform their work effectively and to develop their expertise and potential.
- 1.2 As part of this commitment the College's has a policy of Support for Professional Studies that allows individuals to study relevant qualifications to support their role and future development.
- 1.3 Financial assistance and support, and time off work as study leave available for identified employees, for whom development via additional qualifications would enhance their performance and development at work.

2. General Principles

- 2.1 This policy applies to a recognised course of study, approved by the College, which will improve the employee's effectiveness in their role and the performance of the College.
- 2.2 Discussions between a member of staff and their line manager should generate the rationale for the proposed course and for periodic monitoring of progress. A decision as to whether the employee can undertake the course of study will be given to within 14 days of the meeting.
- 2.3 For accredited programmes which lead to the award of a recognised qualification, the College will pay up to 3% of base pay per annum toward the cost of the course fees and will grant an interest free loan for the remainder of the fees. In some cases, where the course isn't directly related to a member of staff's role, an interest free loan may be offered for the total course expenditure, dependent on eligibility.
- 2.4 The College will contribute 50% towards the membership fee of one professional body where membership is directly relevant to the role.

3. Eligibility

- 3.1 An individual who wishes to apply for consideration to study in accordance with this policy must have at least 26 weeks continuous employment at the date the request is made. In addition the employee must meet all of the

criteria below:

- ✓ The subject and level of the course is relevant to the individual's work;
- ✓ The individual is fully briefed on the terms and conditions of the Study Support agreement.
- ✓ It can be demonstrated that the individual's attainment of the qualification will assist the College/department in achieving one or more of its objectives.

3.2 When approving an application, the Bursar will ensure that the individual satisfies all of the above criteria. If, in the Bursar's view, all of the above criteria are not satisfactorily met the application will not be approved. However, the Bursar may grant an interest free loan for some courses that may not be directly relevant to the individual's role. The employee will have the right to appeal against a decision not to approve a request for study leave.

3.3 The College will not pay for attendance on full-time courses.

3.4 The employee must be on a paid employment contract – individuals on consultancy and other service contracts are not normally eligible unless a separate agreement has been reached between the contractor and the College.

4. Granting the costs

4.1 When approving an application the Bursar will be responsible for deciding which courses will be granted payment. Approval will be for the course duration. This will include consideration of the areas listed below.

4.2 Method of Study

4.2.1 Opportunities exist for employees to be released from their normal working hours to benefit from the Study Support Policy. Study Leave and payment may be for courses involving:

- release from normal working hours
- evening studies
- open/distance learning
- a combination of these options

4.2.2 The Bursar will determine the extent and arrangement of study leave in conjunction with the employee and the employee's line manager, having considered fully the impact on the College/department, the

individual's job role and the identified course of study.

4.3 Registration and Payment of Fees

- 4.3.1 College payment for approved programmes of study will usually cover up to 3% of base pay in any year. Members of staff will be able to take an interest free loan for the remainder of the course fees.
- 4.3.2 The Bursar may grant an interest free loan to staff for undertaking courses that may not directly benefit their current role but are related to their area of work. The loan will be repayable monthly over the agreed period.

4.4 Text Books and/or Equipment

The employee will normally be responsible for all travelling expenses, cost of books and equipment.

4.5 Attendance

- 4.7.1 Leave of absence to attend classes will be decided on a case by case basis dependent on the course in question.

4.8 Study Leave

- 4.8.1 Paid leave will be provided for examination days, usually up to a maximum of five days per annum, relating to the programme of study on proof of the examination dates.
- 4.8.2 Paid leave to prepare for examinations up to a maximum of one full day per exam will be allowed, usually up to a maximum of five days per annum.
No study leave is available to prepare coursework. Additional days must be taken as annual leave.
- 4.8.3 Additional paid leave for revision or project work will be at the discretion of the Bursar. The amount of leave granted will not normally exceed 3 days per annum.

5. Application Procedure

- 5.1 Employees who wish to apply for the College to pay their course fees should be given a copy of Appendices A and B to complete and return to their line manager.

- 5.2 Applications should normally be made by individuals to their manager at least 2 months prior to the commencement of the identified course. Applications will be made in writing using the Application for Study Leave and Payment of Fees (Appendix A) and then forwarded to the Bursar for consideration against the eligibility criteria listed in section 3. The Bursar will then meet with the individual within 28 days of receipt of the application, if the request is to be turned down.
- 5.3 The Bursar should consider all the information contained on the Application, consult with the individual's line manager and decide whether the College will support the application for payment, loan and/or study leave.
- 5.4 If the Bursar does not approve an application, they should explain to the individual the reasons for this decision and offer the member of staff an interest free loan, if applicable. The member of staff will have a right to appeal against this decision to the Principal within 14 days of the decision being notified in writing.
- 5.5 Once the application is approved by the Bursar all associated paperwork should be returned to the HR Manager to place on the individual's personal file.
- 5.6 If the Bursar does not support the application, all paperwork should be returned to the HR Manager to place on the individual's personal file.
- 5.7 Future requests for study leave cannot be made for a period of 12 months following a previous request.

6. Completion of the Programme of Study

- 6.1 At the end of the course, employees must produce their certificate confirming they have passed the course to their line manager, who in turn should pass this to the HR Manager to put on the individual's personal file.
- 6.2 Staff undertaking sponsored study are required to inform the Bursar if they withdraw from the course.

7. Unsuccessful Completion of the Programme of Study

- 7.1 The repayment of all funding to the College by the individual will normally be required in the following circumstances:
- the employee fails to sit for an examination –

without exceptional reason

- the employee discontinues a course
- the employee fails a 're-sit' examination or repetition of the year

7.2 The above may be waived in exceptional circumstances. A decision will be made by Bursar.

7.3 Re-sitting an examination or repeating the year of study may only be approved if the Bursar is fully satisfied that the individual is committed to achieve success on the next occasion. Repeat re-sitting or repetition of a year of study is not permissible under the scheme and as such would result in the funding being repaid to the College by the individual. Re-payment time scales will be agreed on a case by case basis.

8. Leaving the College after completion of the Period of Study

8.1 Should an individual, claiming under the policy, leave the employment of the College within 2 years of the completion of the study, they will be required to pay back a proportion of the fees, as follows:

- within 12 months 100% of the fees will be repaid
- within 18 months 50% of the fees will be repaid
- within 24 months 25% of the fees will be repaid

Any remaining balance of a loan will become repayable and will be deducted from the final month's pay.

8.2 Should an individual be dismissed within 2 years, they will be required to repay all of the direct expenditure incurred by the College, and repay any remaining balance of a loan. This will usually be reclaimed by deduction from salary.

8.3 If an individual leaves the College's employment due to ill health retirement, early retirement, or redundancy, no refund will be required, and the terms of repayment of any loan will be agreed with the Bursar

APPENDIX A

Application for Support for Professional Studies

Please complete Section One from this Appendix and Appendix B. Then forward both forms to your Line Manager.

Section 1 – To be completed by employee

Name.....

Department.....

Line Manager.....

Course of Study.....

Cost of Course.....

Date of Application.....

Section 2 – To be completed by the line manager

I support the above application

I do not support the above application

Line Manager's signature.....Date.....

Section 3 – To be completed by the Bursar

I support the above application for sponsored study and recommend:

payment of £_____ (max 3% of base pay)

interest free loan of £_____, repayable over____months / years

study leave of days (max 5)

time off for examinations and preparation of exams days (max

10) This course of study will require

release from normal working hours, evening studies, open/distance learning,

OR

I do NOT support the above application

Bursar's signatureDate.....

APPENDIX B

Support for Professional Studies Agreement

Employee's Name.....

Department.....

Course.....

Cost.....

I agree to the following terms regarding financial sponsorship for the above course. I also agree to adhere to the Support for Professional Studies Policy and Procedure.

If I leave within 24 months of completion I will repay the fees according to the terms specified in the Support for Professional Studies Policy and Procedure.

I agree to repay the loan monthly over that agreed time, and that this repayment will be deducted from my salary.

In addition I will repay all course and exam fees if I:

- ✓ fail to sit for an examination (without exceptional reason)
- ✓ discontinue a course
- ✓ fail a 're-sit' examination or repetition of a year

Signed Date

Please forward along with Appendix A to your line manager.

Your application and payment for the course will not be processed until these forms are received by the Bursar.