1. Introduction

The University is committed to providing staff with both the training necessary to perform their current work effectively; and opportunities to develop further skills to support future duties and career development. Courses of work-related Further and Higher Education (FE and HE) are a valuable means of developing staff expertise and professionalism. This document describes the support available from the Staff Learning & Development for staff undertaking such courses of study. Where a member of staff wishes to apply for support to attend a short work-related non-qualification course they should refer to the separate provisions of the External Training Support Scheme.

2. Conditions for Approval of Applications

Applications for financial support for FE/HE courses should be made to the Staff Learning & Development on the standard application form, approved by the individual's line manager in all cases.

Financial support will only be granted for payment of course and mandatory exam fees. Support is not normally available for travel and subsistence, membership of professional bodies, or text books. In deciding whether a course can be approved, account will be taken of whether:

- the course leads to a relevant qualification;
- it is related to the staff member's normal work at the University;
- it is linked to the applicant's future known employment at the University;
- the course is in line with agreed internal career aspirations, for example agreed through the PDR process.

Line Managers will sign a declaration to this effect on the application form.

Where the proposed course of study leads to a specialist professional qualification e.g. Finance or IT qualifications, Staff Learning & Development reserves the right to consult the relevant University functional area on issues around suitability and relevance to the role of the individual.

Applications for funding must be received in advance of the course. Applications made retrospectively will not normally be considered.

3. Level of Funding

Staff Learning & Development will pay 50% of course fees for approved applications up to a maximum of £1,500 per person per year. (For repeat applications from those starting courses in the 06/07 financial year and earlier, existing arrangements will continue to apply until completion of the
course. Those who commenced study during 07/08 and acquired alternative funding are now able to apply for support under the provisions of this guidance).

It is expected that the applicant would approach the employing Department and/or make a personal contribution to make up the other 50% of course fees. Staff Learning & Development will not normally fund more than one course per individual per year (or a maximum of 60 credits for Open University degrees).

4. Conditions of Funding

In all approved cases, if a member of staff leaves University employment by resignation or termination by the University during an approved FE/HE course, Staff Learning & Development will require all of the current year’s fees to be repaid by the applicant.

Staff Learning & Development will also withdraw assistance and require the refunding of all or part of course fees on a pro-rata basis in the following circumstances:

- the withdrawal from a course by a member of staff without good reason;
- attendance or progress on the course is deemed as unsatisfactory;
- a member of staff fails to sit the necessary examinations with no valid reason.
- a member of staff fails to pass the requisite examinations
- a member of staff leaves the University through resignation or termination by the University within 24 months after the successful completion of study. In these circumstances the member of staff agrees to repay the pro-rata amount of the current/final year’s fees (reducing by 1/24th per each complete calendar month after completion of study). Repayment will be via a deduction from their final salary payment and where applicable, any remaining balance by direct payment to the University bank account or by cheque within 30 days of leaving.

Any paid time off for attending courses is regarded as part of normal working duties and staff must inform their line manager if they are absent from the course for whatever reason.

The continuance of assistance, whether for a second or succeeding stage of study will be approved if the member of staff has passed the appropriate examination or has otherwise made satisfactory progress. Assistance towards a second attempt at an examination may be considered if it is deemed that the applicant has the potential to pass. Otherwise a one off repeat examination fee will only be reimbursed upon confirmation of passing the examination in question.

5. Levels of Study

These guidelines will typically apply to staff undertaking qualifications such as GCSEs, vocationally based “A” levels, professional qualifications and vocationally oriented degrees. Typical examples of courses supported in the past are provided at Appendix 1. Support to study for a PHD by research does not fall within the scope of the scheme. It would generally be expected that this will be supported where relevant from within the individual’s employing area.
6. Support for Studying University of Manchester Courses.

Staff applying to study for a qualification with the University are normally entitled to a 50% fee remission. Such staff can also apply to Staff Learning & Development for financial support for 50% of the remaining course fees. The remaining 25% funding will need to be made up by their employing area or through a personal contribution.

7. Time Off for Exams/Attendance at Mandatory Teaching Sessions

If the course mode of attendance requires a day or half day release from the workplace, staff are allowed paid time off to attend. This also applies to any other mandatory teaching sessions that form part of the course – for example attendance at Open University Residential Schools, attendance at other course residential and so on. In approving applications line managers should note and make arrangements to facilitate this. Staff are allowed paid time off to take any examination or any other final form of assessment to complete the course of study – it is recommended that staff be allowed paid time off for revision equivalent to the length of the exam.

8. Allowances for Study Time

Courses vary considerably in their content, delivery methods and demands on people’s time in terms of personal research and assessment. Individuals undertaking approved courses of study should negotiate a reasonable time allowance with their line manager on time to be taken in work, or time off in lieu, to undertake assessment and course related work. Such allocations of time must take account of normal work commitments and should be planned so as to minimise impact on normal service/work delivery. It is suggested that a maximum of 4 days be allowed for a course of study lasting one full academic year. Time allowances for study for courses of shorter duration should be treated on a pro rata basis.

9. Further Advice

Any questions about the scheme or the status of particular applications should be directed to the Staff Training & Development Unit on extension 57836.

For advice about training courses and further or higher education please contact 52525.
Appendix 1 Examples of Typical Courses Funded Through the STAFF LEARNING & DEVELOPMENT FE/HE Scheme

NVQ Level 3 Horticulture - Estates

HNC Garden and Landscape Design - STARS

CIM Professional Diploma in Marketing – external facing staff

CIMA/AAT Qualifications - Finance Staff

CIPD Qualifications – HR Staff

European Computer Driving Licence – all staff

MA in Library and Information Management – Library Staff

MA in On Line and Distance Education – Faculty Educational Technologists

HNC Business Studies – Generalist Administration

Foundation Degree in Information Technology/BSc Information and Communications Technology – IT specialists