

Time Off for Study – OU Courses and other Further/Higher Education Provision

1. Principles

The University recognises the value of staff undertaking OU study. The University Staff Development Policy encourages staff to undertake a variety of development activities to update and develop their professional and work related skills. Funding support for study of job related Further and Higher Education courses, identified through CDSA, is provided by individual Units.

Heads of Units are responsible for ensuring that staff have sufficient time to:

- prepare for learning and development activities
- undertake learning and development activities
- consolidate and reflect on learning
- practise and apply what they have learned back in the workplace
- evaluate the effects and changes through development

2. Time Off in relation to OU Courses

The amount of time off to support study of OU courses varies according to whether the course is job related or not. However, all staff taking an OU course (whether it is job-related or not) are entitled to the following paid time off:

- to take the exam plus reasonable travel time to and from the exam centre;
- for exam revision – equivalent to the length of the exam;
- paid time off for each normal working day spent at a residential school – there is no provision for time off in lieu where weekend attendance at a residential school is required.

OU Courses directly related to work – identified through CDSA

Staff are taking OU courses to meet current and future job-related development needs.

Where this is the case the individual may be granted up to six days time off for study per year. This is in addition to leave for exam revision/attendance, and time off to attend any obligatory residential school. Time off can be used at the individual's discretion for reading, preparing assessments or course related work. The maximum of six days can be given for courses attracting 60 credit points. **NB: The maximum of six days applies regardless of the number of courses being taken (e.g. a member of staff studying a 60 point course and a 30 point course in the same year is entitled to six days' time off for study).** Time off for other courses will be on a pro rata basis i.e. a 30 point course will attract 3 days and a 15 point course 1 and a half days and a 10 point course one day.

NOTE – time off for study as set out above only applies to work related OU courses identified and agreed through CDSA.

OU Courses not directly work related

Non job-related courses do not entitle staff to any additional time off for study, above that allowed for the exam, exam revision and residential schools.

3. Post Graduate Research

Academic staff who qualify for study leave are expected to use this existing provision to support their study/research and for research staff this constitutes their work content.

For other staff the Head of Unit may agree paid time off for study up to six days per annum depending on whether the research area is job related. Where it is not job related additional time off would not normally be approved.

4. Time off for other work related courses of Further/Higher Education

Financial support is made available to staff to attend courses of study provided by other institutions, usually where the need cannot be met by OU study. The conditions for financial support are that the course is work related, identified via CDSA, and approved by appraiser/manager. Staff undertaking professional or vocational training courses with an external provider are required to complete the External Training Agreement and in certain circumstances may be required to repay training costs.

Where the course attracts a CATs rating, time off for study up to the six days' maximum can be granted in the same way as time off for study related to OU courses – see paragraph 2i.

Residential schools and obligatory attendance at teaching sessions should be dealt with using the principles for time off to attend OU Residential Schools – i.e. paid leave for each working day spent at such a session. Time off for exams and revision should be given also applying the principles in paragraph 2.

Where the course does not attract a CATs rating, time off should be allowed for attendance at any obligatory teaching sessions as above. Additional time off for study should be given according to the level of study and duration of the course taking 15, 30 point and 60 point OU courses as points of comparison. It is not possible to provide definitive guidance in these circumstances, but the general principles outlines above should apply.

Course Points (CATS)	60	30	15	10
Days leave	6	3	1.5	1

Table indicating CATS points and appropriate time off for study

5. Time Off for Study Arrangements for Part Time Staff

Where part time staff are taking job related OU courses time off for study should be given on a pro rata basis in relation to hours/days worked. The time off for study should be calculated in a similar way to annual leave allowances.

Entitlement of time off for study may be withdrawn by the Head of Unit if the member of staff is undergoing disciplinary proceedings or performance reviews.

6. Useful references

Staff Development Policy
External Training Agreement