



*Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute  
Valuation Joint Board*

## Further and Higher Education Policy

Version	Author	Changes	MT Approved	Board Approved
1.0	K Kelly	New Policy	13/03/2025	28/03/2025

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## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board (the Board) values investment in employee development and is committed to providing opportunities for learning and growth.
- 1.2 This policy outlines the Board's approach to supporting further and higher education for employees, ensuring a consistent and corporate approach to career-related learning.
- 1.3 The Board is committed to equality of opportunity in employee development.
- 1.4 In committing time and/or money toward training and/or qualification for an employee, the Board expect in return that the employee will participate fully in the course of study, and gain qualification at the earliest opportunity.

## 2.0 Scope of Policy

- 2.1 This policy does not apply to ad-hoc Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses.
- 2.2 This policy is intended for long-term formal learning that requires commitment and formal assessment towards a recognised qualification.

## 3.0 Learning Contracts

- 3.1 All employees authorised to follow a course of study for which the Board makes an investment, either in time or money, must enter into a Learning Contract.
- 3.2 The Learning Contract should be signed by both parties at least four weeks prior to the date of enrolment. It is recognised that there may be some exceptions.

- 3.3 All employees who are likely to follow such a course of study, must be made aware of this policy, and the terms and conditions of the Learning Contract, at the earliest opportunity.
- 3.4 A template learning contract is shown in Appendix 2.

## 4.0 Financial Assistance

- 4.1 The decision to approve attendance at a course or event will be made by the Depute Assessor.
- 4.2 The Depute Assessor will apply consistent criteria to ensure fairness for all staff (Appendix 1).
- 4.3 In arriving at a decision, the Depute Assessor will consider:
- any impact on service delivery,
  - potential benefits for the individual and the Board, and
  - budget availability.

## 5.0 Progress Review and Withdrawal of Support

- 5.1 The Depute Assessor will review student progress. If attendance levels or achievement standards are unsatisfactory, financial support may be withdrawn.
- 5.2 Progress reviews will be undertaken by the employees' line manager every 3 months. The line manager will review attendance and achievement standards to ensure the employee is demonstrating a clear endeavour to successfully complete the course of study.
- 5.3 Attendance by the employee must meet the minimum criteria set out by the course of study, if applicable, and any non-attendance must be reported in writing to their line manager immediately. Satisfactory attendance must be maintained unless failure to attend are due to mitigating circumstances e.g. absence for medical reasons.
- 5.4 If unsatisfactory attendance or achievement standards are identified, the line manager must assess the detrimental impact caused and consider whether the financial support should be withdrawn.

- 5.2 Any financial assistance already paid must be refunded by the student.
- 5.3 Repayment requirements may be waived only in exceptional circumstances, such as documented medical grounds.

## 6.0 Financial and Repayment Obligations

- 6.1 An employee must repay course fees and associated costs if they:
- voluntarily leave the Board's employment before completing the qualification,
  - withdraw from the course before completion, or
  - fail to complete the course/qualification in the timescale agreed in the learning contract.
- 6.2 If a staff member is dismissed for misconduct or other reasons, they must repay course fees and associated costs.
- 6.3 Repayments will be made in accordance with the terms and conditions of the Learning Contract.

## 7.0 Redundancy and Financial Recovery

- 7.1 If the Board makes a position redundant, financial recovery of educational assistance will not apply.

## Appendix 1 – Criteria / Guidelines for Authorisation

### Criteria/Guideline for Authorisation of Further and Higher Education Courses

When authorising employees to receive further and higher education courses the Depute Assessor should ensure that such courses are:

- a. job-related,
- b. relevant to the employee's current post, or
- c. part of a continuing staff development programme, therefore, relevant to a potential future position within the Valuation Joint Board.

The merits of any application should be assessed by:

- a. ensuring that staff have the required skills, abilities and knowledge that will be necessary to provide effective service delivery, and
- b. identifying "training gaps" following a training needs analysis, or
- c. as a part of the process of continuing professional development

Account must be taken of available financial resources and staffing resources necessary to fulfil both the operational requirements of the Board's services, and for any commitment required of the employer in relation to the course of study.

### Components of Course and Associated Fees which would normally be funded by the Board will include:

- **Registration**
- **Course Fees**
- **Examination Costs**, including Exemption Fees.
- **Essential Text Books**, provided they are not available from within the service or the local library. Any purchases must follow the Board's procedures. Items bought remain the property of the Board and must be returned to the Board when study is completed or employment terminates.
- **Essential Tools and Equipment** - any purchases must follow the Board's procedures. Items bought remain the property of the Board and must be returned to the Board when study is completed or employment terminates.
- **Excess Travel Costs** – defined as the difference between usual travel to work costs and travel to place of study costs. Tickets or receipts must accompany all claims, and the Board's procedure for claiming of expenses must be followed.
- **Subsistence** – if appropriate a subsistence allowance may be paid as specified in the current Conditions of Service.
- **Other Expenses** – at the discretion of the Depute Assessor.

### Non-Financial Support

- **Time off** from the normal working day. (no enhanced payments will be made for attendance out with normal working hours)
- **Study Leave for Examinations** –one half day per subject per exam diet.
- **Time off for Formal Examination Attendance** – time off from the normal working day or, where examinations fall on a public holiday, a period of time in lieu will be granted to correspond with the duration of the examination, and
- **Time Off to Resit Examinations** – flexi-time, annual leave, TOIL or unpaid leave can be used for re-sitting examinations.

**Full time study and workplace assessed qualifications are not included within the above guidelines.**



## LEARNING CONTRACT

All employees who are granted financial assistance for further or higher education by Dunbartonshire and Argyll & Bute Valuation Joint Board (hereinafter referred to as the Board) will enter into this Learning Contract with the Board and will agree to the terms and conditions stated below.

### Terms and Conditions

- A. Where an employee voluntarily leaves the employment of the Board, or withdraws from the course before completing the whole or defined part of the course qualification, or fails to complete the course qualification by the agreed latest date for completion of the course / qualification, then repayment in full of the financial assistance for the agreed course fee and all associated fees will require to be repaid to the Board by the employee (unless there are exceptional circumstances for failure to complete the course such as documented medical grounds).
- B. Where an employee chooses to leave the employment of the Board within a 4-year period of completing the course / qualification, they will be required to repay a percentage of the financial assistance received as follows:  
Leaving within 36 months of completing the course - 100% to be repaid.  
Leaving between 37 and 42 months of completing the course - 50% to be repaid.  
Leaving between 43 and 48 months of completing the course – 25% to be repaid.
- C. Should a member of staff be dismissed from the Board for reasons of misconduct or otherwise, they will have to repay a percentage of the financial assistance received as follows:  
Dismissed during the course – 100% of all financial assistance paid to date.  
Dismissed within 36 months of completing the course - 100% to be repaid.  
Dismissed between 37 and 42 months of completing the course - 50% to be repaid.  
Dismissed between 43 and 48 months of completing the course – 25% to be repaid.
- D. Continuance of financial assistance and/or support will only be granted if the Board is satisfied that the employee is making progress in the studies and attendance levels at the course are satisfactory. If the Board is not satisfied, it will withdraw the facilities granted and will require the repayment of the financial assistance granted, or part thereof, unless exceptional circumstances exist.
- E. Recovery of financial assistance will not apply if the Board causes an individual's post to be made redundant.
- F. The Assessor will authorise the granting of financial assistance to an employee through use of the Learning Contract. No assistance and / or support will be authorised or permitted unless the Learning Contract has been signed by the employee.
- G. Where completion of a course of study or qualification is an essential requirement of the post, failure to successfully complete the course of study within the agreed period of time for the course / qualification, may result in termination of employment and/or repayment of any financial assistance granted by the Board.
- H. Where completion of a course of study or qualification is an essential requirement of the post, failure to pass associated examinations may result in termination of employment. In such circumstances, and where the course or qualification allows, members of staff to resit an examination any associated costs must be met by the employee.

### AUTHORISATION : TO BE COMPLETED BY DEPUTE ASSESSOR OR DELEGATED OFFICER

Authorised by:

Designation:

Date:

**By signing hereunder I hereby agree to be bound by such Terms and Conditions that form part of this Learning Contract.**

### APPLICANTS SIGNATURE

Signature:

Date: