

Professional Qualifications Policy

1. Our policy

Skills4Stem Ltd is committed to helping all staff to develop skills, gain qualifications and improve long-term career prospects. We want to ensure we focus this investment in the areas of most benefit and your manager and/or director will consider each case on its merits. We also expect that you will be proactive in your own development.

2. What and whom we will support

In principle, we will support you to study any course or gain any qualification that is relevant to your present job or a job you are likely to do in this company in the future, or where you can make a case demonstrating a benefit to the organisation.

Priority will be given to supporting qualifications that are part of your planned development, agreed as part of your performance assessment. In addition, we will give priority to:

- staff studying for qualifications that are essential for their job;
- staff on courses where the content is particularly relevant to their job or the company;
- staff who are prepared to invest significant personal time in studying

If you apply for support and are not successful because of financial constraints or your departments work commitments, we will try to give a high priority to approving your application at the time of next enrolment.

3. Financial support

If your application is successful we will pay for:

- course and tuition fees,
- all exam fees, subject to you having successfully completed any course assignments, paid directly to the relevant institution,
- essential books and materials, (these must be returned to training department at the end of your course so that they can be passed on to other students)
- student membership of a professional institute, paid directly to the institute;
- accommodation costs for formal study weeks that are an essential part of the course.

We will not normally pay for revision course costs or for travel expenses, except for travel to essential field trips.

You must confirm approval for each item of expenditure with training department in advance.

The Company will consider sponsoring students for one re-sit per subject, taking into account the overall success in their studies and individual circumstances. If agreed, support will be limited to payment of exam fees

4. Time away from work

If you need time away from work as part of the support, your line manager will decide whether or not this is possible based on the reason for the request, how much time away from work is involved and the impact on the work of the department at the time.

As a guide you will normally be given paid time to:

- sit relevant examinations;
- attend essential study (including distance learning and in-house tuition)
- Revise prior to the exam (limited to half-day per subject)
- Attend and sit the examination (limited to half day per subject)

Preference will be given to staff who invest significant personal time in study. You should be prepared to at least match the time provided by the Company with study during your own time.

Some departments may be able to accommodate full or half day release classes, however this cannot be guaranteed. Where this is allowed the company will ask the college to provide an attendance report.

Once support is agreed in principle, you must agree each period of time away from work with your manager in advance.

5. Conditions

Support for further education is discretionary and is not normally available to employees who have not completed their probationary period.

Our support may be withdrawn if:

- you have a prolonged period of unsatisfactory performance in your job;
- you fail to attend classes or study weeks that the company has paid for, without good reason;
- you fail to submit essential course assignments without good reason.

If you fail any part of a course, except because you were ill or for another reason outside your control, no more support will be available until you have passed that stage.

Should you leave Skills4Stem Ltd, or withdraw from a course, for reasons other than ill health or redundancy, before taking the examination or other method of completion, Skills4Stem Ltd reserves the right to claim reimbursement of the full amount paid by deduction from your wages.

In the event that we paid for you to study externally (as opposed to using one of our in-house schemes) Skills4Stem Ltd reserves the right to claim reimbursement from you if you leave the Company, for reasons other than ill health or redundancy, within 3 years of completion. The following scale will apply:

- within 1 year – 100%;
- within 2 years – 75%;
- within 3 years – 25%.

If you leave the Company within the above-mentioned timeframe, the signed Agreement will authorise the Company to deduct from your final salary, any costs or payments made on your behalf, associated with the professional qualification.

6. How to apply for support

You should initially discuss appropriate qualifications and agree these with your supervisor/manager at your performance assessment. This discussion should help you decide the appropriate qualification taking account of the job you do, your current level of education and the commitment you are able to make towards your studies. Further advice can also be obtained from training department.

If you decide that you definitely want to proceed you should next complete the attached application. The training officer will help you complete this if necessary. You should pass the completed form to your supervisor/manager who will obtain approval from your Director. You will also need to update your personal development plan to take account of your new studies.

Once agreed, the form needs to be sent to the Training Officer for processing, unless relating to qualifications, which are dealt with by the Trainers. In the event that there are more applications than we can support, there may be occasions when the application may undergo a further selection process, at this stage.

Do not wait until you have been accepted on a course to apply for company support. If you apply early it is more likely we will be able to approve your request.

All applications will be processed as quickly as possible and we will let you know whether we can support your application as soon as we can.

If you feel the decision is unfair you should raise the issue using the normal grievance procedure.

7. Exam Passes and Awards

You must inform the Company of all examination results. When completing examination entry forms, please indicate that this should be done, where stated on the form. You must also send a copy of your exam results (received from the examining body), to the Training Department.

Where an award is due to you this must be authorised by, and forwarded through the Training Department. Your application for an award will need to be supported by a copy of your exam result and/or certificate.

Awards are paid into your salary and are tax deductible.

Awards will be paid subject to the following conditions:

- You are currently employed and not under notice
- You are not subject to disciplinary action

You can only claim for awards where Skills4Stem Ltd have paid for your course and exam fees and the exam has been passed since you have been in the Company's employment.

8. Making a success of further education

Once you have successfully got support for your further education here are some ideas to make it successful.

- Plan time for studying and completing assignments – especially if you are doing distance learning. Many people find it best to set time aside on a regular day. Don't leave assignments until just before they are due in!
- If you have any friends also studying set time aside together – provided you wouldn't distract each other.
- Try to work in an environment that is uncluttered and without interruptions. If this is difficult at home the company may be able to let you use a room outside working hours – talk to your manager or training department about this.
- Take some time after each class, study week or session, to review what you've learned and how it will be useful in your job. Ideally discuss this with your manager or a colleague or training department.
- Try to make contact with someone who has done the course before you for help if you get stuck. Talk to other people doing your course; make formal or informal arrangements to help each other. Training department may be able to help put you in touch with appropriate people.
- Reward yourself if you get a good mark in an assignment, pass an exam or just complete a really difficult section.
- Before exams plan your revision; allow extra time for subjects you found difficult.
- Take regular breaks from studying, especially during revision.
- Discuss your progress on the course regularly with your manager and/or a colleague or friend. Tell him/her what you're doing, how you like it, what's easy/difficult etc.
- Record your progress using your continuous professional development system
- As you get towards the end of each stage of your course talk to your manager about how you are going to use what you've learned in your job.

Good luck!

Application form where in-house tuition applies

I confirm that I have discussed this request and gained agreement from my Controller/Manager.

I have read, understood and agree to abide by the Skills4Stem Ltd Study Policy Document. I agree to notify Skills4Stem Ltd of the results of my examinations and confirm that the Training Department may release any information concerning my course of study to my Manager.

I also understand that Skills4Stem Ltd has agreed to pay the sum of £ which represents the cost of registration, membership, continuous assessment and examination entry to enable me to study towards and complete the

Should I withdraw from the course before sitting the examination(s) or leave the Company before completing the qualification, Skills4Stem Ltd reserves the right to claim reimbursement of the full amount paid by deduction from my wages on termination of my employment.

Signed _____ **(Director)**

Date _____

Signed _____ **(Student)**

Dated _____

Application form where in-house tuition does not apply

I confirm that I have discussed this request and gained agreement from my Controller/Manager.

I have read, understood and agree to abide by the Skills4Stem Ltd Study Policy Document. I agree to notify Skills4Stem Ltd of the results of my examinations and confirm that the Training Department may release any information concerning my course of study to my Manager.

I also understand that Skills4Stem Ltd has agreed to pay the sum of £ which represents the cost of registration, membership, continuous assessment and examination entry to enable me to study towards and complete the

Should I withdraw form the course before sitting the examination(s) or leave the Company before completing the qualification, Skills4Stem Ltd reserves the right to claim reimbursement of the full amount paid by deduction from my wages on termination of my employment.

Should I leave the Company within 3 years of completing the qualification Skills4Stem Ltd reserves the right to claim reimbursement of the amount paid, in accordance with the scale set out in section 5 of the study policy.

Signed _____ **(Director)**

Date _____

Signed _____ **(Student)**

Dated _____