

## Financial Support for Obtaining Higher Qualifications

First Produced:	25/02/92 (different title)	Authorisation:	Te Kāhui Manukura
Current Version:	22/05/18	Officer Responsible:	Director Corporate Services
Past Revisions:	24/8/94, 25/10/02, 4/4/08, 08/06/12, 22/04/16		
Review Cycle:	3 years		
Applies From:	Immediately		

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose

Ara is committed to supporting staff that are required to:

- a Upgrade their qualifications in order to meet the requirements of the programme in which they teach
- b Become research active
- c Change or enhance the services they perform

## 1.2 Scope and Application

- a This policy applies to staff whose role and position requires a higher level qualification, as detailed in their professional development plan, and whose application has been approved to complete that higher-level qualification (by course work, thesis or Recognition of Prior Learning). For Masters or PhD, approval from the staff member's Director or the Chief Executive is required.
- b The most common situations are where a staff member is required to obtain a higher qualification to teach in a degree/higher level programme or is part of an approved professional development plan relevant to his/her role. The Division Director must confirm that completion of the qualification contributes directly to the achievement of the Division objectives and/or to the Research & Knowledge Transfer plan and effectively meets NZQA requirements including research for degrees and above and expert discipline knowledge.
- c Priority is given to supporting tenured full time staff, but applications by proportional staff may be considered. A central fund, to which staff may apply for a standard level of financial support, is managed through People & Development.
- d This policy does **not** apply in circumstances where a staff member wishes to pursue training or further study that does not lead to a recognised higher qualification or enrolls in a higher qualification that is not required by their position or the objectives of the Division/Department

All policies on the Ara InfoWeb are the current version. Please check date of this hard copy before proceeding.

### 1.3 Formal Delegations

- a Delegations related to financial budgeting, monitoring and expenditure are set out in the Delegations Register. For the purpose of this policy, the Director Corporate Services will manage the central fund.
- b The Director Corporate Services is responsible for ensuring the process as set out in this policy is implemented. This includes providing information on, setting up review panels as needed, and requesting supervision reports.
- c Staff who have been directed to upgrade their qualifications and who want to be considered for financial support under this policy are responsible for providing full and accurate information to their Director. If the applicant anticipates applying for funding from the Research & Knowledge Transfer Fund refer to section 3.5.
- d Division Directors are responsible for ensuring the required information is forwarded to People & Development, including their endorsement and/or prioritising of staff applications.

### 1.4 Definitions

- a **Higher qualifications:** Qualifications at a level higher than the staff member has already achieved in the relevant discipline/role.
- b **Approved professional development plan:** Annual plan for an individual staff member, signed by the appropriate Division Director or respective delegate, and completed according to stated Ara policy.
- c **CTA (Canterbury Tertiary Alliance):** An agreement of co-operation signed by Ara, University of Canterbury and Lincoln University.
- d **'Required by Ara':** A staff member must achieve the relevant qualification, usually within a specified timeframe and/or when an accreditation panel or similar body requires staff to complete higher qualifications as a condition of ongoing accreditation, or the Director has identified a need within the role.
- e **Responsible Director:** The director with responsibility for the area in which the employee is employed.
- f **Standard course/paper:** one-quarter of a full time year of study (with 'full time year' equivalent to 120 credits or 1.0 EFT).
- g **RPL:** Recognition/assessment of prior learning.

<p><b>Related Ara Procedures</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procedure and application form from People &amp; Development or Infoweb</li> <li>• Support for Gaining Higher Qualification ER19</li> <li>• Professional Development Plan (Academic Staff) ER27</li> <li>• Workload Plan</li> <li>• Annual Individual Research Plan</li> </ul>	<p><b>Related Ara Policies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CPP205 Council/Staff Discounted Fees</li> <li>• CPP214 People &amp; Development Management</li> <li>• APP803 Research and Knowledge Transfer</li> <li>• APP803i Supervision for Higher Qualification Grant application</li> </ul>
<p><b>Related Legislation or Other Documentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree Approval, Accreditation and Monitoring NZQA</li> </ul>	<p><b>Good Practice Guidelines</b></p>

All policies on the Ara InfoWeb are the current version. Please check date of this hard copy before proceeding.

## References

- <http://www.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Providers-and-partners/Registration-and-accreditation/guidelines-degree-approval-and-accreditation.pdf>

## Notes

The first version of this policy was entitled “Financial Support for Staff Required to Obtain Degrees” replaced under new title in 2002.

## 2 Principles

- 2.1 Ara will work with staff to clearly state any requirement that staff upgrade their qualifications, and will agree a personal development plan to outline the details of any such requirement.
- 2.2 Ara will support staff who are required to upgrade their qualifications as part of their employment.
- 2.3 There is a benefit to staff of upgrading their qualifications.

## 3 Associated procedures for Ara Corporate Policy on: Financial Support for Obtaining Higher Qualifications

---

Contents:	3.1	Funding Mechanism
	3.2	Financial Support
	3.3	Bonding & Reporting Requirements
	3.4	Time Allocation
	3.5	Support from the Academic Research Fund

### 3.1 Funding Mechanism

- a A contestable central fund will be administered by People & Development
- b The Responsible Director, or in the case of division directors, the Chief Executive, will consider applications at division level and then forward them, with endorsement and priority ranking, to People & Development. This usually will be in the year prior to study commencing, so that budget implications can be addressed and staff informed of the decision well in advance of enrolment deadlines. People and Development will notify applicants of the decisions made.
- c In any year where the number of applications exceeds the amount of money available, priority will be as follows:
  - i Applications that are required to meet a compliance requirement e.g. degree/masters level teaching.
  - ii Applications which support specific Ara strategic objectives or enhance the profile of Ara.
  - iii Applications which support specific objectives in the particular division.

### 3.2 Financial Support

- a Staff are eligible for financial support to subsidise course fees and RPL, **up to** the following maxima. Note that in most cases, in recognition of the benefits of obtaining higher qualifications to the individual as well as to Ara, the cost of obtaining a higher qualification is not paid in full by the institution.

For applications for enrolments and attendance on courses:

**All policies on the Ara InfoWeb are the current version. Please check date of this hard copy before proceeding.**

- i Maximum \$1,000 per standard course/paper or proportion thereof (refer Definitions in Section 1) for Bachelor's degrees, other level 6 or 7 qualifications and Master's degrees. This equates to a maximum of \$4,000 for a full time study/year. The allocation may be used to cover RPL fees, but does not cover additional costs such as Students' Association fees or texts.
  - ii Maximum \$3,000 per year for a maximum of six years for doctorate level qualifications, excluding additional costs such as Students' Association fees, texts and related expenditure.
  - iii The total amount paid towards any qualification will not exceed what would be allocated had the staff member completed the qualification within the minimum timeframe, based on the equivalent full-time study.
  - iv Support for the payment of RPL assessment fees will not exceed the amount that would have been paid for enrolment fees and will be allocated on a case by case basis.
  - v A successful application in one year does not guarantee the same amount will be allocated to that staff member in following year/s, although an indication of the likelihood of further funding will be given wherever possible. Successful completion of annual goals/outputs will be taken into account when allocating funds in subsequent years.
- b If the relevant qualification is offered by Ara or another provider offering discounts or scholarships to Ara staff (eg the CTA reciprocal discount scheme), staff are expected to enrol with that institution. Staff are required to agree with their HOD on the institute at which the qualification is to be studied.
  - c Payment of fees will be reimbursed on receipt of evidence of having passed the particular paper/s. In cases of financial hardship, the fee may be reimbursed immediately. A statement must be signed by the staff member agreeing to repay Ara if he/she withdraws from or does not pass the course/s.
  - d For applications related to RPL fees for higher qualifications, staff will require a statement of support from their line manager before they begin work with the CAPL staff to ascertain the time and costs related to the particular degree which will fulfil their needs. CAPL will calculate the costs involved and forward the application and supporting documentation to People & Development. Applications will be approved by the relevant division director or the Chief Executive.

### **3.3 Bonding and Reporting Requirements**

- a Upon receipt of reimbursed fees staff will be bonded: for qualifications up to Masters the period will be for one year; for PhDs the period will be for two years.
- b Acknowledgement of this stipulation is required before any payment will be made.
- c During this period, if a staff member's position becomes surplus to requirements and they are made redundant, the staff member is not required to pay back any of the fees.
- d Staff members who leave for any reason other than redundancy will be required to refund the financial support received as follows:
  - For qualifications up to Masters – the last year's reimbursement
  - For the qualification of PhD – the last two year's reimbursement
- e There is a reporting requirement for Master's or Doctorate thesis/dissertation, so that Ara can track progress towards completion of the qualification. For the first year, a six monthly report from the staff member's research supervisor is required, followed by

**All policies on the Ara InfoWeb are the current version. Please check date of this hard copy before proceeding.**

an annual report until the work is completed. The provision of such reports is a prerequisite for the payment of the reimbursement. The progress report will be copied to People & Development, Head of Department and the relevant Director. The Head of Department will assess progress against milestones attached to the project through the Ara research approval process and address any issues raised. Any issues regarding completion of a qualification must be raised as soon as possible. A grant for a PhD is expected to be over six years (part time basis) and for a Masters three years (part time basis). If the tertiary institution allows a longer period for completion, this must be identified as part of the approval process with the Division Director and People & Development.

### **3.4 Time Allocation**

Academic staff with research time as detailed in their Individual Research Plan may, with approval from their Director, use their allocated research time to upgrade their qualifications to Master or Doctorate level. Staff are expected to complete research outputs as well, e.g. publication, exhibition, conference presentation. Other time releases from normal duties must be negotiated with the Head of Department and/or Division Director, as appropriate.

### **3.5 Support from the Research and Knowledge Transfer Fund**

In addition to the cost of course fees covered by People & Development, the Research and Knowledge Transfer Committee may provide additional financial support e.g. supervision grant. The terms and conditions of these grants are set out in APP803 Research & Knowledge Transfer Policy and, procedures and forms are on the Infoweb.

**All policies on the Ara InfoWeb are the current version. Please check date of this hard copy before proceeding.**