

University of Sussex

Staff Fee Reduction or Waiver Guidance for Postgraduate taught courses

1. Fee Reductions and Fee Waivers

What is a Fee Reduction or Fee Waiver?

A fee reduction is where the employee pays a reduced fee for a programme of study. As of December 2024, staff can receive an 80% reduction to their fees. A fee waiver is where a fee for a programme of study is waived in full.

When is a full fee waiver considered?

This applies to staff where the programme of study is **essential** to their current role or future development of their role, i.e. a formal requirement to hold/retain the post as noted in the job description and contract. The full fee waiver assessment is expected to only apply at the start of a new role or where there is a role change resulting in a formal update to the employment contract.

Where applicable, agreement to waive the fee and arrange flexible working time to undertake the programme of study is agreed with the employee's Line Manager, Head of School and Executive Dean or Director and then approved by the Executive Director of HR or delegated approval by a member of the HR Executive Team.

When is a Fee Reduction considered?

This applies to staff where the programme of study is of interest to the employee but not essential for their role (current or known future needs). In this case, agreement to have a fee reduction and to undertake the programme of study in the employee's own time (flexible working can be considered to accommodate this) is agreed with the employee's Line Manager, Head of School and Executive Dean or Director, Chief Operating Officer, Finance Business Partner and Chief Financial Officer.

Both Fee Waivers and Fee Reductions apply to:

- Part-time postgraduate taught courses leading to a Masters degree, a Postgraduate Diploma, a Postgraduate Certificate, a Graduate Diploma or a Graduate Certificate
- Part-time postgraduate research routes. This does not include PhD students who have a Doctoral Tutor contract).

Please note this offer does not include Postgraduate Researchers or any BSMS courses.

2. Eligibility and exclusions

Eligibility criteria

Employees must have completed at least one year of employment with the University to be eligible to apply for the fee reduction or waiver scheme and not be undergoing any formal performance or disciplinary related process.

Employees must be on either a permanent or fixed term contract throughout the period of receiving any fee reduction or waiver. Employees will need to reapply for a fee reduction or waiver for each year of their course.

Employees are expected to maintain expected levels of work performance and attendance in their roles, and follow any changes to working pattern agreed to accommodate the course attendance.

3. Exclusions

The course of study length exceeds the length of your contract

If an employee wishes to apply for a course which exceeds the length of their contract (e.g., the course is three years and their contract is two years) the **individual employee** and not the University will be responsible for funding the remaining year(s).

Employees cannot be working in a role that is directly related to the programme of study they wish to pursue as this could pose a conflict of interest and unfair access to course related information.

Sub-contracted staff

SEF or Chartwells contracted staff (or other sub-contracted staff) are not eligible for this scheme.

If you leave employment with the University of Sussex

If you leave employment with the University, the tuition fee waiver or reduction will cease with immediate effect. Outstanding fees will need to be paid in full by former employees. Further information can be found on our [Paying your tuition fee](#) pages.

Time off during working hours

This guidance does not include the right to time off during normal working hours. Where teaching, examinations or study requirements take place during a normal working day, individuals must discuss with their Line Manager whether they can be given time to attend as part of their development or consider flexible working options. Please refer to the University's [Flexible Working Procedure](#) for more information. It will be important to consider that teaching times may change from term to term.

4. Performance and employee health and wellbeing

Undertaking a course of postgraduate study is a significant undertaking in terms of time and commitment. Staff and Line Managers need to be aware that if:

- The employee's performance dips during their attendance on a course, that they would need to be managed through the capability procedure in the usual and fair way. As part of this, the University might agree with the employee that if long term performance is being impacted that, participation on the course may be paused to enable performance expectations to be met.
- The employee's health and wellbeing suffer during a course of study, that our duty of care (as both an employer and provider of educational services), would require the University to step in with appropriate arrangements.

5. Roles and responsibilities

Employees are responsible for:

- Identifying a course they may be interested in.
- Considering how this fits in with their current role requirements.
- Considering how they will manage undertaking a significant course of study alongside working commitments.
- Discussing with their Line Manager how the course will support their development, progression and/or wellbeing.
- Planning with their Line Manager how they will manage their time when working and studying.
- Completing and submitting a course application form.
- Completing and submitting the fee reduction/waiver application form for each year of the course that they wish to apply for.

Line Managers or Heads of Department are responsible for:

- Encouraging and discussing tuition fee waiver or fee reduction opportunities with individuals in their Achievement and Development Review (ADR) discussions or in 1:1s.
- Where the employee wishes to pursue a fee reduction application, considering if it is operationally viable for an employee to attend their chosen course and continue with their role. This may include looking at flexible working options.
- Discuss the demanding requirements of undertaking a postgraduate course of study and ask their employee to consider this and demonstrate how they plan to meet the demands of studying and working.
- Supporting a tuition fee waiver or reduction application unless it is not operationally feasible.

- If a line manager does not approve an application, they need to give a very clear explanation why and submit this to the Organisational Development team.
- Supporting their direct reports throughout their course of study and regularly discussing the balance between work, study and wellbeing.

Heads of School or Directors are responsible for:

- Reviewing and authorising the fee waiver or fee reduction application for academic and Professional Services staff.
- If a Head of School or Director does not approve an application, they need to give a very clear case as to why and submit this to the Organisational Development team.

Executive Deans are responsible for:

- Reviewing and authorising the fee waiver or fee reduction application for academic and Professional Services staff.
- If an Executive Dean does not approve an application, they need to give a very clear explanation why and submit this to the Organisational Development team.

Chief Operating Officer is responsible for:

- The final review and authorisation if the fee waiver or fee reduction application for Professional Services staff.

Executive Director of HR (or delegated designate) is responsible for:

- Approval of full fee waivers

Finance is responsible for:

- Maintaining an overview and analysis of overall cost of activities across the University.
- Processing a tuition fee waiver.

Admissions are responsible for:

- Considering submitted applications.
- Providing feedback on applications and communicating an Admissions decision.

Organisational Development are responsible for:

- Provide a review of applications for the Executive Director of HR (or their delegated designate) to check consistency of approval decisions and consider any Equality Diversity and Inclusion implications.
- Retain an overview on University-wide applications to study and reasons for any applications which are turned down.
- Provide a summary of fee reduction or fee waiver applications, approvals and

refusals to the People & Culture Board on an annual basis.

6. Submission and Approval of Applications

Eligible staff can access the application form and guidance on the Organisational Development webpages.

Applications to undertake study will need to be approved as follows:

Stage 1

- For academic staff: approval by the Head of Department/Line Manager, Head of School and the Executive Dean.
- For Professional Services staff: approval by the Line Manager, Divisional Director, and Chief Operating Officer.

Stage 2

- All applications are then approved by the Chief Financial Officer or their delegated role for approval.

Note: Full Fee Waivers must be approved by the Executive Director of HR or their delegated designate.

7. Time to study

Undertaking a reduced fee course of study does not include the right to time off during normal working hours. Where participation on the course takes place during a normal working day, employees must raise the learning opportunity with their Line Manager/Head of Department and discuss if they can be given time to attend as part of their career development and consider flexible working options that enable the employee to make up the work time lost.

The Line Manager/Head of Department would be expected to consider requests in line with our current [Flexible Working Procedure](#) and, where practicable, accommodate requests for flexibility (but with a specific time duration associated with the course length) to enable employees to attend the course.

As with all flexible working requests, due regard must be taken to balancing the request and benefits for talent development against the University's business/operational needs and impact on colleagues. It will be important to consider that teaching times may change from term to term.

Overall, Line Managers are encouraged to support staff and make arrangements to accommodate those who wish to study wherever possible.

8. Fees

Tuition fees

If the employee meets the eligibility criteria set out in section 3, and depending on their situation, they will either be eligible to apply for:

- an **80% fee reduction**, meaning the employee **pays only 20% of the tuition fee** or
- a fee waiver is approved against the tuition fee for those staff identified as be *required* to undertake the qualification for their role.

The fees normally payable are as published on the [University's tuition fees](#) webpages and are determined by the chosen course and the academic year.

The waiver cost will be coded to the academic department owning the course as this department will get the full fee income and the cost of the waiver will net against it, leaving a net 20% benefit to them.

Other related expenses

The University will not waive any additional charges or expenses incurred as part of an employee studying on the course, for example library fines, tuition materials, late registration fees or reassessment fees. If the employee successfully completes the course and is eligible to attend Graduation, the normal Graduation charges will apply and are the responsibility of the eligible employee.

9. Information on other current subsidies available to employees

- Full online Masters-level courses offered by the University currently offered at a discount of 20% off the standard tuition fees
- Modern Language courses (various concessions available)
- Apprenticeship qualifications at other education and training providers ranging from Level 2 to Level 7 qualifications.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

The University has conducted an Equality Impact Assessment on this guidance and is satisfied that its application should not result in a differential and negative impact on any groups of employees identified under the Equality Act 2010.

11. Monitoring

The People & Culture Board will monitor the impact and implementation of this guidance.

12. Useful links

[University Tuition Fees](#)

[Fee Reduction/Waiver Form](#)

[Flexible Working Policy](#)



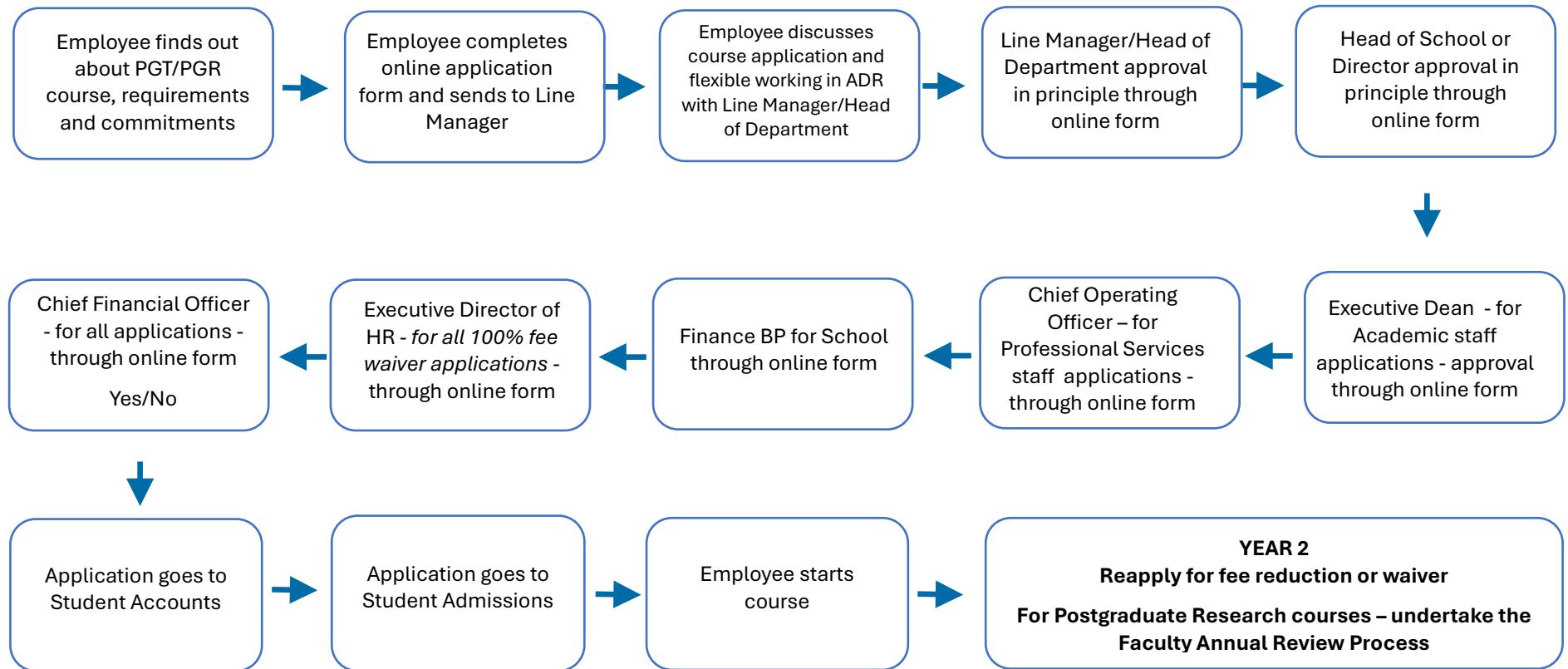
UNIVERSITY
OF SUSSEX

[Achievement & Development Reviews – forms and guidance](#)

[Tuition Fee Liability Policy](#)

13. Timeline for Fee Reduction or Fee Waiver application

Applications must be submitted by 31 January of each year



If you have any queries, please contact OD@sussex.ac.uk