 <p>Department: Learning & Development</p>	<p>Policy No: L&D003 Version. 4 Page 1 of 10</p>	<p>Original Release date: 01/07/2016 Current Version Date: 06/02/22 Next revision date: 06/02/24</p>
<p>Áras Chúchulainn, Blackheath Drive, Clontarf, Dublin 3 . Tel 01 818 6400 Fax 01 833 3873 Email info@iwa.ie www.iwa.ie</p>		
<p>Policy Title: Support for Further Education</p>		
<p>Written/Reviewed by: ██████████</p>	<p>Title: ██████████</p>	
<p>Approved by ██████████</p>	<p>Date: 01/07/2016</p>	

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1. Policy Statement

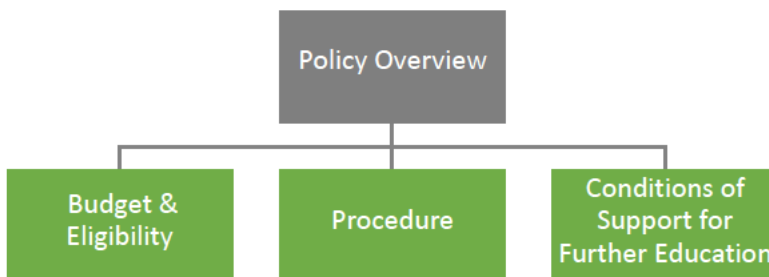
Irish Wheelchair Association (IWA) is committed to the development of its employees. This policy outlines the support for those employees who wish to undertake further education in subjects which are deemed to be relevant to their role within IWA.

2. Purpose

The purpose of the policy is to:

- Outline the procedure which must be followed when employees wish to apply for Support for Further Education.
- Outline the commitment required from employees who are successful in their application.

3. Policy Details and Procedure



3.1 Budget

- 3.1.1 IWA will endeavour to set aside a modest financial allocation each year to provide support for further education which will be equitably distributed among different grades of staff. Half of the budget will be made available for staff up to and including Grade 3, i.e., Programme Assistants, Personal Assistants and Administrators etc. to achieve a relevant QQI Major Award at Level 6 or other relevant qualification as detailed in Appendix A.
- 3.1.2 The remaining half will be made available for staff at Grade 4 and upwards, i.e., Service Support Officers, Coordinators, Area/Regional and Other Managers to achieve a relevant qualification as outlined in Appendix A.
- 3.1.3 QQI Level 5 courses will not be funded through this policy. IWA will continue to provide the QQI Level 5 programme internally where resources allow. Where the financial position of IWA does not allow for the provision of support for further education in any given year, IWA reserves the right to refuse / postpone a call for applications under this policy.
- 3.1.4 Where an annual budget for support further education has been set aside, a call for applications will normally be made by Learning and Development in March of each year. All applications received would be considered in the context of relevance to role or future role, organisational context, completion of training relevant to current role and cost, both financially and in terms of any time off which would be required by the applicant.
- 3.1.5 Applications received after the closing date each year will not be considered except in

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exceptional circumstances.

- 3.1.6 Consideration will also be given to the multiannual nature of some such courses and the impact on budget over a number of years.
- 3.1.7 Decisions regarding the provision of support will be made by the Head of Learning and Development in conjunction with the relevant Director of Service.

3.2 Eligibility Criteria


- 3.2.1 All employees, who have a minimum of 12 months continuous service, are eligible to apply for support for education under this policy. Employees who are on leave of absence or are absent on a long-term basis for any other reason, are not eligible to apply for funding under this policy until such time as they return to work.
- 3.2.2 Support for further education will only be approved for courses deemed directly relevant to an employee's role as described at appendix A.
- 3.2.3 Community employment (CE) participants employed under CE schemes funded by the Department of Social protection (DSP) are not covered by this policy. Separate funding through the DSP is available for these staff. For further information on training and development opportunities, CE participants should contact their CE supervisor.
- 3.2.4 Under this policy, support further education may cover up to a maximum of 50% of the course fees only (course fees will include course, registration, and exam fees). Books, travel, parking, accommodation, or any other charges will be excluded from this payment.
- 3.2.5 In circumstances where IWA identifies a course necessary for the individuals continued professional development or to meet the needs of the business and the organisation, IWA will cover the cost of such a course in full.

3.3 Fees

- 3.3.1 In agreement with a successful employee, IWA may appear the full course fee to the college/institution and agree a deduction from salary for the employee's percentage of the fees over an agreed timeframe which should not exceed the academic year.
- 3.3.2 It is at the discretion of the Head of Learning and Development what percentage (if any) of the course fees will be paid.
- 3.3.3 It should be noted that the payment of support for further education may be considered as taxable income if the course is not considered directly relevant to an employee's role. The employee will be responsible for any tax liability arising from the receipt of same. Tax relief is available on amounts paid by an employee towards the cost of further education where the course is approved by the Revenue Commissioners for such relief.

3.4 Procedure

- 3.4.1 The employee should initially discuss the course with their line manager and agree its relevance to the role and the impact if any on their duties in IWA. The employee should fully complete a support for further education application form to include details of the course, time off required, statement of how the course will enhance their ability to carry out their role or develop their career within the organisation.
- 3.4.2 Details of the course, i.e., course outline or prospectus, should be attached to this application form.

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- 3.4.3 The completed application form should be sent to the employee's line manager who will complete the manager section of the application outlining the benefit to the individual and the organisation and complete sign off and onward submission.
- 3.4.4 The line manager should forward the application form to Learning and Development in Clontarf for processing and consideration.

Successful application for support for further education

- 3.4.5 Learning and Development will issue the successful applicant with a confirmation letter outlining the details of the support for further education that will be provided.
- 3.4.6 The successful applicant is responsible for making the application to the college/institution for the approved course.
- 3.4.7 When an employee commences their course, a letter of undertaking/salary deduction agreement will be sent to the employee (See appendix C). Any payment made under the IWA support for further policy is subject to the employee signing a letter of undertaking. A signed copy of this letter should be returned to Learning and Development. No payment would be made unless the signed letter of undertaking has been received by Learning and Development in Clontarf.
- 3.4.8 If for any reason the employee does not commence their course, or they defer their course they must inform Learning & Development immediately as payment may still be made to the college/training institution.
- 3.4.9 On completion and receipt of certification for the course, the employee is required to send in a copy of their certificate and transcript to Learning and Development for recording on the HR system.

Unsuccessful applications for support for further education

- 3.4.10 Should an application for support further education be unsuccessful, the employee will be notified in writing.
- 3.4.11 The employee may appeal the decision to the Director of People and Development.
- 3.4.12 The appeal must be made in writing and must be within two weeks of the issue of the letter of unsuccessful application.
- 3.4.13 Appeals would be considered within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal and the employee will be informed of the outcome within a further five working days.
- 3.4.14 The outcome of the appeal will be final.

Payment of support for their education fees

- 3.4.15 IWA, in agreement with the employee, will pay the full cost of the fees directly to the college/institution on receipt of an official invoice.
- 3.4.16 Learning and Development will agree with the successful applicant arrangements for payment for their contribution for the course.
- 3.4.17 The employee contribution towards the cost of the course may be deducted from the successful applicant salary over an agreed timeframe not exceeding the academic year.
- 3.4.18 An invoice should be issued from the college/training institution to Learning and Development for internal processing and payment.
- 3.4.19 If a deposit is required to secure the place, the applicant must inform Learning & Development and supply a copy of the receipt. The successful applicant can claim the online deposit on their

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expenses.

- 3.4.20 Should an employee defer their course or part of their course, the employee will be responsible for any deferral fees associated with this action.
- 3.4.21 Should an employee withdraw from a course before the course is completed, the employee is required to inform Learning & Development immediately. The employee will be required to refund the fees paid by IWA on their behalf.
- 3.4.22 Where an employee has a legitimate reason for not completing the course, and where deferral is not an option, the individual has the right to set out in writing to the Director of People and Development the reasons why a refund of the course fees should not apply.

Study Leave

- 3.4.23 Study leave must be agreed with the Line Manager. The following is a guide on what study leave could be considered;

➤ Courses up to QQI Level 6 Major Award	➤ Up to a max of 3 days per academic year
➤ Courses at degree level (Level 7 and above)	➤ Up to max of 5 days per academic year

- 3.4.24 Study leave will only be granted to those undertaking a course of study for which the association is providing support for further education.
- 3.4.25 Any further study leave required must be unpaid or taken from the employee’s annual leave entitlement.

Exam Leave

- 3.4.26 Exam leave will be granted for the duration of exams, i.e., the actual length of the exam. With the exception of the duration of the exam and travel time, an employee will be expected to work normal hours on that day.

3.5 Conditions Of Support for Further Education

3.5.1 Resignation

It is a condition of support for further education that an employee must remain in the employment of IWA one year for each year that support for further education is provided after the course has been completed in full e.g.: if a person completes a two-year course, they must remain with the Association for a further two years after successful completion of the course.

Should an employee who is receiving, or has received, support for further education leave the employment of the Association within this timeframe, the employee will be required to reimburse the IWA for any support for further education which they have received in accordance with the terms of the letter of undertaking. In addition, any monies due to be reimbursed shall be withheld.

3.5.2 IWA Duties

An employee’s duties will take precedence over course demands. Any request for release from duties

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to participate in course requirements will be granted at the discretion of an employee’s line manager, to whom all such requests should be directed. Time off to attend course lectures will not be paid time. It can be taken as unpaid leave or taken out of the employee’s annual leave entitlement. Support for Further Education will only be made for courses if there is no interference with work assigned or required by the Association.

3.5.3 Confidentiality

Information in relation to IWA, its staff, service users, volunteers or members may not be utilised for class discussion or projects unless specific authorisation has been given in advance by the employee’s line manager. It is recognised that employees/volunteers may be required to conduct research as part of their chosen course of study and as part of this study, may wish to conduct research in their place of work. Anyone wishing to do so must apply to the Research Approval Committee and received written approval from them before commencing any research in IWA associated with their studies (Please see the Research Approval Policy).Should an employee be found to be doing so without specific authorisation, they may be subject to the disciplinary procedure. Employees who complete research as part of their further education under this policy are required to share the final report with IWA to make available on SharePoint.

3.5.4 Restrictions

In general, an employee will only be provided with support for further education on one occasion, i.e., for one course unless their role changes within the organisation.

3.5.5 Breaches of Policy

Any abuse of this policy will be taken very seriously and will be subject to IWA’s Disciplinary Procedure.

4 Scope

List other policies that are connected and or impact on this policy.	Research Approval Policy
List which Manual standard operational procedures (SOP’s) are connected and or impact on this policy.	Support for Further Education SOP003
List who was consulted with.	Director of People and Development HR Manager

5 Roles

The Association, as a collective, actively makes our policies work. Central roles to the policy are: -

Board of IWA role to:
○ Oversee the activities of the organisation and ensure they are in line with best practice
Senior Managements role to:
○ Ensure the policy is communicated and adhered to within the organisation
Operational Management role to:
○ Discuss the chosen course with the employee in the context of their role and career direction in



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- Follow up with the employee to check on progress and completion as part of the performance development process

Learning and Development role to

- Send out a call for applications
- Process applications fairly and in line with the policy
- Follow up on all outstanding certificates and payments

Individual Responsibility to

All IWA employees and volunteers have a role and individual responsibility to:

- Discuss their application with their line manager and receive approval before making an application
- Abide by the conditions set out in the policy
- Send their completed certificate to the Learning & Development Department on successful completion

6 Frequency of Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years and in line with IWA document control standards.

7 Implementation Plan

IWA will take all reasonable steps to ensure that all individuals impacted by this policy are made aware of same. This policy is communicated through:

Staff intranet <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Team meeting agenda <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Accessible formats <input type="checkbox"/>
Email notifications <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Information session for staff and volunteers <input type="checkbox"/>	Information session for people availing of our services and supports <input type="checkbox"/>
Staff Guides <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	On -line training session facilitated in IWA Develop <input type="checkbox"/>	Service Guides <input type="checkbox"/>
Other <input type="checkbox"/> please outline		

8 References

IWA Research Approval Policy			

9 Appendices

Appendix A: Qualifications Framework

10 History of Changes

Version	Date	Author	Changes Made/Rational
1	01/07/2016		Release of document
2	01/02/2019		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transferred into updated policy template • Method to review section outlines the people who will review the policy • Qualifications Framework expanded to include additional grades of staff • Reference to FETAC removed • Contents page added
3	04/02/2020		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Titles in heading updated • Changes of Department title from Management & Staff Development to Learning & development • Page 2: Removal of the word “Internal” under Annual Budget • Page 3: Adjudication Panel changes to Head of Learning & Development • Page 4: “HR Director” replaced by “Head of Learning & Development” • Page 5: “Accompanying the letter” replaced by “When an employee commences “ • Page 5: “CEO” replaced by “Director of People & Development” • Page 6: “Major Award” added to QQI Level 6 • Page 8 “Training & Development Manager, the Human Resource Manager and one other member of the Management & staff Development Team “replaced by “Head of Learning & Development, the Director of people and Development and one other member of the HR team”
4	06/02/22		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy transferred into new policy template • New point added relating to payment of online deposit to college • Study leave updated • Added requirement to share research with IWA to make available on SharePoint • Added reference to Research Approval Policy

Appendix A: Qualifications Framework

Job Title	Suggested Qualification for role	Possible Courses Available (QQI was formerly known as FETAC)
Administrator	Level 5 or higher	QQI Office Administration 5M1997 QQI Business Studies 5M2102 QQI Community Health Services 5M4468 with admin/ IT modules QQI Health Services Skills 5M3782 with admin or IT modules <i>Or other relevant qualification at Level 5 or above</i>
Personal Assistant	Level 5 or higher	QQI Community Health Services 5M4468 QQI Healthcare Support 5M439 QQI Health Services Skills 5M3782 QQI Community Care 5M2768 <i>Or other relevant qualification at Level 5 or above</i>
Programme Assistant	Level 5 or higher	QQI Community Health Services 5M4468 QQI Healthcare Support 5M4339 QQI Health Services Skills 5M3782 QQI Community Care 5M2768 <i>Or other relevant qualification at Level 5 or above</i>
ALS Scheduling Officer	Level 6 or higher	BA in Social Care QQI Supervisory Management Skills 6M4978 <i>Or other relevant qualification at Level 6 or above</i>
ALS Service Support Officer	Level 6 or higher	BA in Social Care QQI Supervisory Management Skills 6M4978 <i>Or other relevant qualification at Level 6 or above</i>
ROC Service Support Officer	Level 6 or higher	BA in Social Care QQI Supervisory Management Skills 6M4978 <i>Or other relevant qualification at Level 6 or above</i>
ALS Coordinator	Level 7/8 or higher	B.Sc. in Nursing BA in Occupational Therapy BA in Management Practice BA in Enterprise and Community Development BA in Health Service Management <i>Or other relevant qualification at Level 7 or above</i>
ROC Coordinator	Level 7/8 or higher	B.Sc. in Nursing BA in Occupational Therapy BA in Management Practice BA in Enterprise and Community Development BA in Health Service Management <i>Or other relevant qualification at Level 7 or above</i>
Service Manager	Level 8 or higher	BA in Management Practice BA in Management BA in Business, Social Enterprise, Leadership and Management

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		BA in Health Service Management <i>Or other relevant qualification at Level 8 or above</i>
Area/Regional Manager	Level 9 or higher	MA in Management for the Non-Profit Sector MA in Leadership and Management for the Community and Public Sector MA in Voluntary and Community Sector Management MA in Health Services Management <i>Or other relevant qualification at Level 9</i>
Departmental Managers (e.g., Finance, IT, HR, Training)	Level 7/8 or higher	BA in a relevant discipline to the department being managed <u>AND</u> Relevant accredited Management qualification or experience
National Leads (Specialist areas)	Level 8 or higher	BA in a relevant discipline to the Specialist area