

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 In accordance with The Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001 all learning and development provision will be planned, delivered, monitored and evaluated on the basis of equality of access for all staff.
- 2.2 It will be the role of Human Resources to undertake this monitoring.
- 2.3 The Training and Development Team within Human Resources manages the training budget and on receipt of training requests forms will approve or decline. A form has been devised (see appendix A) which should be completed by **all** staff for approval.
- 2.4 The training request form is required for all external learning, including conferences and seminars. The form encourages the individual/manager to state the reasons why they think the individual should receive the training, and asks them to link these with their personal and team objectives.
- 2.5 All internal training can be requested directly through the training team. The induction training is conducted for all new employees when they join the Council.

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 as in paragraph 1.1

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

- 4.1 All employees, undertaking approved personal development activities as in paragraph 1.1 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 Training Team make the best use of their annual budget allocated to training/study leave.

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.
- 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. Employees are entitled to claim for meals subject to the current subsistence allowance.

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."

- 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 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 external training should complete a Training Request Form (see Appendix A – a copy of the Training Request Form will be available from the Biz under Human Resources/Training and Development. This should then be submitted to their manager for consideration before being passed to Human Resources for approval. Once this is has been actioned an email confirmation will be sent to both the manager and employee. 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.



Appendix A

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

Notes for completion (to be read in conjunction with the training request workflow):

This form has been designed to measure and evaluate training events to ensure Breckland Council is investing in appropriate training and that we continue to assess the quality of the investment. When completed please send to HR.

Prior to the event:
 Section A should be completed by the Employee
 Section B should be completed by the Line Manager
 Section C to be completed by Director if the event is £1000 or over
 Section D to be completed by HR

After the event- Evaluation
 Section A complete the Evaluation form on the BIZ
 Section B should be completed jointly by employee and Line Manager

Section A: to be completed by employee	
Name:	
Job Title:	Dept:
Learning Event Title:	
Professional Qualification:	Yes or No
Venue:	
Start Date:	Duration:
Type of Event: Seminar / conference / course	Provider:
Cost of Course (ex VAT): £	
Supplier Code:	
<i>Please state code if event is £1000 or over</i>	
Please give reasons why you have chosen this supplier:	
Time off required to attend:	
How many exams will you be required to undertake?	When will these take place:
Expenses (please indicate approx costs)	
Accommodation: £	Other Travel: £
How does this programme address your agreed development objectives?	
What will you gain from attending this training?	
Are you undertaking any other training which may affect your ability to complete this training? Yes / No	
If yes, please give a brief description:	
Signature:	Date:

Section B: To be completed by the Employees Line Manager (prior to the training event)	
Manager's Decision:	Accept / Decline
If declined, please state reasons:	
Has the learning been identified in the appraisal discussion? Yes / No	
Have you met with the learner to discuss the learning objective(s)? Yes / No	
How does this programme address the individual and organisational needs identified by the Performance and Development Review process?	
How will the employees work be covered while attending training?	
<p>Please note: <i>External Training</i> - 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 signed and attached before it is sent to the Director.</p>	
Signature:	Date:

Section C: To be completed by the relevant director – if the Learning Event is £1000 or over	
Director Decision:	Yes / No
Employee undertaking completed and signed:	Yes / No
Signature	_____
Date	_____

Section D: To be completed by HR	
Application fully completed: Yes / No If No , date returned:	Training Manager Budget Approval:
Employee undertaking fully completed: Yes / No	Date email confirmation sent to Employee / Manager:
P O Number: Ref: Number:	GRN Number:
Spreadsheet updated:	

Appendix B

Employee Undertaking

I have read the Council's Training/Study Support and 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 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.

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. THE TRAINING REQUEST FORM AND EMPLOYEE UNDERTAKING MUST BE COMPLETED IN FULL BEFORE ANY COURSE OF STUDY IS BOOKED.