

TRAINING/STUDY SUPPORT AND LEAVE POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Breckland Council is committed to training and developing its staff to assist in achieving the Corporate Objectives. Breckland Council recognises that effective training and development should meet the needs of individual employees as well as corporate needs however, it is imperative that all training and development activity should be focused on achieving service/function objectives and those of the Council.
- 1.2 It is the responsibility of managers, in conjunction with their staff, to identify and agree appropriate training opportunities and to facilitate the necessary arrangements to allow staff to take advantage of them.
- 1.3 Advice and guidance on employee development can be obtained from Human Resources.
- 1.4 Managers are reminded that the Councils' Equal Opportunities Policy is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all staff.

2. STATUTORY DUTY TO PROMOTE RACE EQUALITY AND TO RECORD APPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING, TRAINING RECEIVED & TRAINING DECLINED

- 2.1 The Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties Order 2001) requires that all local authority employers should undertake ethnic monitoring. Under the Race Relations Act, the Commission for Racial Equality has the power to enforce the specific duties to monitor applications for training. This monitoring has to be carried out on applications both approved, declined and training received, and a report has to be produced annually to this effect.
- 2.2 It will be the role of Human Resources to undertake this monitoring and to publish the results annually to ensure that we meet our obligations. The monitoring has to take account of access to training for staff according to: ethnicity, gender, disability and employment status (part time / fixed term workers).
- 2.3 Chief Officers manage their section's training budget and will know when staff request training and whether these requests have been approved or declined. However, Human Resources is not always advised that a member of staff has requested training or the outcome of the request. A form has been devised (see appendix A) which should be completed by **all** staff and a copy of the completed form should be sent to Human Resources to enable us to comply with the **statutory duty** to monitor all requests for training, training received and training declined.
- 2.4 For the purpose of the training request form, training is considered to include in house and external learning, coaching, mentoring, seminars, secondments and on the job training. Please note that induction training should be conducted as a matter of course to all new employees, and the individual should not have to ask to receive this training. All training apart from induction training should be requested using the form, even if the course is to be self-funded and the member of staff is just requesting the time off work. The form encourages the individual to state the reasons why they think they should receive the training, and asks them to link these with their Service/Function/Portfolio and Breckland's objectives.

3. **DEFINITION OF STUDY LEAVE**

- 3.1 Leave required for a training/learning event that will prevent the individual member of staff from undertaking their normal duties.
- 3.2 Study leave for the purpose of this policy includes: both day release and one-off courses, conferences, seminars, workshops and any active learning opportunities arranged either internally or with other organisations.
- 3.3 Study leave will only be granted for relevant and authorised courses.

4. **WHO CAN APPLY FOR STUDY LEAVE**

- 4.1 All employees, undertaking approved personal development activities may apply for study leave whether they are full time, part time, permanent or fixed term. Approval will be given on the basis of appropriateness and relevance to both the individual and the needs of the Council.
- 4.2 Members of staff may not take study leave without their Manager's written approval prior to the required leave.

5. **FUNDING SUPPORT AND REIMBURSEMENT**

- 5.1 It is essential that the Council and its managers make the best use of any budget allocated to training/study leave.
- 5.2 In accordance with the Terms of Reference, Part B2-5, page 22, items 16 and 17, Chief Officers (Portfolio Managers, the Chief Executive, Strategic Manager and the Scrutiny and Standards Manager) have the power to authorise attendance of employees on courses and to incur expenditure on training, provided that the costs can be met from within the Training Budget.

The level of funding given for each training/study leave application will be at the discretion of the budget holder (e.g. the Chief Officer). Depending on the relevance of the course to the service, and the individual, it is possible that the applicant may be asked to make a contribution to the cost. For example the Council may pay half of the course/seminar fees, and the employee may be required to pay the other half.

6. **SUBSISTENCE AND TRAVEL**

- 6.1 In accordance with the National Terms and Conditions of employment, should an employee be granted leave of absence to undertake further study/training, they will be entitled to be reimbursed for any approved additional expenditure incurred for travelling and subsistence. The amount claimed should not exceed normal subsistence entitlements. Current rates for subsistence and travel claims can be obtained by contacting a member of staff within the Human Resources function.
- 6.2 Assistance maybe provided towards the purchase of books/materials deemed essential for the undertaking of the approved personal development.

7. PAID TIME OFF TO ATTEND COURSES

- 7.1 An employee should not suffer a reduction in earnings as a result of taking study leave or undertaking training. Accordingly, staff will be paid for the time spent attending training and/or whilst on study leave where they would otherwise have been on duty. However, where the training/study leave is not compulsory, the Manager may wish to negotiate a compromise with that member of staff.
- 7.2 Part time staff who take part in training/study leave that exceeds their daily contracted hours, will be paid up to the full-time hours for that day, or, alternatively, it may be agreed that time off in lieu is given.
- 7.3 It is not the Council's policy to pay a member of staff for hours spent on training/study leave that exceed the average full time daily hours. Therefore, if a member of staff attends college for a full day, they are entitled to have 7.24 maximum (pro rata for part time staff) credited to their clock. If they attend college for an afternoon and evening, they are entitled to be credited for their normal afternoon hours (for full time staff this will be 3.42 maximum, for part time staff it will be the hours they would normally have worked that afternoon).

There is provision within the flex scheme for members of staff who have to attend a seminar or conference say in London, which results in the employee's travelling and studying time going over and above the normal daily hours, to claim up to a maximum of ten hours for that day.

- 7.4 Staff are expected to ensure that their work is not unduly disrupted by periods of training/study leave. They are also expected to ensure that no undue pressure falls to other members of their team due to their absence whilst undertaking training or whilst on study leave.
- 7.5 Where a course of training/study leave has been approved which includes compulsory attendance at a residential school, the employee is entitled to their normal days pay. Where the residential school covers a weekend the employee is expected to attend in their own time as commitment to the course and they will not be entitled to any credit on the clock.

8. TRAINEE COMMITMENT

- 8.1 When study leave is granted for an individual to pursue a professional qualification, e.g. A.A.T, a Degree Level Course, Diploma of Management Studies or an MBA (this list is indicative and is not exhaustive), the individual is required to sign the following undertaking: (See appendix B for a copy of the form)
- a) Following the completion of the course, you will remain working for the Council for a period of two years (otherwise you will be required to repay the financial assistance given to you).
 - b) If you leave Breckland Council's employ before completing the whole or a defined part of the qualification, repayment in full of the financial assistance will be required by the Council.**

- c) Where repayment of financial assistance is required this shall not include any salary paid in respect of time spent at approved courses of study, nor shall it include any subsistence or travel claims.
- d) If you, (without good reason) fail to sit an examination within a reasonable period; or you fail to show satisfactory progress in your studies; or you discontinue the course, the Council may withdraw the facilities granted under this policy. Furthermore, the Council may require the refunding of a proportion of the financial assistance granted. The amount to be repaid will be determined after consultation with your Portfolio Manager and the Strategic Manager.
- e) The continuation of the facilities under the policy, whether for a second or succeeding stage of study or for a second attempt at an examination, shall be granted only if the Council is satisfied that you have passed the appropriate examinations; or that you have made satisfactory progress in your studies; or that you merit assistance to enable you to sit the exam again.

** “The Chief Executive has the authority to waive wholly or partly the requirement for an officer to repay the amount of financial assistance received towards training because of an early resignation, where the circumstances seem appropriate.” (Terms of Reference, Part B2-5, Page 22, Item 18).

8.2 Where an employee is required to attend a course, conference or seminar as an essential part of their job or in order to enable them to perform more effectively the full duties of their job, they will not be required to sign an undertaking in respect of paying back any financial assistance. Examples of such courses are; Word, Excel, Outlook and professional updates.

8.3 The Council is committed to developing staff and ensuring that they have the opportunity to maximise their skills and abilities. However, it is not in the business interests of the Council to invest valuable resources to a significant level that are not subsequently reinvested in the organisation.

9. **SHARING KNOWLEDGE**

Staff who attend a training event that is relevant to other members of their team/service/portfolio should be encouraged to share that knowledge. This may take the form of a written paper, presentation, briefing or workshop, and will assist in maximising training/study leave resources.

10. **TIME OFF FOR EXAMINATIONS**

10.1 Breckland recognises the importance of being prepared for examinations and as part of it’s commitment to employee development it will grant paid time off to allow employees to prepare for and to sit examinations. **For each examination an employee has to undertake, they will be entitled to one days paid study leave for revision purposes and one days paid study leave to sit the examination.**

10.2 Employees will normally be allowed one attempt at re-sitting an examination.

11. **PROCEDURE FOR APPLICATION**

- 11.1 Staff wishing to apply for training (of any description) should complete a Training Request Form (see Appendix A – a copy of the Training Request Form will be available from the Keep Directory under HR Forms/Miscellaneous/Training Request Form). This should then be submitted to their manager for consideration by their Portfolio Manager at least two weeks before leave is due to commence (dead line at the portfolio manager's discretion). As part of the application process they should clearly state the benefits of undertaking the course of study to both the Council and themselves. They should also detail what financial assistance and time off is required, with an estimate of other costs.
- 11.2 Where the course of training/study falls within the areas as defined at paragraph 8.1 above, the employee must sign an employee undertaking (See Appendix B), whereby they agree to the terms and conditions detailed at paragraph 8.1 (a) – (e). This undertaking must be completed and signed by all concerned **before** any financial commitment is made.
- 11.3 A copy of the signed undertaking must be returned to Human Resources for insertion on the employee's personal file so that where applicable, the necessary steps can be put in place to claim back any monies due in accordance with the conditions outlined in paragraph 8.1 (a) to (e) detailed above.
- 11.4 In order that the Council complies with its statutory duty to promote race equality, **all** applications for training of any description, whether approved or not, must be recorded on a Training Request Form (Appendix A) and a copy **must** be sent to Human Resources for recording purposes.

12. **MISCONDUCT**

Training/Study leave is granted in good faith for the purpose of personal development and exam preparation. Staff who are found to have misused this benefit may be subject to formal disciplinary action and may be dismissed.

**BRECKLAND COUNCIL'S EXTERNAL TRAINING REQUEST FORM –
To be used for all external training (inc. seminars, conferences and
accommodation)**

As from 1 April 2008 the training budget will be centralized. A Training request form is required to be completed for all external training. All external training requests are external learning, seminars and conferences and will need to be authorized by management and Human Resources. Please ensure that forms are fully completed and the process below is followed.

Process:

Member of staff: fully complete 'Employee' section on the training request form.

Line Manager: fully complete the 'Manager' section of the form.

Portfolio Manager: fully complete the 'Portfolio Manager' section of the form

If the training request is declined, a signature from the portfolio manager is still required.

Once the request is fully completed (as above) and signed, the form should be forwarded to Human Resources to process.

Once the budget has been approved in HR and an order raised, the manager and member of staff concerned will receive an email confirmation with the order number. The external training can then be booked by the department concerned.

Please note: Any forms received in Human Resources that are not fully completed will be returned to the manager

This data will be stored and collated (in accordance with Data Protection) in order to meet our statutory duties to monitor equal opportunities for staff applying for training, those who receive training and those who have had their application declined.

The original forms will be kept on file in Human Resources, please keep a copy of the request form for your own records.

BRECKLAND COUNCIL'S EXTERNAL TRAINING REQUEST FORM –
To be used for all external training (inc. seminars, conferences and
accommodation)

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE EMPLOYEE

Employee:

Job Title:

Department:

Training/development programme:

Does the training lead to a recognised qualification? Yes / No
(If yes, please also sign the employee undertaking attached.)

Start Date:

Duration:

Cost of training, (Exc of VAT):

Is the supplier set up on Integra? Yes / No (you can check this with the member of staff who normally raises orders in your department)

If Yes, please state the supplier code:

If No, please send out a 'New Supplier Request Form'. This can be found on the Biz under 'Organizational Structure, Cabinet, Finance, Documents'.

If new supplier request form sent out, date request sent out to supplier:

Time off required to attend (Please detail):

How many exams will you be required to undertake?

(As you will be entitled to take time off for examinations, section 10 Training / Study Support and Leave Policy)

How does this programme address your agreed development objectives?

(The objectives are discussed at your annual performance and development review)

Please note:

External Training - If non-attendance and any costs are incurred, this will be recharged to your department

Name:

Signature:

Date:

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE EMPLOYEE'S MANAGER

Manager's Decision: Yes / No

If no, the specific reasons why training has been declined in this instance:

How does this programme address the individual and organisational needs identified by the Performance and Development Review process?

Please note:

External Training - If non-attendance and any costs are incurred, this will be recharged to your department

It is the manager's responsibility to ensure that the Employee Undertaking is signed when the individual is requesting training which leads to a recognised qualification and / or there is a financial commitment. The Employee Undertaking must be attached to this form before it is sent to the Portfolio Manager.

Name: (please print)

Signature:

Date:

(Please obtain your Portfolio Manager's signature if you wish to support training which leads to a recognised qualification / there is a financial commitment / conference or seminar / or the training request has been declined.

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE RELEVANT DIRECTOR

Commitment agreed to:

Employee undertaking completed and signed: Yes / No
(Appendix B of Training/Study Leave Policy)

Name: (Please print)

Signature:

Date:

IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THIS FORM IS COMPLETED AND A COPY SENT TO HUMAN RESOURCES FOR STATUTORY EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES DATA MONITORING (AS REQUIRED UNDER THE RACE RELATIONS 1976 (STATUTORY DUTIES ORDER 2001))

Human Resources Action

Application form fully completed:	Y / N
Employee undertaking fully completed:	Y / N
Budget agreed:	Y / N
P O Number:	-----
Date of Email to manager / employee to confirm:	-----
Initials:	
HR Manager / Training Manager Approval:	-----

Employee Undertaking

I have read the Council's Study Leave Policy and agree that I will abide by the conditions set out below:

- a) Following the completion of the course, I will remain working for the Council for a period of two years (otherwise I understand I will be required to repay the financial assistance given to me).
- b) If I leave Breckland Council's employ before completing the whole or a defined part of the qualification, repayment in full of the financial assistance will be required by the Council.**
- c) Where repayment of financial assistance is required this shall not include any salary paid in respect of time spent at approved courses of study, nor shall it include any subsistence or travel claims.
- d) If I, (without good reason) fail to sit an examination within a reasonable period; or I fail to show satisfactory progress in my studies; or I discontinue the course, the Council may withdraw the facilities granted under this policy. Furthermore, the Council may require the refunding of a proportion of the financial assistance granted. The amount to be repaid will be determined after consultation with your Operations Manager.
- e) The continuation of the facilities under the policy, whether for a second or succeeding stage of study or for a second attempt at an examination, shall be granted only if the Council is satisfied that you have passed the appropriate examinations; or that you have made satisfactory progress in your studies; or that you merit assistance to enable you to sit the exam again.

** The Chief Executive has the authority to waive wholly or partly the requirement for an officer to repay the amount of financial assistance received towards training because of an early resignation, where the circumstances seem appropriate.

I agree to the terms and conditions set out in paragraph (a) to (e) above and understand that failure to do so will mean that I will have to repay in full the financial assistance approved and paid in order for me to undertake the above programme.

Name (please print):

Employee signature:

Date:

NOTE. THIS TRAINING AGREEMENT AND UNDERTAKING MUST BE COMPLETED IN FULL BEFORE ANY COURSE OF STUDY IS BOOKED.