

Purpose of the Learning Agreement

The Learning Agreement is to support the Jersey Public Service Learning and Skills Policy. In order to safeguard public funds and ensure the organisation realises a return on investment made towards Public Servants' development in relation to professional studies and qualifications this agreement outlines responsibilities of both colleagues and their line managers.

It is essential that Public Servants requesting financial support to undertake professional qualifications have support from their Line Manager. Your Line Manager must confirm this in the application form by outlining:

- that you demonstrate (high) potential, performance and commitment
- that you are able to realistically complete the course/training – taking into consideration your attendance record and other relevant information
- that there is a job or function related benefit of the planned learning
- that they are prepared to ensure that you are given time to attend the course/training/exams

You must ensure you meet the entry criteria for the chosen course or qualification before applying for funding.

This Learning Agreement is to support applications for financial support for professional studies and exams made by Public Servants already in employment within the organisation who have identified a learning and development need as part of their ongoing professional development. It does not apply to or replace existing agreements where vocational training is provided by the organisation as part of the recruitment and hiring process such as Fire and Rescue Officers and Police Constables etc.

Professional studies and exams are one or more of the following:

- courses that result in a qualification awarded by a recognised professional body
- professional training courses that relate to a specific industry or career path
- undertaken directly after completing university or by professionals with several years of experience who are looking to develop their career further
- often involve an element of practical training
- linked with a specific industry and are designed to help you improve and develop relevant skills for a particular career path
- involve education for at least one year at post-secondary level
- train you to meet standards in practice for a particular profession and give you certain expertise in a particular profession

This would include for example, undergraduate and postgraduate Degrees, Diplomas and any professional course that provides specific accreditation or certification.

Selection and Approval process

You can apply for funding to cover the costs of professional studies by submitting an application via the Professional Qualification Application form. This will be emailed to your Line Manager who will add the detail outlined above to confirm their approval. Your manager will share this with your Learning and Development Lead who will ensure your application is taken through your departments' specific application process to secure funding. Each department has its own application and approval process.

Departments manage their own training and learning budgets. If there are more applications for professional studies than available budget, departments should convene a Selection Panel, which includes a representative from Human Resources to review and select candidates based on an analysis of the needs of the department and organisation.

Financial support will not be forthcoming until the Professional Qualification Application form has been completed by both you and your manager.

You should not apply for a course or commit the organisation to any financial costs before the Professional Qualification Application form has been completed by both you and your manager and financial approval has been confirmed via your internal application process.

Financial Support & Financial Responsibility

Once the Professional Qualification Application form has been completed and funding has been confirmed, the organisation will pay 100% of all costs. This includes course fees, examination fees, and where necessary, travel and other related costs where an equivalent option is not available locally or remotely.

You must submit details of all estimated related expenses such as course materials, travel and accommodation, if necessary, etc on the application form so that your manager and department understand the full cost of financial support being requested. Expenses and travel requests will be processed through your department's existing financial process to pay for these and paid for from your department's relevant budget.

Financial assistance includes student membership, exam entry fees, books, course notes, study materials and course fees, as well as membership admission fee (i.e.: the one off cost for a student/affiliate to be admitted to full membership upon completion of the exams and practical experience requirements). Annual membership fees are the responsibility of the member of staff to fund once qualified.

The amount of financial assistance for examinations will be 100% for the first attempt. Should you not pass and need to sit the examination for a second time, the organisation will cover 50% of the cost. If you have to sit the examination for a third time you will be required to cover the costs of the examination in full.

You must opt for the local provision if there is one available. Colleagues who choose to take courses off island are entitled to do so but will not receive financial assistance for the flights and accommodation required if there is a local equivalent available that does not incur these additional costs and will only be reimbursed the same rate as the local course fee.

If you resign, retire earlier than your normal retirement age, take involuntary redundancy, are dismissed or choose to leave your job for any reason before qualifying, you will be required to pay back any financial assistance including any reimbursements of previous employer training costs provided in full.

If you leave the organisation within two years of qualifying, you will be required to pay back the funds allocated to your development as outlined in the table below. The amount you would be required to repay will be reduced on a proportional basis according to the number of months you remain in service after having qualified. Repayments would be deducted from your salary. You will sign an agreement to this effect by completing and submitting the Professional Qualification Application form. This will be included as part of your contract with the Government of Jersey.

Reimbursement agreement:

Not yet qualified	100% of costs to date
Fully qualified	100% of costs
6 months post qualified	75% of costs
1 year post qualified	50% of costs
1.5 years post qualified	25% of costs
2 years post qualified	0% of costs

If reimbursement of costs have not been received before the final date of employment, any sum owed will be deducted from your final salary. It is your Line Manager's responsibility to inform Payroll in good time of the outstanding amount.

If you are dismissed or your final salary is not sufficient to deduct the sum owed, the outstanding amount must be repaid immediately. If the sum is not repaid the outstanding amount will become a debt owed to the organisation and will be treated as such.

Please note that different funding arrangements are in place for medical staff who should follow the HSSD Study Leave Guidelines, and employees in the Law Officers Department taking the Jersey Law course. The same requirements for repayment, as above apply to these employees.

If you fail to complete the course or qualification within the agreed timescale you also become liable to repay all costs.

In the case of some exceptional cause or hardship beyond the employee's control, the Department may, at the discretion of the Chief Officer or their nominee, waive repayment of the subsidy in whole or in part or make an adjustment to the terms of the agreement as it considers fair and reasonable in the circumstances.

Professional Body Registration fees are not covered by the Learning & Skills policy of this Learning Agreement. In order to claim a deduction for Professional registration fees against your tax liability for the year, you will need to complete section 3.3 on your tax return.

Progress during the course

Your department has the right to ask for reports from the study provider relating to your progress and performance during the duration of your studies. If you fail an exam the organisation will pay for 50% of one exam re-sit. Any further exam re-sit costs will be paid for by you direct to the learning provider.

If, for any reason, you choose not to complete the course or you are unable to complete the course due to failure of exams or modules, or extenuating circumstances, you are liable to reimburse the organisation 100% of fees paid by the organisation in relation to that particular qualification for the two years (only) prior to your leaving date. This does not include any time agreed by your manager in advance as a 'deferral period'.

Should you wish to pause or defer your studies for any reason this must be discussed and agreed with your line manager and approved by the learning provider. This decision must be recorded, along with the new date you will recommence your studies and complete, in your performance management record.

You are responsible for attending classes and handing in mock examinations as required by the training provider's policies in order to attain pass assurance. If you do not do this, you will be required to self-fund any resultant costs for future courses which would otherwise have been covered by the organisation.

You are expected to agree a completion date with your line manager and carry out exams at a reasonable frequency to demonstrate you are progressing as expected. An exam plan must be agreed upon with your line manager and your progress should be discussed frequently in your one to ones and six-monthly reviews. This is to ensure you complete the qualification in a reasonable time and should you require an extension due to unforeseen circumstances this is discussed and agreed with your line manager.

Time off for study and taking exams

Colleagues who are taking a course of professional study or exams supported by their Line Manager are permitted to take study leave (as defined in the Special Leave Policy) and special leave to attend the introductory, interim and revision courses administered by the training provider and be granted paid time off from work on the day of the exam.

For courses with evening classes, colleagues will be entitled to the equivalent time off from work in addition to allocated study leave. For example, if the course is taught in the evening from 5pm to 8pm, the trainee will be entitled to three hours off from work and also additional time allocated as study leave. This is to ensure the trainee has sufficient time outside of the office to work towards assignments and self-revision. Due to the nature of varying roles across the Jersey Public Service, different arrangements may be in place to help public servants in their learning, for example in schools and educational settings. Please discuss your chosen learning provision and request for time off to study with your manager in advance of applying for any course.

Special leave for revision prior to examinations will be provided on the following basis:

Certificate/Diploma level – 1 day per subject/unit (up to a maximum of 4 days)

Degree level – 2 days per module (up to a maximum of 6 days)

Masters level – 2 days per module (up to a maximum of 6 days)

Special leave for the duration of sitting each exam

Special leave to study and sit exams will not be refused unless the absence from work would seriously disrupt the provision of a service.

All other study leave or re-sitting of exams must be managed by using annual leave or in exceptional circumstances unpaid special leave. Re-takes do not qualify for further periods of paid special leave. Separate arrangements are in place for study leave for medical staff and employees in the Law Officers Department following the Jersey Law course.

Please sign below to acknowledge that you have read and agree to this learning agreement.

Delegate signature.....

Print name.....

Date.....

Line manager signature.....

Print name.....

Date.....

Once complete please send a copy of this agreement to peoplehub@gov.je