

SESLHD PROCEDURE COVER SHEET



Health
South Eastern Sydney
Local Health District

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| KEY TERMS | Learning and development leave, tertiary study leave, short courses, seminars, conferences, distance/online education |
| SUMMARY | <p>The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance to staff and managers regarding eligibility for and granting of learning and development leave.</p> <p>Leave for learning and development applies to external courses offered by educational institutions and registered training organisations, in addition to conferences, seminars and short courses.</p> |

COMPLIANCE WITH THIS DOCUMENT IS MANDATORY

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Learning and Development Leave Procedure **SESLHDPR/430**

1. POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidance to staff and managers regarding eligibility for and granting of learning and development leave.

Leave for learning and development applies to external courses offered by educational institutions and Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) in addition to conferences, seminars and short courses.

Learning and Development Leave is not required for the following types of learning activities which are undertaken by staff on a routine basis, and at which staff are considered to be “on-duty”:

- “In-house” courses or learning activities
- Mandatory training and education

Refer to Attachment 1 for a summary of the benefits and support available for Learning and Development activities.

For further information relating to the policy for leave relating to learning and development, refer to NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive [PD2019 010 - Leave Matters for the NSW Health Service](#).

NOTE: This procedure does not apply to staff covered by awards or determinations that specify study leave arrangements, ie, Visiting Medical Officers (VMOs), Senior Medical Practitioners or Department of Health employees. Refer to NSW Ministry of Health Policy Directive [PD2019 043 - Staff Specialists Training, Education and Study Leave \(TESL\) - For Staff Specialists](#) for additional information.

2. DEFINITIONS

| South Eastern Sydney Local Health District | |
|---|---|
| Educational institutions | Those institutions accredited to provide undergraduate and/or postgraduate tertiary studies that culminate in a recognised academic and/or professional qualification including a degree, diploma or certificate. |
| Learning activities | Activities that enhance a staff member’s capacity to contribute to organisational goals. This includes tertiary study, conferences, seminars, workshops or short courses conducted by a relevant professional body or by the employer. Staff members may make use of learning and development leave to attend learning activities, or they may be attended on an ‘on duty’ basis. |
| Learning and development leave | Leave granted to undertake tertiary studies at an accredited educational institution (including leave for examinations), or leave granted to attend external activities, such as conferences, seminars, and short courses. This excludes lectures, tutorials, conferences and seminars that staff |

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| | choose to attend on days when they are not rostered for duty, for which no payment is made. |
| Mandatory training and education | Learning activities that aim to develop those skills required by the SESLHD in response to legislative, policy and/or service delivery needs. |
| Registered Training Organisations | Those institutions that offer accredited training which lead to nationally recognised qualifications. |
| Tertiary Education | Comprising higher (university) education and Vocational and Technical Education (VTE). |

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Chief Executive and Directors of South Eastern Sydney Local Health District (SESLHD) are responsible and accountable for ensuring the implementation of the Learning and Development Leave procedure across SESLHD.

3.1 Employees are responsible and accountable for:

- Understanding the procedures to follow when applying for learning and development leave
- Understanding the feedback mechanism in place for the dissemination of information acquired as a result of attending a conference, seminar or short course.

3.2 Managers, Supervisors, Team Leaders are responsible and accountable for:

- The effective promotion, support, and application of the Learning and Development Leave procedure within their area(s) of responsibility
- Ensuring employees understand the procedures to follow when applying for Learning and Development leave
- Ensuring employees are aware of the feedback mechanism for the dissemination of information acquired as a result of attending a Conference Seminar or Short Course
- Applying equity principles in decision making in relation to applications for Learning and Development Leave
- Advising employees of the review procedures relating to non-approval of Learning and Development Leave.

3.3 Hospital General Managers/Service Directors are responsible and accountable for:

- Ensuring implementation of the Learning and Development Leave procedure within site/facilities and services of SESLHD.

4. PROCEDURE

4.1 PRINCIPLES

SESLHD aims to be a 'Learning Organisation'. Learning Organisations have structures and processes in place to encourage and reward continuous learning. A learning organisation also

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recognises that its people are its most valuable asset, and every individual is encouraged and supported to locate and create his/her own learning opportunities.

The District aims to facilitate access for its employees to relevant learning opportunities by establishing structures and processes that enable staff to learn from actual work situations. In this way the performance of all staff and their contribution to the District in meeting its strategic objectives will be improved.

Sponsored learning and development activities must provide benefits to the organisation as well as the individual, and be consistent with the District's strategic plan. As such priority will be given to those activities that facilitate the achievement of the District's strategic goals.

Within SESLHD there is both a corporate and personal responsibility for assessing, achieving and maintaining a high level of organisational, team and individual competence to ensure the safe and effective delivery of health care. Similarly responsibility for learning and development needs to be shared between the organisation and the individual. Staff are expected to pursue their professional development using both their own and the District's resources.

4.2 ELIGIBILITY

Access to learning and development leave is at the discretion of the appropriate Department Manager and/or Delegated Authority. It is made available to promote the development of a highly trained, skilled and versatile workforce, which is responsive to the requirements of government and health service delivery.

Both permanent and temporary staff (whether full-time or part-time) are eligible to apply for leave. Part-time staff are granted leave on a pro-rata basis.

Casual staff are not eligible for this form of leave.

4.3 PRIORITIES FOR SUPPORT OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT LEAVE

4.3.1 Features of external learning and development activities with highest priority:

- Activities that contribute to the achievement of the District' strategic goals
- Activities focusing on the development of knowledge and skills essential to the individuals role
- Activities that reflect a core component of an individual's professional development plan as identified in their Annual Performance Review.

4.3.2 Guidelines for staff seeking support to attend external learning and development activities:

- Recommended that the staff member and their manager outline a professional development plan as part of Annual Performance Review
- Ensure that the professional development plan articulates with the District's strategic goals and specific service objectives
- Be prepared to participate in/contribute to in-service and continuing education of staff within the relevant unit or service.

4.4 TYPES OF AND AMOUNT OF LEAVE

4.4.1 Seminars, conferences, and short courses

The approval of leave and/or financial assistance for attendance at seminars, conferences, or short courses will be considered in light of the District's strategic plan. Staff may be granted learning and development leave, *or* may be considered 'on duty' depending on the priority for the activity concerned. The amount of leave granted is at the discretion of the appropriate Department Manager and/or Delegated Authority, taking into consideration relevant policies and award entitlements. Decisions in relation to financial assistance will be made in the context of budgetary constraints and the expected benefits to the District.

4.4.2 Tertiary study

All employees are encouraged to acquire management skills and qualifications. Areas of skill shortages should be identified and strategies developed to address them, including releasing employees from rostered shifts where there are no alternative and feasible attendance options.

Arrangements should be agreed between the employee and relevant manager prior to the commencement of the course.

Leave will not to be approved for failed or repeated subjects.

The maximum amount of tertiary study leave that can be approved is four hours per week, per semester or term. At the beginning of each semester or term the staff member must negotiate how tertiary study leave is to be taken, in accordance with the following guidelines.

4.4.3 Face-to-face lectures

The amount of leave granted is at the discretion of the appropriate Department Manager and/or Delegated Authority.

In respect of attendance at an educational institution, staff may be granted 50 percent of compulsory attendance times, ie, up to a maximum of four hours per week per semester or term.

The amount of leave granted to attend examinations will be based on the specific requirements of the individual course. Department heads may grant pre-examination leave for staff where it is considered appropriate and where there is no direct impact on the provision of services. A staff member's request not to be rostered to work night shift on the day prior to a scheduled morning examination will, wherever practicable, be agreed to by the department head.

4.4.4 Flexible, Online and Distance Education

The equivalent amount of learning and development leave available for face to face study is to be granted to employee completing accredited course via alternative delivery options, such as the internet.

4.4.5 Accrual of leave

Learning and development leave associated with tertiary studies may be accrued up to a maximum of five days per semester or term and may be accrued until the last examination of the semester, or the last attendance day of the semester if there is no final examination.

4.4.6 Residential study leave

The amount of leave to attend a compulsory residential program should be based on the specific requirements of the course and should be negotiated at the time of application for learning and development leave.

4.4.7 Thesis/research or combination thesis/research/coursework

Periods of leave may also be granted to staff undertaking higher degrees by thesis, research, coursework, or a combination of these.

The amount of leave will be based on four hours per week for each academic year of study. An academic year for these purposes is considered to be a year of full-time study. Where a staff member is undertaking the study on a part-time basis the periods of leave should be granted on a pro rata basis. For example:

- If the higher degree takes one academic year and an academic year is 30 weeks, the entitlement for leave would be calculated as 30 weeks x 4 hours = 120 hours available over the year;
- If the higher degree takes two academic years, the entitlement would be 240 hours, available over two years;
- If the employee completes a two-year degree on a part-time basis over four years, the entitlement would be 240 hours, available over four years.

Rather than being taken on a week-to-week basis the leave is available over the course of study in amounts mutually agreeable between the staff member and the employer.

4.5 APPLICATION AND APPROVAL PROCESSES

Application, approval and review processes will be communicated to all staff that apply for Learning and Development leave.

Learning and Development Leave is not required for learning activities undertaken by staff on a routine basis, and at which staff are considered to be “on-duty”. For example:

- “In-house” courses or learning activities
- Mandatory training and education.

4.5.1 Applying for Leave

To initiate the request for approval to attend an external course, seminar, conference, or tertiary study, a request for external learning approval should be submitted in My Health Learning for the Manager to review and accept or decline.

Fields for completion include course details, cost, hours and justification for attendance. This is then recorded on the employees' My Health Learning learning transcript.

- Completing this action in My Health Learning is for **manager approval to attend only** and employees are still required to complete the relevant leave and registration forms.
- All Staff must complete the appropriate leave application in SARA when applying for Learning and Development Leave:
 - Select "Other Leave" in the Category list
 - Select the appropriate type of study leave in the Type list.
- **Note:** Applications for Tertiary Study must be submitted at the beginning of each semester.
- Once completed the leave request will be automatically forwarded to the appropriate Department Manager.

4.5.2 Decision Making Process

- Department Managers will respond to leave requests within 21 days of receipt of an application for learning and development leave.
- In instances where learning and development leave is not approved, Department Managers will ensure:
 - The reason for non-approval is clear and stated in writing to the employee
 - The employee is advised of the availability of a review process
- Where learning and development leave is not approved the review process should be completed within a further 14 days.

4.6 PAYMENT FOR LEAVE

Leave approved for the purposes of learning and development activities will be paid on the basis of the staff member's ordinary rate of pay, ie, in accordance with the relevant award, agreement and/or determination in relation to the payment of ordinary hours, excluding penalty rates.

4.6.1 Workers Compensation

Given the variety of situations in which employees undertake study, specific advice regarding coverage of workers compensation will be provided by SESLHD Human Resources units.

4.6.2 Financial Assistance

SESLHD will meet costs associated with learning and development activities that are required by the District.

Staff will be responsible for meeting all fees/costs associated with tertiary studies or fees associated with other educational activities, unless learning and development scholarships or other forms of financial assistance are available.

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4.7 TRAVEL AND ACCOMMODATION

In instances where approval is sought to attend a conference or seminar, which involves overnight accommodation and or long distance travel, staff must complete SESLHD Official Travel Form to apply for financial assistance. The contents of the Official Travel form explain the requirements as set down by SESLHD, the Ministry of Health, and the Australian Taxation Office in relation to these issues.

4.8 DATA COLLECTION

In complying with NSW Health Policy, and where resources are available to do so, Department Managers will ensure that data relating to the granting of learning and development leave is entered into My Health Learning and Kronos.

4.9 ENQUIRIES

Any enquiries regarding this policy should be directed to local Human Resource Departments.

5. DOCUMENTATION

- Leave application form electronically submitted via SARA

6. AUDIT

None required

7. REFERENCES

- [NSW Health Awards and Determinations](#)
- [PD2016 010 - NSW Health Official Travel](#)
- [PD2016 048 - Mandatory Training - Criteria for Approval as a NSW Health Requirement](#)
- [PD2019 010 - Leave Matters for the NSW Health Service](#)
- [PD2019 043 - Staff Specialists Training, Education and Study Leave \(TESL\) - For Staff Specialists](#)

8. REVISION AND APPROVAL HISTORY

| Date | Revision No. | Author and Approval |
|----------------|--------------|---|
| August 2015 | 1 | Endorsed by Executive Sponsor – Director Workforce |
| August 2020 | 2 | Minor review with links updated. Changed HETI online to My Health Learning. Noting leave is now applied through SARA. Endorsed by Executive Sponsor. |
| September 2020 | 2 | Formatted by Executive Services prior to publishing. |

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Attachment 1 - Summary of Learning and Development Activities

GUIDE TO THE BENEFITS AND SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

| LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITY | BENEFIT | LEAVE AVAILABLE? | FINANCIAL SUPPORT |
|--|--|--|---|
| Mandatory Training/ Education | Beneficial to SESLHD, to meet legislative, policy, or service delivery needs | Leave not required as employee 'on duty'. | Provided by employer. |
| 'In- house' or Employer arranged Seminars and Short courses | Beneficial to employee; Meets identified need for SESLHD | Leave not required as employee 'on duty'. | Provided by employer. |
| External Conference, Seminar or short course | Beneficial to employee; Potential benefit to the SESLHD | Leave may be approved or staff member may be considered 'on duty'. | Negotiable based on Learning and Development Leave policy and budgetary constraints |
| Tertiary education or program offered by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) | Beneficial to employee; Potential benefit to the SESLHD | Leave may be approved. | At Employee's expense unless directed by Employer to undertake program. |
| Program Seminar or Short course aimed at personal development (not directly related to employment) | Employee benefit only. | No leave available. | Employee's expense. |