



6 May 2024

Tēnā koe

### **Official Information Act request**

Thank you for your email of 10 April 2024, requesting information about the current study leave entitlement offered to employees at the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry).

I have considered your request under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act).

The Ministry does not have a specific current study leave entitlement offered to Ministry employees, as this would be dependent on the type of study being undertaken and would be considered on a case-by-case basis. Therefore, I am refusing your request under section 18(g) of the Act as the information you have requested is not held by the Ministry and I have no grounds to believe that the information is either held by, or closely connected to the functions of another department, Minister of the Crown or organisation.

However, there are provisions in place to consider the approval of paid time for study. I have provided you with an excerpt below of section 11.5 of the National Office Collective Agreement that states the following:

#### **11.5 Study leave**

*Employees may be granted leave to undertake a programme of study as agreed with the employer. Support for study leave may include paid or unpaid leave for attendance at lectures, tutorials, workshops, and attendance and preparation for examinations or assessments, contribution to course fees, or use of work facilities. The employer, in consultation with the employee, in determining the support for study, will take into account:*

- *The time commitment required and the workload of the employee;*
- *Programme requirements such as attendance at lectures or workshops, residential modules, on-the-job or practical experience, examinations and assessments;*
- *Additional support available such as use of work facilities and technology;*
- *The impact of leave on the work of the organisation and on the workload of the employee and others; and*
- *Affordability of providing the support to the employee.*


Please also find attached to this letter as **Appendix One**, the internal Study Assistance policy published on the Ministry's internal website with information for staff, which notes that, "*Study assistance can take different forms such as paid time off work to attend courses, do study, attend exams etc. It can also involve full or partial reimbursement of course costs, exam costs, or other related costs associated with the study.*"

I will be publishing this decision letter, with your personal details deleted, on the Ministry's website in due course.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with my decision on your request, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

pp. 

Magnus O'Neill  
**General Manager**  
**Ministerial and Executive Services**

## Appendix One

### Study assistance policy

---

This page outlines the staff study assistance policy. It applies to all MSD staff who wish to do external tertiary or qualifications-based study.

On this Page:

[Policy statement](#)

[Scope](#)

[Key principles](#)

[Responsibilities](#)

[Related policies/additional information](#)

### Policy statement

---

MSD is committed to building employee capability and recognises that work-relevant study can be an important aspect of this development. This policy outlines possible MSD study assistance provisions.

### Scope

---

This policy applies to all permanent MSD employees.

There are three criteria tests to determine eligibility for study assistance. The study must:

1. be for a recognised external qualification or study
2. be relevant to the employee's current work
3. directly contribute to capability improvement of MSD.

### Key principles

---

- On-the-job learning opportunities are the first avenue for employee development and must be explored by managers and employees before study assistance can be provided under this policy.
- Study assistance needs to be flexible to accommodate different personal circumstances and the nature of different roles.
- Study assistance can take different forms such as paid time off work to attend courses, do study, attend exams etc. It can also involve full or partial reimbursement of course costs, exam costs, or other related costs associated with the study.
- A reasonable amount of study or exam leave must be given to support the employee to complete the recognised external qualification or study successfully.
- Any financial reimbursement will be based on the successful completion of the recognised external qualification or study while working for MSD.

### Responsibilities

---

Person/Party	Responsibilities
Manager	Consider your employee's request for study assistance and whether it meets the eligibility criteria.  Confirm the study is relevant to the employee's development plan/

	<p>If approved, provide written confirmation to the employee of the support that will be provided such as any paid time off work and any full or partial reimbursement of related costs.</p> <p>Pay for approved study assistance from your individual budget (within your available and delegated budget).</p>
Employee	<p>Explore your on-the-job learning opportunities.</p> <p>Discuss your interest in a recognised external qualification or study with your manager and how it:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fits with your development plan</li> <li>• is relevant to your current work</li> <li>• directly contributes to the capability improvement of MSD.</li> </ul> <p>Document your request for study assistance, outlining all aspects including the support you're requesting from MSD.</p> <p>Complete your study within timeframes prescribed by the provider of the recognised external qualification or study and inform your manager if these timeframes will not be met.</p> <p>Put in a request for reimbursement of any approved costs to your manager within one month of successfully completing your recognised external qualification or study. You need to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the tax invoice and receipts</li> <li>• written evidence that your recognised external qualification or study has been successfully completed.</li> </ul>

#### Related policies/additional information

Other information that may be useful:

- [Study assistance guidelines](#)
- [Development Bank](#): This policy applies to those managers and senior specialists who have the Development Bank provision grandparented in their employment agreement.
- [Supporting your study](#)

Content owner: [Human Resources](#) Last updated: 29 November 2020