



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHE
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY

Code: QA130
Title: Further Education Policy (FEP) for University of Galway Staff
Revised Date: 1 June 2021
Approved by: UMT

1.0 Introduction

University of Galway is committed to supporting staff undertaking educational programmes to enhance their professional and personal development. This commitment is in accordance with the strategic values of the University, and to support and maximise the potential and growth our staff.

1.1. Purpose

Staff are encouraged to undertake further education/training. This can be through in-house training or through a programme that leads to qualifications that enhance their job contribution, professional and personal development and performance. Any such programme of training and development undertaken should be in line with the staff member's annual PMDS report, or a recommendation for development following discussion with the staff member's line manager/ Head of School.

1.2. Further Education Policy Group

The scheme will be administered by the Learning and Development unit (HR Office) via the Further Education Policy group; this group will consider applications submitted under the scheme. The Further Education Policy group will consist of the Director of Human Resources (Chair), Deputy Director of Human Resources, Director of Management Accounts and two trade union staff representatives (an academic staff member and an academic support staff member). The Learning and Development unit will seek to ensure that the principles of fairness and equity are applied to all applications.

1.3. Eligibility

Applicants must have completed one year's service and a successful probationary report before making an application.

A staff member on or who intends to submit an application for unpaid leave such as Special Leave/Career Break scheme for the period for which funding is sought is not eligible to make an application.

Staff members on part-time or job share are eligible to apply but their contracted hours of work must, at a minimum be not less than 20% of their full-time equivalent (FTE).

Staff members on Fixed Term or Specific purpose contracts of employment are eligible to apply for support for the period of (and not exceeding the period of their contract of employment); their eligibility for support will be extended in the event of the renewal or extension of the contract.

Priority will be given to staff member's applying to the scheme for the first time or those who have not availed of the scheme in the last five years.

1.4. Funding Support Criteria

The scheme aims to support staff taking programmes of study leading to an accredited outcome from Level 6 or above of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) <http://www.nfq.ie>. (See Appendix 1 for a classification of the programmes that are included in this scheme). This includes programmes accredited by professional bodies and qualifications from Educational Institutions up to and including doctoral level.

The University is anxious to improve its research and publication ranking in the international league tables and welcomes applications at level 9 and 10 of the NQF.

Programmes of study external to the University will be subject to budgetary constraints, and require 50% co-funding from the staff member's unit. Each College will be required to provide a number of allocated places on programmes to be granted to staff through the FEP scheme, for those places the course fee will be waived.

1.5. Applications

An application by a staff member for further qualifications should be as an outcome of a discussion with their line manager/Head of School either through PMDS, probations outcome meetings etc. An application can be to support an employee:

- to carry out their role in the University;
- to support the employee's professional development or
- is deemed desirable by the individual staff member and the University/College/School or Support Service.

Applications which fall into this category are eligible to undertake a course of study on courses which are offered by University of Galway on a waived fee basis.

For external programmes a business case should be presented. The time to attend taught programmes and assessments will be determined by agreement between the individual and their Head of Unit.¹

Note: It is recognised that in most cases further academic or vocational qualifications will benefit the University or the applicant's scope of work as well as the personal and professional development of the individual.

1.6. Regulations Governing Funding

- a) In the case of applications support will be provided for external programmes only in the event that an equivalent programme is not provided by University of Galway. Such programmes will be co-funded to a level of 50% by the staff member's unit.

¹ Head of Unit is Dean of College, Head of School, Support Service Director/Manager, Supervisor, Principal Investigator

- b) In the absence of an internal programme comparator, the maximum fee support allowable under the scheme is €8,000 per annum.
- c) The cost of repeating a programme of study or examinations will not be funded.
- d) For staff undertaking a part-time PhD, funding will be provided only in respect of the first six years of registration on the PhD programme.
- e) Financial support will be provided only in respect of the tuition fees.
- f) Staff members will be responsible for the payment of any levies² associated with the programme or costs such as travel and accommodation.
- g) Financial support will only be provided where other funding schemes (government grants, etc.) are not available to applicants.
- h) In the case of Technical Staff the existing agreed procedure in relation to the Senior/Chief Technicians 10% salary award scheme continues to apply.
- i) In the case of children and spouses of Staff, the existing fee concessions will continue to apply as outlined in the Financial Policy and Procedures on Fees Staff Concessions. [QA309-Fee-Concessions.pdf \(universityofgalway.ie\)](#)

1.7. Programme Attendance

Where attendance at an educational or training programme requires a staff member to be released from their work, or they are unavailable, or unable to execute their existing workload by reason of the requirements of a programme supported under this Scheme, arrangements must be made by the Head of Unit to cover that deficit from within their existing resources.

The Head of Unit should be cognisant of the requirements of the programme being undertaken by the staff member in terms of course schedule, examination and study leave. Please refer to Appendix II of this policy for Study Leave and Examination guidelines.

1.8. Making an Application

Before applying, applicants should ensure that:

- a) The programme they wish to apply for is the most cost effective and relevant option.
- b) They meet the programme entry requirements and the funding support criteria
- c) They secure the support of their Head of Unit.

Applications should be made on the appropriate application form, which can be downloaded from the Learning and Development website: <https://www.universityofgalway.ie/human-resources/learning-and-development/funding-support/>

² The Student Levy is payable by every student and relates to student services (health care, etc). The postgraduate fee is broken down into two parts: tuition fee and student levy. You can view this information on the Fees Office website: [Student fees - University of Galway](#).

Once the applicant has completed their section of the form they should pass the application form to their Head of Unit for signature and comment. Completed applications must be submitted to Organisation and Staff Development unit (HR Office) by the closing date (staff will be advised by email of the closing date and it will also be posted on the Learning and Development website at [Funding Support - University of Galway](#))

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application within 4 weeks of applying.

PhD applications from academic staff members will be accepted and considered throughout the academic year.

In the event of any dispute between the staff member and their Head of Unit in relation to the programme application, an independent Appeals panel consisting of two management and two union representatives will be convened. Terms of reference for the Appeals Panel are attached in Appendix 3.

When making an application, please note the following regulations:

1. Applications will be refused if they fail to meet any of the funding support criteria or if the application does not meet the NQF requirement.
2. If a programme is commenced without first securing a fee concession, payment of the fee will be the staff member's responsibility.
3. If a programme is being taken external to the University, the fee reimbursement to the approved level will be made to the individual on presentation of a receipt of fee payment or payment to the relevant Institute will be processed based on the relevant invoice to Learning and Development Unit.
4. Approval of funding will be required on an annual basis for staff members continuing programmes of study both internally and externally. Prior to the granting of such approval, evidence of successful completion of the relevant examinations, or satisfactory progress otherwise, will be required. This will be administered by Organisation and Staff Development.

1.9. Repayment of Funding

- a) **Internal funded programmes:** Where a successful applicant leaves the employment of the University during the course of their study, he/she will be liable to repay fees on a pro-rata basis. The University will take into account individual circumstances.
- b) **External funded programmes:** Staff leaving University employment during the course of their studies or within two years of completion, will be required to repay the cost of the support provided on a pro-rata basis. In the case of PhD research this condition will not apply due to precedent and the empirical nature of the work involved. The University will take into account individual circumstances.

Staff members are obliged to complete two years of employment with University of Galway post completion of the course. If a staff member leaves the University employment within two years of course completion, then the following fees will be repayable by the employee to the University:

Leaving within 12 months of course completion	100% to be repaid
Leaving within 12-18 months of course completion	75% to be repaid
Leaving within 18-24 months of course completion	50% to be repaid

- c) **Discontinuation of a programme of study:** In the event of a staff member failing to complete an approved

programme, the staff member will be required to repay the cost of the support provided on a pro rata basis. The University will take into account individual circumstances.

1.10. Evaluation

At the end of each academic year, a staff member who intends to progress with their programme of study will be required to submit examination results. In the case of a staff member undertaking a PhD, they will be required to submit satisfactory progress report from the PhD supervisor. On the conclusion of the programme of study, a staff member will be required to provide an evaluation report outlining the value of the programme that they have undertaken in terms of self and the University.

2.0 Responsibilities

Name	Responsibility
Director of Human Resources	Policy Owner
Learning & Development Manager	Ensuring the policy remains updated

Appendix 1

3.0 Programmes covered by this Scheme include:

- Professional Body examinations.
- Academic or vocational qualifications which are relevant to the applicants scope of work or of benefit to the University, College, School or Support Service.
- The Postgraduate Certificate, Diploma and Masters in Teaching & Learning in Higher Education.
- The Postgraduate Certificate, Diploma and Masters in Health Sciences (Clinical Education).
- Higher Certificate/Diploma.
- Postgraduate Diploma.
- Degree qualification.
- Masters qualification.
- PhD qualification.

Appendix 2

4.0 Study Leave Guidelines

Staff are generally entitled to special paid leave to study for course examinations. Up to one day's study leave per examination subject can be allowed at approved dates as agreed to a total maximum of 5 days paid leave in any one year.

In addition to study leave, staff will be granted agreed special leave on the day of the examination whether it takes place outside normal working hours or not.

Study and exam leave are at management's discretion and should be determined in conjunction with the Head of Unit in advance of the commencement of the course of study.

N.B.: Participation on a course which may result in a request for study/exam leave must be advised to your Head of Unit prior to the commencement of the course.

Appendix 3

Terms of Reference for FEP Appeals Panel

As a general principle of the procedures, applicants have the right to appeal the decision of the FEP group. The FEP Appeals Panel has the authority to uphold, reduce or revoke the original decision. Members of the panel will have equal standing when hearing an individual's appeal and decisions will normally be reached by consensus.

- 1.** An appeal must be made in writing and be received by the HR office within 10 working days of the notification of the original decision of the FEP group clearly stating the grounds on which the appeal is to be heard.
- 2.** On receipt of an appeal, the FEP Appeals panel will be convened, this panel will be independent and consist of the two management and two union representatives.
- 3.** The decision of the appeals panel, which is final, will be formally notified to the applicant in writing within five working days of the hearing.