

# Time off for Staff Development Policy

February 2020

Policy control

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<b>Benchmarking Exercise Complete</b>	University of Strathclyde Glasgow Caledonian University University of Dundee (Abertay)

## **TIME OFF FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

### **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 GSA is committed to providing a culture of continuous learning that encourages creativity, innovation and development and aims to assist all staff to achieve their full potential and enhance their contribution, through personal and professional development opportunities. In fulfilling this commitment GSA allocates a budget for training and development opportunities on an annual basis.
- 1.2 Continuous professional development is encouraged and expected of all GSA employees irrespective of gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief and race with relevant training being discussed through the Career Review and Development (CRD) process. Staff will usually undertake a training and development event on their normal working days which are paid.
- 1.3 This procedure has been introduced in line with the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009 which states that an employee has the legal right to make an application to request time off for training. For the purposes of this procedure the term 'training' will be replaced with the term 'staff development' to promote all aspects of enhanced expertise or knowledge.

### **2 Purpose and Scope**

- 2.1 It is not intended for this procedure to be used for all staff development requests, nor is it to replace the Personal Development Plans (PDPs) already in place via the Career Review process. It is also not intended nor expected to replace sound and regular dialogue which currently exists between staff and their line managers through which such requests would normally be made as a matter of course.
- 2.2 The purpose of this procedure is to provide staff with a formal mechanism by which a request can be made where, either;
  - a) the original request was verbally rejected by the line manager; or
  - b) no opportunity, mechanism or forum exists outwith that of the CRD process for such a request to be made.
- 2.3 The statutory right to request time off for staff development does not provide an automatic right for staff to be granted all requests but simply provides staff with a mechanism by which requests can be made. GSA has a duty to consider the request.
- 2.4 There is no legal obligation on GSA to grant paid time off for staff development for requests made under this procedure. The decision to grant paid time off will be at the discretion of the relevant line manager and will be made at the same time as considering the request for 'time off for staff development' (see relevant section of form in Appendix I).

### **3 Eligibility**

- 3.1 An employee has the legal right to make an application to request time off for staff development if they have been employed by GSA continuously for a period of 26 weeks at the date of application. Please note that Agency Workers and 16-18 year olds already expected to undertake training (e.g. Modern Apprentices) are exempt from this process.
- 3.2 GSA recognises that there may be circumstances not covered by the legislation, as outlined above, where an employee may wish to make a request for time off for staff development and, as such, is agreeable to considering such requests on an individual basis.

### **4 Right to Request**

- 4.1 Staff development requested should aim to enhance both the employee and the GSA's objectives.
- 4.2 Staff development can either be:
- accredited, for example development that leads to the award of a recognised qualification; or
  - unaccredited, for example development to help an employee develop specific skills relevant to an employee's job role.
- 4.3 Employees may request time off for staff development to be delivered in a number of ways.
- 4.4 Applications for funding for any courses should be made using the 'Application for Individual Funding - Staff Development Budget' form available on the intranet.
- 4.5 There is no limit to the amount of time an employee can request to take off for staff development.
- 4.6 No requests for staff development will be turned down on the basis of gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief or race.

### **5 Procedure**

- 5.1 The procedure for making an application for requesting time off for staff development is as follows:

#### **Step 1**

The employee must make an application at least twelve weeks before the staff development is due to take place or as soon as the employee is aware of the staff development event. This should be in writing to his/her immediate line manager (see Appendix 1 – *Requesting Time Off for Staff Development form*). The application should outline what the employee's desired staff development would

be, as well as what the potential impact upon the department/colleagues would be if the staff development event takes the employee out of the workplace away from their day to day duties. The employee should also try to provide an indication of how such impact can be accommodated.

## **Step 2**

Normally within five days of receipt of the employee's application, the line manager will invite the employee to a meeting to discuss the request. The discussion will allow both parties to explore the staff development request in depth and to determine how the request might be accommodated. Employees are entitled to be accompanied by a GSA colleague or Trade Union representative.

## **Step 3**

Normally within two days of the meeting taking place, the line manager will write to the employee, using the *Requesting Time Off for Staff Development form* submitted by the employee, to confirm whether the staff development requested has been approved. Should the request not be approved, clear business grounds will be provided.

## **Step 4 - Appeal**

Should an employee be dissatisfied with the outcome of their request for time off for staff development they have the right to appeal the decision.

Appeals should be made in writing to the Human Resources department within five days of the written decision having been received and should outline clearly the grounds for appeal.

The Human Resources department will assign an appropriate member of senior staff to consider the appeal and the employee will be invited to attend a meeting within five days of receipt of the written submission. Employees are entitled to be accompanied by a GSA colleague or Trade Union representative.

Within two days of the meeting the employee will be informed in writing of the outcome of the appeal.

## **Timescales**

The timescales referred to in section 5.1 above may vary according to the timing of the staff development.

It is recognised that there are occasions when it will be impossible to meet the timescales set out within the policy due to leave or other unforeseen circumstances. Where timescales cannot be met owing to such exceptional circumstances, a written explanation of the reasons for exceeding the time limits

will be provided to the employee, accompanied by a revised timetable for progression of the procedure.

## **Meetings**

Employees are entitled to be accompanied at all meetings by a GSA colleague or Trade Union representative. Meetings will be postponed/rescheduled should an employee's companion be unable to attend the original scheduled date. Reasonable adjustments will be made to facilitate attendance at meetings; staff should indicate to their line manager where this is required (further guidance can be sought from the HR department).

5.2 Line managers can reject requests for time off for staff development for one or more of the following reasons:

- the proposed staff development would not improve the employee's effectiveness in the GSA;
- the proposed staff development would not improve the performance of the GSA;
- the burden of additional costs would be too great;
- it would cause a detrimental (negative) effect on the employee's ability to meet customer demand;
- the employee's work cannot be re-organised among existing staff;
- the line manager is unable recruit additional staff;
- the proposed staff development would cause a detrimental impact on quality;
- the proposed staff development would cause a detrimental impact on business performance;
- there is insufficient work during the periods the employee proposes to work;
- it conflicts with any planned structural changes.

5.3 In the event that a specific staff development request has been rejected following the appeal process, the employee may not make a request for the same staff development request within one year of the rejection.

5.4 In the event that the employee fails to start or fails to complete the agreed study or training, they should notify their line manager in writing.

5.5 If the employee engages in training that differs from what was agreed in any way, or proposes to engage in training that differs to what was agreed, they should inform their line manager immediately.

## **6 Questions or Complaints**

6.1 Clarification on the terms or operation of this Policy may be obtained from a member of the HR department. Any complaints in relation to the Policy or its operation should be directed to a senior member of the HR department.

## **7 Monitoring**

- 7.1 The number and profile of staff invoking right to request time off for staff development will be monitored by the HR department. The outcomes of the monitoring process will be presented along with other performance indicators to relevant committees within GSA including the HR Committee (which has representation from each recognised trade union).

Appendix 1

## Requesting Time Off for Staff Development

Name of applicant	
Position/Job Title	
Department/School	

*Having read the accompanying Requesting Time Off for Staff Development Procedure, please explain what your desired staff development request (section 63D request) is:*

Subject matter of the proposed staff development.
What qualification will this staff development lead to?
Where and when will the proposed staff development take place?
Who will provide or supervise the staff development?
How do you think the proposed staff development will improve your effectiveness and/or the effectiveness of your Department and/or the School?
Will the time off for staff development have an impact on you fulfilling your current duties? If so, how do you propose these duties are fulfilled/re allocated?
<u>If you have made a request under this policy in the last 12 month, please provide details of the date made below:</u>

Applicant's signature			Date	
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**To be completed by Head of School/Department/Head of Professional Service**  
(delete as appropriate)

*- I confirm that I do endorse the above-named employee's request for time off for staff development as outlined above.*

*- I confirm that I do not support the above-named employee's request for time off staff development as outlined above for the following reasons: (refer to Requesting Time Off for Staff Development Procedure)*

Considered by (name):		Position	
Signature:		Date:	
Detail any time off to be paid for payroll purposes otherwise time off for staff development will be assumed unpaid.			

**A copy of this form should be forwarded to the HR Department upon completion.  
To make an application for funding for this training, please submit 'Application for Individual Funding - Staff  
Development Budget' form on the intranet.**