

## Staff Learning Scheme

The Department of Paediatrics is supportive of continuing education in staff members. Any training needs should be considered at employees annual Performance Development Review (PDR), training needs will be agreed between the employee and their line manager, it is recommended that a time frame is set up for the training to be carried out.

### **Background:**

The University believes that learning at work, undertaken voluntarily and properly supported, is likely to benefit both the individual and the organisation. For the purposes of this policy, learning at work is defined as structured learning, undertaken with a purpose related to current or future work roles. It may involve formal courses or a programme of other activity such as work shadowing, mentoring or coaching, planned reading or projects undertaken for learning purposes. Usually the learning will be connected with work, but learning programmes undertaken out of general interest may also benefit the University if the effect is to stimulate an interest in learning for its own sake.

The Staff Learning Scheme is designed to provide staff with financial support for relevant courses and other learning activities for which they would otherwise have to pay. Where possible the training could be carried out in house by other members of the department, alternatively suitable training could be provided by Oxford Learning Institute (OLI). A list of their training courses is available from the following webpage:

<http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/courses/>

Training in university software (e.g. Oracle or Core) should be provided when the employee starts with the department or when the need arises (in the case of a change of duties or the employees role). This training can be organised and booked through the appropriate centralised departments (e.g. Finance department or HRIS). The scheme does not cover internal courses run by the Oxford Learning Institute and other Oxford providers such as Computing Services and the Language Centre, which remain free or carry only a nominal charge to staff. Nor does the scheme cover research except where research forms part of a programme of study.

### **What is the scheme?**

In some cases internal training may not be appropriate for the development of employees, in this instance the department has a staff learning fund to support costs of external training. Employees of the University who wish to undertake a course or other learning activity may apply to the Departmental Administrator for a grant towards the fees for the course.

The annual grant will normally be for a maximum of 100 per cent of the fee, or £2,000, whichever is the lower. In approved cases, the grant will be available for:

- courses offered by the department in which the member of staff is employed (including DPhils);
- courses offered by other academic departments of the University;
- courses offered by colleges of the University (e.g. Oxford Bursars Training);
- courses offered by organisations outside the University.

Employees wishing to be considered under the scheme must be able to show that:

- their primary role is as a member of staff of the University; and

- the course will help them to develop within the role and be of broader benefit to the department; or that, alternatively, it will enable them to acquire new skills and deal with changes in responsibilities or a new role.

Activities with a direct link to the individual's existing job or to their career intentions will take priority over other activities when there is competition for resources. It should be clear that the employee has discussed the preferred training with their line manager and has their line manager's approval. Those in part-time posts are eligible to apply so long as they meet criterion above. Payments will not be reduced pro-rata. Those in fixed-term posts are also eligible to apply. Funding, when approved, will run until the end of the contract or until the end of the course, whichever is the earlier date.

In the case of training being carried out during the employees working day then an agreement should be made with the line manager as to how work will be covered or if the employee is expected to make up the working hours. This may be more relevant if the employee is taking part in a long term course (for a year) rather than the occasional day away from the office for training purposes.

### How to apply:

Applications must be made by the following deadlines;

- **1<sup>st</sup> July**
- **1<sup>st</sup> November**

All applications will be considered after each deadline and the funds awarded accordingly. Applications must be made on the relevant application form to the Departmental Administrator, who will consider first whether the application meets the criteria for approval.

Application forms are available from: <http://www.learning.ox.ac.uk/scheme/>

Applications will be considered by the Departmental Administrator and the Deputy Departmental Administrator, employees will be informed if their application is successful. If the application is not successful, full details of the reasoning behind the decision will be communicated to the employee the employee has the right to appeal the decision to the Head of Department.

In some circumstances, financial support may be withdrawn or repayment of financial assistance will be required:

- where an employee fails to sit for an examination within a reasonable period, or fails to demonstrate satisfactory progress in her/his studies or discontinues her/his course of study, the University may withdraw the facilities previously granted. Repayment of a proportion of the financial assistance may also be required. The University will determine what is appropriate depending upon individual circumstances;
- an employee who voluntarily leaves the University before completing the whole or a defined part of a recognised qualification, or before completing a non-qualification-bearing course, may be required to repay in full the financial assistance that has been given;
- an employee who voluntarily leaves the University within two years after completion of a course may be required to repay the financial assistance in accordance with the proportion of two years' service that has been completed;
- no repayment will be required where an employee leaves to take up full time education;
- where repayment of financial assistance is required this shall not include salary paid in respect of time spent at approved courses of study.

**Study leave-** It is usual that study leave for exams be granted on the basis of one day per exam (not including the examination time), in order to allow employees adequate time for preparation.