



# Tuition Fees Assistance for Staff, and Persons Closely Associated with Unitec

<b>Policy Name:</b>	Tuition fees assistance for staff, and persons closely associated with Unitec
<b>Category and Number:</b>	HR11
<b>Date last approved/updated:</b>	September 2002/December 2003
<b>Commencement date:</b>	December 2003
<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Chief Operating Officer
<b>Responsible Manager:</b>	Manager, Human Resources Services
<b>Approved by:</b>	Senior Management Team
<b>Date of next review</b>	December 2014

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## Policy

### 1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is that Unitec encourages the professional and personal development of all its staff. To this end Unitec encourages staff to enhance their academic qualifications by enrolling in courses and programmes, particularly those offered by Unitec.

### 2. Organisational Scope

This is a Unitec-wide policy and applies to staff.

Staff who develop their skills and knowledge are better able to contribute to the goals of Unitec. Additional benefits are derived from staff members developing their skills and knowledge by undertaking study at Unitec. The benefits include:

- staff gaining an understanding of the student experience at Unitec, and
- staff demonstrating overtly to the community that they appreciate the value of Unitec qualifications.

### 3. Definitions

**Tuition fees** are defined as all compulsory fees, GST inclusive, associated with a particular course (i.e. the fees that would be covered by the government student loan scheme) at the domestic student's level as are approved by the Council of Unitec from time to time. The cost of text-books, student services, travel and accommodation is not included under this policy.

**Persons closely associated with Unitec** are defined as Unitec staff members, Advisory Committee and Council members and members of their family.

**Family member** means the partner or spouse or children (including whangai) of any staff, Advisory Committee or Council member.

*Note: "Whangai" are children who are being, or who have been brought up by one or more family members instead of by their natural parents. The benefit conferred under this definition is intended to apply to all cultures.*

**Reimbursement** for the purposes of this policy, means reimbursement by Unitec to the staff member via Accounts.

**Senior Manager** for the purposes of this policy, a Senior Manager is the manager to whom the staff member directly or indirectly reports and who has delegated authority to approve the reimbursement.

### 4. Policy Statement

#### 4.1 Policy re Tuition fees for work related study

4.1.1 Reimbursement or payment of fees is available as a matter of current Unitec policy to staff engaged in study that is relevant to their work or professional development at Unitec.

4.1.2 This policy applies to study undertaken at the request of the staff member. It is not intended to cover training or study required to be completed by the employer in order for the staff member to carry out their duties competently.

4.1.3 This policy applies to all staff employed on an unlimited term / permanent basis. At the discretion of the appropriate Senior Manager, staff employed on a temporary or limited tenure basis may also receive reimbursement of fees under this policy. As a guideline, the period of employment should be a minimum of one full year.

- 4.1.4 Staff employed for an unlimited term on less than a full-time basis should receive any reimbursement appropriately reduced to reflect the part-time nature of their appointment.
- 4.1.5 The chosen programme of study should be relevant to the staff member's area of employment or professional development. It should also be of significant benefit to Unitec for the staff member to undertake study in the chosen programme. The relevance and benefit of a particular course of study will be determined by the staff member's Senior Manager after consultation with the staff member.
- 4.1.6 Relevant programmes of study may, at the discretion of the staff member's Senior Manager, include non-credit bearing short courses.
- 4.1.7 When a staff member enrolls at Unitec in accordance with this Policy, the standard prescribed fees are payable. Such a staff member will be formally enrolled and as the Government tuition fee will have been paid, the staff member will be regarded as an EFT, or part thereof. Where appropriate the Government "top up" of the tuition fee will be claimed by Unitec.
- 4.1.8 Staff enrolling for programmes or courses which meet the criteria above may apply for payment or reimbursement of up to 100% of tuition fees (as defined in clause 3). Normally the amount applied for should not exceed \$1,500 per annum. The staff member's Senior Manager may approve payment or reimbursement up to and including \$1500 per annum.
- 4.1.9 With the approval of the Director Finance, the relevant Senior Manager may authorise payment or reimbursement to the staff member of a sum greater than \$1500 per annum. A record of payments or reimbursements in excess of \$1,500 per annum shall be submitted at the end of each semester to the Chief Executive.
- 4.1.10 Where the intended payment or reimbursement is greater than \$1,500 per annum, the staff member will be required to enter into a bond with Unitec. Approval shall not be given unless the staff member signs the bond document provided at [Appendix 3](#). The staff member will be required to bond themselves to pay the amount paid or reimbursed that is in excess of \$1500 per annum, if he or she resigns within two years from the date of that payment or reimbursement. This amount will be abated by 25% for each six months of service completed following the date of payment or reimbursement. A staff member whose employment at Unitec is terminated on the grounds of redundancy will not be required to pay back any monies outstanding under their bond at the date their employment at Unitec is terminated.
- 4.1.11 Except where a tuition fee relates to a course of study in excess of one semester, approval for payment or reimbursement of tuition fees will usually be granted on a semester by semester basis. Approval for further payment or reimbursement of tuition fees relating to study in any subsequent semester (or period of study) will not be granted where the staff member has not been successful in the previous semester (or period of study), except in exceptional circumstances.

4.1.12 Payment of tuition fees by Unitec is only available where the application for tuition fees and a completed admission/enrolment application have been received by Unitec prior to the start of the semester.

4.1.13 Reimbursement of tuition fees by Unitec is only available where the fees have been paid by the due date. Staff are personally fully liable for any late, change of course fees or fines incurred by them. Such fees or fines will not be reimbursed.

4.1.14 If a staff member withdraws from a course for which the staff member has had fees paid or has claimed reimbursement, they must immediately advise their Senior Manager of their withdrawal. If any refund of fees is received, then the full amount of any payment or reimbursement paid to the staff member shall be repaid to Unitec within two weeks of the refund having been paid. Any amount not repaid is a debt owing to Unitec.

#### **4.2 Policy re Reduction of course fees at Unitec for non-work related study, and for persons closely associated with Unitec**

4.2.1 A reduction in tuition fees is currently available for study at Unitec for staff undertaking study for their personal enjoyment or personal development not specifically related to their work, and for persons closely associated with Unitec.

4.2.2 This policy applies to all staff employed on an unlimited term / permanent basis. At the discretion of the staff member's Senior Manager, staff employed on a temporary or limited tenure basis are also eligible for a reduction of fees under this policy. As a guideline, the period of employment should be a minimum of one full year.

4.2.3 A 25% reduction in tuition fees is available to staff or a person closely associated with Unitec for any course or programme listed in the Unitec Prospectus or any new course approved after the publication of the Prospectus. This reduction does not apply to short courses unless the Head of the Department providing the course has given their prior approval in writing.

4.2.4 As a general rule, any reduction received by a Unitec staff member employed for an unlimited term on less than a full-time basis should be appropriately reduced to reflect the part-time nature of their appointment.

4.2.5 In no circumstances shall the discount exceed \$1500 per annum.

4.2.6 Eligibility for reduced tuition fees is subject to the approval of:

- in the case of staff and Advisory Committee members, the Head of School/Senior Manager of the member concerned
- in the case of Council members, the Executive Director, Organisational Development.

4.2.7 Except where the tuition fee relates to a period of study in excess of one semester, reduced tuition fees will be granted on a semester by semester basis. Approval for further reduced fees relating to study in

any subsequent semester (or period of study) will not be granted where the staff member has not been successful in the previous semester (or period of study), except in exceptional circumstances.

- 4.2.8 The support provided under paragraph 4 of this policy is in the form of a discount on course fees. No reimbursement or internal requisition is involved.
- 4.2.9 A discount will only apply where the tuition fees are paid by the due date. No discount is available on any fines, late fees, change of course fees or any other cost or fee.
- 4.2.10 The discount may not be applied retrospectively.

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## Procedures

### 5. General Processes

#### 5.1 Staff engaged in work related study

- 5.1.1 Eligible staff wishing to apply for a payment or reimbursement of fees must discuss their application with their Senior Manager and reach agreement on the relevance of the programme or course to their area of employment, prior to enrolling in any programme or course.
- 5.1.2 Such staff should complete an "[Application for Tuition Fees Assistance](#)" form. This form must be signed by their Senior Manager. Reimbursement will not be made unless the application has been approved by the staff member's Senior Manager.
- 5.1.3 If the study is at Unitec, the staff member should present their invoice to their Senior Manager, who will arrange for the invoice to be paid through an internal requisition. The internal requisition is forwarded to the Student Registry for processing.
- 5.1.4 If the approved study is at an institution other than Unitec, the staff member should complete the enrolment procedure and payment of fees personally, then apply for the appropriate reimbursement using the "[Claim for Refund of Expenses](#)" form. This form must be signed by the staff member's Senior Manager. The enrolment receipt should be attached to the form which should then be sent to Accounts for reimbursement.

In exceptional cases of personal hardship and providing the amount sought does not exceed a total of \$500, alternative arrangements may be made at the discretion of the staff member's Senior Manager.
- 5.1.5 If an amount greater than \$1,500 is to be reimbursed in any one year, the bond document at [Appendix 3](#) must be completed by the staff member and countersigned by the Senior Manager approving the reimbursement. The original form should be forwarded to Payroll for inclusion on the staff member's personal file and a copy sent to the staff member being paid or reimbursed. This information will be entered into the Human Resources management information system.

5.1.6 If the staff member resigns or has their employment terminated (otherwise than on the grounds of redundancy) within the period during which the bond applies, the staff member's manager will request the repayment of any outstanding bond through Payroll using the Repayment of Bond form at [Appendix 3](#). Clearance of any bond will be required to be confirmed on the employee clearance checklist.

5.1.7 Staff who have received assistance under this policy are required to advise their Senior Manager at the end of the semester (or other period of study) whether or not they were successful in their study.

## **5.2 Reduction on course fees at Unitec for non-work related study, and for persons closely associated with Unitec.**

5.2.1 Approval must be sought and obtained before an enrolment form is submitted.

5.2.2 An "[Application for Tuition Fees Assistance](#)" must be completed and signed by the Head of Department/Senior Manager of the person applying for support. If the person seeking support is a staff member, a copy of the form will be sent to Payroll for inclusion on their Personal File.

5.2.3 The completed form must accompany the enrolment application form.

5.2.4 Once processed, the "Application for Tuition Fees Assistance" form and the fees invoice should be forwarded to the Student Registry. The Student Registry will re-calculate the fees and forward the updated fees invoice to the student.

5.2.5 Staff enrolling online for non-work related courses, or persons closely associated with Unitec, should take the completed and authorised [Tuition Fees Assistance Form](#), with their invoice, to the Student Registry. The Student Registry will then adjust the invoice in accordance with the discount approved.

5.2.6 Staff who have received assistance under this policy are required to advise their Senior Manager at the end of the semester (or other period of study) whether or not they were successful in their study.

## **6. Policy Review**

The Senior Leadership Team will review this policy set out above on a bi-annual basis.

## **7. General**

The Executive Director, Organisational Development has the delegated authority to update any forms or appendices associated with this policy.

## **8. Forms**

[Application for Tuition Fees Assistance](#)

[Claim for Refund of Expenses](#)

[Bond by Staff Member to Refund Tuition Fees](#)

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**Revision History** (*Office use only – this will be added as part of the policy management process*).

Initial approval:

Amendments (date and substance):

**Dec 2008** Nomenclature changes to reflect change in organisational structure