



Maynooth University
Human Resources Office

Maynooth University Education Support Policy

Revision Record

Author / Policy Owner:	Human Resources
Creation Date:	15 th May 2020
Review Date:	2 nd September 2022
Version:	2.1 Updated section 5.7 07/10/2022
Review Frequency:	This policy shall be subject to a biennial review.

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Relevant Information

Education Support Form
 Education Support FAQ's
 Education Support Checklist for Head of Department
 Education Support Checklist for applicant
 MU Study and Exam Leave Policy
 Fee Remission Policy and Form
 Career Break Policy
 Part-Time Working Policy
 MU Strategic Plan/Department Strategic Plan

General queries on the policy and applications should be made to people.development@mu.ie

Definitions

Assigned Working Hours: For the purpose of this policy are those hours the staff member is assigned by the Head of Department or their nominee to work on a particular day. Some staff members who work in particular areas may be assigned hours outside the 9.00am - 5.30pm typical working hours.

Core Working Hours are those a staff member must work each day. Some staff members have access to flexi-time.

Employer: shall be understood to mean Maynooth University.

Staff member: shall be understood to mean any person employed under a contract of employment by Maynooth University.

Full - Time Equivalent (FTE): measures an equivalence to full-time working hours. Example: If a staff member works a 5-day week, the FTE is 1, if a staff member works a 2-day week, the FTE is 0.4.

Head of Department means the Head of an academic Department/School or the Head of an administrative Department to which the staff member is assigned.

Nominee: shall be understood to mean the person to whom the Head of Department has nominated in their place to carry out the role under this policy, as if they were the Head of Department.

Pro-rata: shall be understood to mean in proportion to the whole entitlement and will be based on the individual staff member's contract of employment.

Short-term courses – Courses which are not considered academic qualifications and are not aligned to qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications.

For further information on the NFQ, please view [https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-\(NFQ\).aspx](https://www.qqi.ie/Articles/Pages/National-Framework-of-Qualifications-(NFQ).aspx)

Section One

1. Policy Statement

Maynooth University supports staff members who wish to pursue further education by providing payment of relevant fees. Approval is subject to funding being available and at the discretion of the University.

2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to staff members who wish to pursue a **part-time course** of study from level 6 to level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

In exceptional circumstances, and on a case-by-case basis, the University may approve a course of study at level 10.

Please note this policy does not cover short-term training courses. These may be supported from the Department non-pay budget, with the approval of the Head of Department or their nominee. Retrospective applications under this policy will not be permitted. However, you may apply for approval for future years from the start of your next academic year.

3. Policy Principles

The principles of this policy are to:

- 3.1 support staff members to pursue a part-time qualification (level 6-9 NFQ or equivalent) that is directly relevant to their current role **or** will support their short to medium term career development in the University;
- 3.2 support the recruitment and retention of staff members;
- 3.3 support skill development in key areas relevant to the staff member's role;
- 3.4 promote a culture of continuous improvement and career development and
- 3.5 provide funding for external Colleges/Universities courses where Maynooth University does not offer a similar course of study.

4. Eligibility Criteria

The staff member must:

- 4.1 have completed a minimum of 12 months continuous employment;
- 4.2 have successfully completed their probationary period;
- 4.3 have a contract of employment that extends beyond the course of study;
- 4.4 apply and participate in the full knowledge and understanding that the course is likely to require a high degree of commitment of their own time;
- 4.5 adhere to the principles of the policy.

The course must:

- 4.6 be part-time¹;
- 4.7 be considered, by the Head of Department or their nominee, to be directly relevant to their current role or will support their short to medium term career development in the University;
- 4.8 normally be outside of assigned working hours. In the case of a relevant course being within assigned working hours, the suitability to attend this course must be agreed in advance between the Head of Department or their nominee and the staff member, taking into account the workload of the staff member and the operational requirements of the department. If the Head of Department or their nominee decides it is suitable to attend and workload can be managed by the staff member and the department, the staff member may apply for support under this policy.
In the instance where workload cannot be managed, it may be investigated whether flexibility in the staff members working arrangements would be possible. If it is decided by the Head of Department or their nominee and the staff member, that workload can only be managed through the staff member being flexible and taking time to attend the course from their own time, this should be decided locally, before an application is put forward.
- 4.9 be a course level 6 – 9 or equivalent on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).
- 4.10 be offered by a reputable Institution. Approval is contingent on quality assurance of the chosen Institution. On occasion the Education Support Committee may recommend an alternative institution.
- 4.11 for academic colleagues a selected course should normally be in the area of leadership, not within their specialism, as there are alternative supports available for this.

¹ If the staff member requires to reduce their working hours or seek a Career Break to complete their studies, they should apply through the relevant University Leave policy.

5. Policy Terms & Conditions

- 5.1 Funding is available on a pro-rata basis. Any change to the staff member's work hours (increase or reduction) during the duration of the course must be confirmed in writing to HR (people.development@mu.ie) as it will impact on financial reimbursements due to the staff member under this policy. The fee covered is up to the maximum fee of a part-time course, additional years will not be paid for. The course must be completed in a timely manner in line with the expected duration of the course.
In the exceptional case of a PhD, the course must be completed within a 6-year period.
- 5.2 Ordinarily, Education Support is limited to fees payable in respect of one undergraduate degree, which can be obtained through progression from level 6 to 8, during the course of a staff member's employment. Staff members may be entitled to apply for a maximum of two postgraduate courses during the course of their employment, if the subsequent course of study represents progression on the National Framework of Qualifications and is directly relevant to their current role or will support their career development in the University.
- 5.3 All application forms must be approved and signed by the Head of Department or their nominee.
- 5.4 Staff members are required to ensure their current workload is managed and not adversely impacted by the commitment required in undertaking the course of study, in conjunction with the Head of Department.
- 5.5 Education support provides for payment of course fees including exemption fees for the approved course of study.
- 5.6 Relevant documentary evidence in the form of a formal receipt from the Institution you are pursuing the course through must be presented to Human Resources, in support of any request for payment of fees. The receipt should include your name, address, student number, name of Institution the course of study is with, course title and the amount paid.
- 5.7 Staff members in receipt of Education Support in respect of a course at Maynooth University will not be required to make a payment to the University. However, recipients will be obliged to submit evidence of satisfactory completion of studies annually. Funding will be awarded on a pro-rata basis. Recipients will also be bound to the terms of fee reimbursement (see clause 5.13 and 5.14).
For courses outside of Maynooth University, where 100% funding is granted, the University will reimburse 50% of the fee paid by the staff member post registration, on provision of a receipt of payment of fees. The University will reimburse the remaining 50% of the fee paid by the staff member on evidence of successful completion of the course, each academic year. (See example 1 Appendix 1).
In the case where the fee is paid in more than one instalment (up to a max of 4 instalments is permitted per academic year), the staff member will be refunded 50% of each payment on provision of a receipt of payment of fees and the remaining monies on evidence of successful completion of the course, each academic year. (See example 2 Appendix 1).
- 5.8 Staff members are required to meet all fees and expenses connected with repeat examinations, repeat years, travel and subsistence etc.
- 5.9 Funding does not apply to staff members currently on an unpaid leave of absence or career-break.
- 5.10 When a course of study is supported under Education Support, it is important that the Head of Department or their nominee and HR are immediately notified of any intended change to the approved course, including the staff member's intention not to complete the course or defer the course, and reason(s). This should be done in advance of informing the Institution they are studying with. HR will then arrange a meeting with the staff member, their Head of Department or their nominee to discuss and agree an outcome. The Education Support Committee will be notified of all non-completions and deferrals. A staff member who fails to complete an approved course of study will not be permitted to undertake an alternative course of study under this policy, unless there are personal extenuating circumstances or medical circumstances. Any money refunded for the course by the Institution they are studying with, should be refunded to Maynooth University.
- 5.11 Staff members who register or pay fees prior to Human Resources approval, do so at their own risk.
- 5.12 If, after applying for Education Support, the staff member receives funding from an alternative source for the course, they should advise HR, so their Education Support application is amended to reflect the external funding.

- 5.13 Where a staff member resigns during their studies, they will be liable to pay the balance of fees due from the date of cessation of employment and reimburse monies paid by Maynooth University to date.
- 5.14 Staff members who resign within 12 months of receiving the last financial support payment under this policy will refund all monies (100%) received under this policy. Staff members who resign between 12 and 24 months of receiving the last financial support payment under this policy will refund 50% of all monies received under this policy.
- 5.15 Where monies fall due under 5.13 and 5.14, deductions will be made from any salary and/or payment due to the staff member by the University. In circumstances where such deductions do not cover the full amount, they will be liable for any shortfall and undertake to do so within 90 days of their employment ending with Maynooth University.
- 5.16 When the course is completed, the staff member should forward confirmation of completion and final examination results obtained, to Human Resources where a copy will be taken and placed on their personnel file.
- 5.17 Any written project, the content of which relates to Maynooth University or the work of the University, should be approved in writing in advance through the Head of Department or their nominee.
- 5.18 A staff member who is subject to a current disciplinary sanction will not ordinarily be eligible to benefit under this policy. In such instances, advice from Human Resources should be sought prior to an application for support being made under this policy. If a performance and/or conduct issue arises during the period of study, these supports may be withdrawn, if in the opinion of Human Resources, the circumstances warrant same.

Section Two

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Staff member

The staff member is responsible for:

- 6.1.1 Deciding what part-time course, they would like to pursue and ensure it is directly relevant to their current role or will support their short to medium term career development in the University
- 6.1.2 Examining courses run by Maynooth University to see if they would be appropriate, in the first instance.
- 6.1.3 Discussing their potential course of study and the reasons they wish to pursue it with the Head of Department or their nominee, in advance of applying under this policy.
- 6.1.4 Ensuring, that the course is outside of assigned working hours.
In the case of a relevant course being within assigned working hours, the suitability to attend this course must be agreed in advance between the Head of Department or their nominee and the staff member, taking into account the workload of the staff member and the operational requirements of the Department.
- 6.1.5 Ensuring all sections of the Education Support Form are completed, relevant signatures received, and the Head of Department or their nominee has included the letter/email of support. Returning the completed application form and letter/email of support along with the course outline, exam timetable, costs and times of lectures to people.development@mu.ie **by either 1st July (for courses that start between September to November) or 1st November (for courses that start between January to May).**
- 6.1.6 Forwarding the confirmation of completion of their final examination results to Human Resources.

6.2 Head of Department

The Head of Department or nominee is responsible for:

- 6.2.1 Reviewing all support documentation relating to this policy and discussing the course, the staff member wishes to pursue with the staff member, to ensure relevancy to their current role, how it will support their career development in the University and deciding whether it meets the criteria for this policy.
- 6.2.2 Discussing the benefit, the department and the staff member will gain from the learning.
- 6.2.3 Ensuring the operations and efficiency of the department are not impacted and proper supports are in place to facilitate the application.
- 6.2.4 Completing the relevant section of the Education Support Form, stating the reasons why this course is directly relevant to the role, and/or will support their career development in the University, the benefits of supporting the application, how any time to attend during assigned working hours will be dealt with and any other relevant information to support the application.
- 6.2.5 Approving in advance, any written project, the content of which relates to Maynooth University or the work of the University.

6.3 Human Resources Department

The Human Resources Department is responsible for:

- 6.3.1 Issuing a communication to request applications from Departments.
- 6.3.2 Chairing the Education Support Committee which includes the Director of Human Resources, the Bursar, the Head of People Development and a Faculty Dean.
- 6.3.3 Informing the staff member, in writing, if the application has been approved or not, within three weeks of the deadline for application.
- 6.3.4 Sending terms and conditions to the staff member for signing and confirming when the signed version has been accepted.
- 6.3.5 Organising payment of fees for the staff member through the Bursar's Office.
- 6.3.6 Informing payroll of fee reimbursements due.

6.4 Bursar's Office

- 6.4.1 The Bursar is responsible for confirming that funding is available.
- 6.4.2 Reimbursing the staff members under this policy.
- 6.4.3 Payments Office is responsible for processing the fee reimbursement payments from the staff member, if applicable. ²

7. Budget Allocation

Twenty-five per cent (25%) of the total approved fees are charged to the relevant departmental non-pay budget of the staff member. The remaining amount is charged to a central University budget.

8. Monitoring and Review

The Director of Human Resources or their nominee will monitor the application of the policy. This policy shall be reviewed after a period of 2 years.

Effective date: 7th October 2022

² Where a staff member attends Maynooth University under this policy no fee will be deemed to have been incurred for the purposes of benefit-in-kind

Appendix 1 - Sample Reimbursement of Fees to Staff member for courses outside of MU approved under Education Support

Example 1: Full-time Equivalent Staff member* - FTE 1.0

Course fees – Total Year 1: €2,000 due 1st October

Staff member pays €2,000 on 1st October

Staff member submits receipts for €2,000 to HR and is reimbursed €1,000.

Staff member successfully completes Year 1.

Staff member submits proof of successful completion to HR and is reimbursed the remaining €1,000.

Example 2: Full-time Equivalent Staff member – FTE 1.0

Course fees – Year 1: €2,000 of which €1,000 due 1st October and €1,000 due 1st February

Staff member pays €1,000 on 1st October

Staff member submits receipts for €1,000 to HR and is reimbursed €500

Staff member pays €1,000 on 1st February

Staff member submits receipts for €1,000 to HR and is reimbursed €500

Staff member successfully completes Year 1.

Staff member submits proof of successful completion to HR and is reimbursed the remaining €1,000

Example 3: FTE 0.5 (half-time staff member)

Course fees – Year 1: €2,000 due 1st October

Staff member pays €2,000 on 1st October

Staff member submits receipts for €2,000 to HR and is reimbursed €500

Staff member successfully completes Year 1.

Staff member submits proof of successful completion to HR and is reimbursed the remaining €500

Total refund is on a pro-rata basis of 50% as 0.5 FTE (half time staff member) (€1,000 for a course costing €2,000)

** Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) measures an equivalence to full-time working hours. Example: If a staff member works a 5-day week, the FTE is 1, if a staff member works a 2-day week, the FTE is 0.4.*

For those on less than 1.0 FTE and **studying a course in MU under Education Support** they will be required to pay the balance of the course.

For example, course costs €2,000 per year. FTE is 0.5. Staff member pays 50% of fees (no reimbursement due)/MU pays 50% of the fee (fee reimbursement from staff member due if they come under 5.13 or 5.14 of policy).

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