



# CEB Higher Education Study Support Operating Procedure

Reviewed: August 2025  
Next Review: 2028

## Rationale

Higher education study support is designed to promote ongoing professional learning of the individual and in support of a high-performing system of Catholic Schools culture aligned to the DOBCEL Strategy 2035.

This procedure recognises that higher learning is an important element of a contemporary Catholic education office that will enhance the learning across our diocesan education community, ensure effective outcomes for students and support succession planning.

Higher education study support is offered for higher education studies in an approved course of relevance and benefit to the person's role and career at Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB) or the wider DOBCEL community.

Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB) will allocate specified funds annually to support continuing CEB employees to pursue further academic qualifications.

## Definitions

**Approved study course:** A course of study endorsed by the Team Leader, Directorate member and Assistant Director of People and Development as relevant to the person's role and/or career path at CEB and in-line with the DOBCEL Strategy 2035. Such study must result in a qualification obtained from a recognised institution.

**Continuing employees:** Catholic Education Ballarat employees engaged in full-time or fractional employment other than fixed-term or casual employment.

**Fringe benefits tax (FBT) exemption:** FBT is a tax levied by the federal government on an employer designed to tax many of those benefits that an employee receives outside their normal taxable income. To avoid FBT requirements, the course that an individual seeks to study must be a full fee-paying course and not HELP (HECS) funded and be related to the individual's employment and related career.

**HELP (and HECS):** is a loan available to eligible students enrolled in Commonwealth-supported places. A HECS-HELP loan covers all or part of the student contribution amount and is subject to Fringe Benefits Tax. Catholic Education Ballarat will not provide reimbursement of HECS and HELP payments and debt.

## Procedure

### Application process

On an annual basis, Catholic Education Ballarat (CEB) employees can apply for financial support towards higher education and study leave for one approved course of study/subject per semester. Up to two-thirds of the cost of the education will be provided as financial assistance. Financial and other support approved will be pro-rata, based on the part-time fraction, where the employee works less than full time.

## Application Steps

1. Discuss application with your Team Leader/Manager\*.
2. Submit the online application which will workflow to your Team Leader/Manager. If not endorsed, the Team Leader/Manager must meet with the employee to discuss alternatives.
3. If endorsed by the Team Leader/Manager, the application workflows to the relevant Directorate member.
4. If endorsed by Directorate member, application will workflow to the Manager, Organisational Development for collation and review of all applications received.
5. If applications exceed budget available to support high education, a Directorate panel may assess applications.
6. Applicants will be informed of the outcome of their application in writing by People and Development by week two in term 4.

Late applications cannot be considered.

\*Where the higher education study support request cost is less than \$2500, the Team Leader may approve this outside of the *CEB Higher Education Study Support Operating Procedure*, within the service team's professional learning budget.

## Endorsement and eligibility criteria

- Applicants must have completed a minimum of 12 months of service and continued to be employed by Catholic Education Ballarat for the approved professional learning support duration.
- Proposed study - relevance to current role or career path at CEB or the wider DOBCEL community
- Alignment with DOBCEL Strategy 2035
- Applicants must be up to date and compliant with mandatory training and education.
- Review of any past financial support for professional learning or enrichment
- Applicants agree to any personal contribution (financial, time, sharing learning) as determined with the Team Leader and Directorate.

## Reimbursement of approved study costs

Financial support is offered as a reimbursement on successful completion of the approved course of study per semester, at the rate of two-thirds of the unit cost. The recipient agrees to contribute the balance of the associated costs. The approved reimbursement is not transferable to another study program or person.

To request a reimbursement, the employee must complete the *CEB Higher Education Study Support Reimbursement Online Request (see appendix 2)* and attach evidence of the successful completion of the unit/course of study and the amount paid by the employee.

The completed online form should be submitted with the required information. The Manager, Organisational Development will review to confirm that any reimbursement request is consistent with the approved higher education study support and authorise Accounts Payable to reimburse the approved costs from the higher education study support budget.

## Reimbursement of reasonable additional expenses

The Team Leader/Manager may approve the reimbursement of some textbooks and other study materials where the cost is within the service team's approved professional development budget. Employees must pay for these expenses upfront and seek reimbursement at the end of the semester. The employee must provide evidence of the successful completion of the study and a tax-compliant receipt.

The Team Leader/Manager may also approve additional requests for travel and accommodation in keeping with the *CEB Travel and Expense Reimbursement Protocol* and where the cost is within the service team's approved budget.

For reimbursement of these additional costs, the employee should complete an expense claim via the Flexi Purchase website or app and send to their manager for approval. If the Team Leader/Manager approves, the approval will be sent to Accounts Payable to reimburse the approved costs from the service team's budget.

These additional costs are not covered under the higher education study support budget.

## Study Leave

Catholic Education Ballarat may provide study leave of up to 2 days per semester (pro-rata for part-time employees) and where there is a mutual commitment, meaning the employee will agree to use their accrued leave entitlement for at least half of the requested time.

Study leave may be approved where the leave does not adversely impact on operational and service level needs. Study leave can be approved to attend mandatory lectures, tutorials and related examinations that cannot be done outside of usual work hours.

Study leave will not be approved to complete coursework or to attend non-core sessions or events. Study leave is only available during approved course/term time.

Any other arrangements may only be approved by the Assistant Director, People and Development and Executive Director.

Once approved, the employee must complete a leave application, and on endorsement, this will be electronically forwarded to the Payroll team for processing.

## Mutual commitment

The support for higher education study, provided in this procedure, is a mutual commitment between CEB and the employee. Should an employee leave employment within DOBCEL within 12 months of being granted reimbursement of fees, they shall agree to repay part of the reimbursements made by CEB according to the following scale:

- |  |      |
|--|------|
| • Up to 6 months after receiving study support                   | 100% |
| • from 6 months – up to 9 months after receiving study support   | 75%  |
| • from 9 months – up to 12 months after receiving study support  | 50%  |
| • from 12 months – up to 24 months after receiving study support | 25%  |

## Appendix 1

Application form – this can be accessed by clicking this link - <https://forms.office.com/r/FjJ6uBiUEN>

## Appendix 2

CEB Higher Education Study Support Reimbursement Request form - this can be accessed by clicking this link - <https://forms.office.com/r/FjJ6uBiUEN>