



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

**(Including Study Leaves, Sabbaticals, Research and
Publishing)**

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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Policy is to encourage and support staff to pursue actively their professional and career development as an integral element of their employment with Newbold College of Higher Education. The College acknowledges that continuing professional development contributes to personal job satisfaction, workplace productivity, reward and recognition.

The College has a strong commitment to quality learning and teaching and to quality professional services. The College accepts that its staff members are the key to the attainment of this commitment. By encouraging and supporting the continuing professional development of its staff members, the College can assist them in their contribution to this commitment.

The principal purposes of professional development are to optimise the quality of working life and to achieve quality learning and teaching outcomes by enhancing and supporting the existing strengths and potential contributions of all staff members to the mission of the College.

Professional development applies to all staff members, and is an integral part of professional responsibilities. It imposes obligations on individuals to develop and on the College to support the development in ways that are consistent with individual and College needs and objectives, and with the availability of resources.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Setting Goals

Planning, clarification and review of personal goals are all important in the professional development of staff members. They are addressed within each curriculum and professional services area through the annual appraisal and review process. This is a two-way process in which the needs and goals of the individual and of the College are taken into account. Attention is focused on the individual and on the context in which the individual works. A plan of action to reach these goals is established.

Meeting Needs

Whilst the appraisal and review process is central to professional development, the contribution of traditional forms of professional development is vital.

At the *individual* level, these include:

- Courses
- Seminars
- Workshops
- Conferences
- Formal study, continuing education or training
- Participation in special projects such as editing
- Participation in induction programmes.

At the *discipline* level these include:

- Peer-review of work undertaken
- Supervision or examination of external doctoral theses
- Becoming involved in networks of similar employees.

At the *curriculum area* level these include:

- Undertaking reviews or planning retreats
- Inviting trainers or speakers to address curriculum areas on matters of concern or interest
- Following up with colleagues who have attended courses, seminars, workshops or conferences so that their new skills can be used constructively in the curriculum area
- Curriculum development
- Creation of teaching materials
- Development of teaching methods.

Procedures

Each staff member submits a proposed programme of professional development to their line manager at the time of the annual appraisal and review. Subsequently, the staff member may submit requests for changes to their initial professional development proposal provided that they are within the current budget constraints.

If the proposal is for a conference, the line manager makes the decision on the basis of the principles agreed for that particular year. If the request falls outside of the agreed principles for that particular year, the request is referred to the Senior Leadership Team, chaired by the Principal.

Conferences

Academic staff members are encouraged to present papers at the conferences they attend. This may be a pre-requisite for obtaining funding for some (particularly international) conferences. This is to promote the dissemination of Newbold research and to enhance the academic profile of the College.

The College will organise regular colloquia at which academic staff members may present papers (or revisions thereof) which they have presented at conferences during the preceding year. This is to ensure that colleagues benefit from listening to and feeding back on research undertaken by their peers.

Upon their return to the College, academic staff members shall prepare a short written report or conference summary for relevant colleagues, with the conference attendance appearing in the appropriate curriculum-area minutes for submission to the Academic Board. This is to help other staff members to share in the information emanating from the conference and to obtain the greatest amount of effect from the financial resources expended.

Seminars, workshops and short courses

The seminar, workshop or short course must be compatible with the agreed goals or career development plan for the staff member for that year, as well as with the College's Strategic Plan, and funds must be available.

Documentation

All Staff Development opportunities must be approved and recorded on the Professional Development Application Form. Amounts up to a total of £850 per full-time employee per year for professional associations, subscriptions, conferences, seminars, workshops etc. are approved by the line manager and countersigned by the Academic Registrar (academic staff) or Chief Financial Officer (professional services staff) if not the line manager. Amounts over £850 per full-time employee per year are recommended by the line manager to the Senior Leadership Team through the Academic Registrar (academic staff) or Chief Financial Officer (professional services staff). Pro-rated amounts are available for part-time employees.

STUDY LEAVES

The College is committed to maintaining a highly qualified academic staff. To this end, the College provides funding each year to assist academic staff to gain additional qualifications or higher degrees.

In allocating funding, consideration is given to the needs of the College, the staff member's capacity to make effective use of the proposed study opportunity, and the staff member's contribution or potential contribution to the development of the College's academic provision.

First priority for funding assistance is given to doctoral degrees. Funding assistance may be provided for other higher degrees where there is demonstrable benefit to the academic provision of the College.

In special circumstances the College may offer funding assistance to upgrade the qualifications of a prospective staff member. The level of such assistance will be determined by the College on a case-by-case basis, but not exceeding the levels of assistance available to those already in College employment.

Assistance for all additional academic qualifications or higher degrees is funded from the staff development budget.

Application Process

Academic staff contemplating advanced study should first discuss their plans with the head of their curriculum area and then with the Academic Registrar.

Applications should be submitted to the Academic Registrar in January of the academic year prior to that for which funding is requested, using the Advanced Study Application Form. Late applications will not normally be considered, though an exception may be made where the College identifies an immediate need for a study programme.

The application should state the name of the programme; the institution at which the programme is to be undertaken; the proposed duration of the programme; the benefits to the College; and the funding applied for. The application should also provide a proposed timetable for completion of the degree; a plan of what is to be achieved each year; projected annual costs; and details of all costs for which the applicant is applying for the ensuing year. Funding may be provided to assist with tuition fees; textbooks and other required resources; research expenses; travel and accommodation costs (where relevant); thesis or dissertation costs; and other approved expenses necessary to complete the programme of study or research.

Where the proposed programme involves a residential requirement at an institution other than Newbold, the application should state any impact on the staff member's Newbold employment responsibilities, the costs for any replacement staff, and the costs of attending the other institution (including fees, travel and reasonable accommodation).

Applications for full-time study leave or sabbaticals or partial reduction of normal responsibilities should include details of replacement staff required and estimated costs (determined in consultation with the staff member's curriculum area head), as well as a letter from the curriculum area head confirming that substitute staffing can be arranged and how this will be achieved. The application should be countersigned by the Academic Registrar.

Funding is allocated on an annual basis. A new application must be submitted for each year of a study programme. Funding allocations are for a specific year, and will not normally be carried over to a subsequent year. Funding is subject to satisfactory progress. After the first year of assistance, each application must include a progress report using the Advanced Study Progress Report Form. The College will also require a progress report from a research supervisor.

Applications for higher degrees will be considered by the Senior Leadership Team, chaired by the Principal. The Principal will submit recommendations for such full-time study programmes to the Board of Governors for ratification.

The Academic Registrar will notify applicants of the results of their applications.

Study Categories

Assistance may be approved for own-time study, for part-time study involving partial reduction of normal employment responsibilities, or for programmes involving a period of full-time study leave.

Own-time study. The study is undertaken in the staff member's own time, without any reduction in the staff member's normal workload at the College.

Part-time study. The study is undertaken with a partial reduction in regular employment responsibilities for a given semester or semesters (eg release from one or more modules for which the staff member is normally responsible, or assessment/cross-marking and/or tutorial responsibilities).

Full-time study. The staff member is granted full release from regular

responsibilities at the College for a given semester or semesters.

Examination Leave

Staff members who are undertaking a programme of study and who are required to attend examinations at another institution may request their curriculum area head to approve leave to travel and take the examinations. The College will approve up to one day of leave for each examination taken.

Study Expenses

Approved study and research expenses will be reimbursed to the staff member on production of receipts. Prior advances may be arranged for large items of expenditure on production of evidence of the projected expense.

Any significant change in the nature of the expenditure within the amount approved for a given year must be approved by the Senior Leadership Team.

Funding shall not exceed the total amount of assistance approved for the study programme in a given year.

Full-Time Study Leave

A staff member may apply for a period of full-time study leave on a paid or unpaid basis. Paid study leave counts as credit towards a staff member's years of service; unpaid study leave does not count as service credit.

A period of paid full-time study leave is normally granted only for a higher degree by research, and must be approved by the Board of Governors on the recommendation of the Senior Leadership Team.

Full-time leave for a Master's degree by research (eg MPhil) will not normally exceed one semester. In doctoral programmes where substantial progress is being made, applications for up to two semesters of leave (not necessarily consecutive) may be considered. In exceptional circumstances (eg where full-time study at an overseas university is considered of value to the College), a staff member or prospective staff member may be approved for full-time assisted study leave for a period longer than twelve months.

A staff member will normally be expected to have served at least three years at the College before being granted a semester's full-time leave for advanced studies. This requirement may be waived in exceptional circumstances, such as where the College identifies a need for a study programme to be expedited, or where the College agrees to sponsor the study programme of a prospective employee. A staff member with a break in service at the College may count employment at the College prior to the break as qualifying time for a period of full-time leave for advanced study, provided the break in service was for no longer than six months.

Normally a staff member applying for a period of full-time study leave must not have previously attempted a degree at the level concerned, and the qualification for which the staff member is enrolled or proposes to enrol should normally be

higher than the highest qualification currently held by the staff member, unless the College is better served otherwise.

A period of full-time study leave will normally be granted only within the first two full-time equivalent years of enrolment for a Master's degree, or the first four full-time equivalent years of enrolment for a doctoral degree.

Applicants for a period of full-time study leave must provide a statement from their higher degree supervisor indicating progress to date and the likely outcomes of the period of full-time leave for the candidate.

Applicants for a period of full-time study leave should indicate when they will take their annual leave for the year in question without disruption to their normal employment responsibilities.

Except for approved annual leave periods and statutory public holidays, a staff member on full-time study leave is expected to devote the leave period solely to advancing the full-time study programme for which the leave was provided.

Funding Arrangements for Full-Time Paid Study Leave

Full salary, allowances and employer's pension contributions will continue to be paid while the staff member is on paid full-time study leave.

Staff on full-time paid study leave will continue to accrue service credit. Any annual or other leave which the staff member may wish to take during a period of full-time paid study leave will be subject to the normal approval processes.

Where the study programme requires a continuous period of more than two months at a distant location, the staff member may apply for financial assistance for travel and accommodation for accompanying spouse and children.

Where a staff member is approved for assisted full-time study leave to be taken in residence overseas, assistance will be provided in accordance with Trans-European Division policy.

Amortisation following Paid Full-Time Study Leave

A staff member applying for paid full-time study leave thereby undertakes to return immediately on conclusion of the leave to the service of the College for a period of time at least equal to the length of the period of the proposed study leave. A contract shall be signed by the staff member accordingly. The staff member must be capable of fulfilling this obligation.

Study Programme Assisted by a Scholarship

Where a study programme is assisted by a scholarship and/or other assistance from a source other than the College, all scholarship and funding assistance from the other source(s) shall be reported to the Senior Leadership Team. The salary, allowances and other financial benefits that the College would otherwise have paid to the staff member while engaged in the study programme shall be offset by the value of the scholarship and funding assistance from the other source(s).

Changes to Projected Plans

Recipients of study assistance should inform their curriculum area head and the Senior Leadership Team of any significant changes to their projected study plans (including changes to dates of travel or travel destinations away from the local area).

Unsatisfactory Progress

A staff member incurring additional costs in order to repeat a unit of study will not normally be eligible for financial assistance for the repeated unit.

Report on Successful Completion

On the staff member's successful completion of the agreed study programme, a report accompanied by the degree transcript and/or diploma must be submitted to the Academic Registrar, who will forward a copy of the documentation to the Office Manager, Office of the Principal, for the employee's personal file.

Appeals

An appeal may be lodged against decisions on applications for study assistance based on a perceived defect in the process.

An appeal must be lodged with fourteen days of the date of notification that the application was unsuccessful.

Appeals must be lodged under the terms and conditions of the College's Staff Grievance and Appeals Policy.

SABBATICALS

Applicants for sabbaticals shall normally:

- Have already completed an earned doctoral degree
- Have been employed at the College for a minimum initial period of three years before becoming eligible for sabbatical leave or have worked at the College for a minimum of three years since the completion of any previous sabbatical
- Not have had the benefit of sabbatical leave during the previous three years
- Have achieved at least the rank of Lecturer
- Have developed a research/project proposal which is supported by the colleague's curriculum area; is considered viable by the Senior Leadership Team; and supports the College's Strategic Plan. The granting of sabbaticals is not automatic on completion of a certain number of years of employment.
- Have shown evidence of making good use of any previous development opportunities

- Have documented plans for publishing the completed research, for feeding it into the strategic planning of the College, or for integrating it in some way into the work of the curriculum area.

The relevant curriculum area should:

- Be proactive in the process of identifying suitable candidates
- Submit to the Senior Leadership Team a prioritised list of colleagues seeking sabbatical leave. The list of requests should reach the Senior Leadership Team before the end of February each year.

The Senior Leadership Team shall:

- Identify the level of sabbatical provision that the College is able to sustain in a given year
- Invite curriculum area heads to submit requests for sabbaticals, once such requests have been prioritised within the curriculum area
- Consider the lists provided by the curriculum areas in the light of the College's strategic plan and produce a prioritised list of candidates for sabbatical provision for the coming academic year for discussion at the April meeting of the Academic Board
- Pass the agreed sabbatical plan and research proposals to the Board of Governors for information
- Ensure that all sabbaticals are amortised over a period of one year immediately following their completion
- Require and review reports on work completed during sabbaticals within two months of their completion.

The length of a sabbatical shall normally be for one semester as follows:

AUTUMN SEMESTER, first day of teaching to last day of examination period, though there is no expectation to be involved in the subsequent cross-marking process.

SPRING SEMESTER, first day of teaching to last day of examination period, though there is no expectation to be involved in the subsequent cross-marking process.

Sabbaticals shall not be bolted onto periods of regular annual leave, nor shall they be taken in conjunction with time granted for any purpose other than research.

RESEARCH AND PUBLISHING

Although Newbold is primarily a teaching institution, it is also vital that academic staff undertake regular research activities if they are to grow within their

academic disciplines and to teach and supervise undergraduate and postgraduate students.

At times when the College is not in session, academic staff will take their allotted period of annual leave, devoting the rest of their time to agreed professional development activities; general research, reading and writing; preparation of conference papers and classroom lectures; and project-based activities. For the purposes of accountability and transparency, before the beginning of each break each member of academic staff will complete a **Research and Project-based Activities Form**, indicating what periods of time will be used for annual leave and other activities. This form will be signed off by the relevant head of department, countersigned by the Academic Registrar, and filed by the Office Manager, Office of the Principal.

Academic staff presence on campus is necessary for availability to students, consultation with other colleagues, membership of committees, and the strengthening of a collegial atmosphere on campus. To this end, all those teaching full-time on degree or credit-bearing programmes are normally expected to observe posted office hours each week as agreed by their head of department, though also devoting a full day per week to agreed research and other developmental activities.