

5.02 Assistance to Study – Essential Qualifications

This policy is about the support available to you if you are required to undertake a formal qualification essential to a particular post.

- You have a right to support to undertake a recognised qualification that is essential to your post (such are normally specified as mandatory in trawls/interest circulars/direct recruitment notices) – [Section 1.1 Policy Statement](#)
- Only qualifications listed in the policy are eligible - [Annex 1](#)
- You need to complete an Application Form which must be endorsed by your line manager/Head of Branch – [Section 1.3 Procedures](#)
- If eligible, all course fees, travel and subsistence and compulsory residentials will be paid – [Section 2 Package of Assistance](#)
- You may qualify for assistance with books (up to £100 per academic year), equipment (up to a maximum of £200 and residentials (where compulsory element of course) – [Section 2 Package of Assistance](#)
- You may qualify for day release and/or special leave – [Sections 2.5 and 2.6 Day Release and Special Leave](#)
- If you fail to complete a course of study, you may be required to refund some of all of the costs – [Section 2.12 Failure to Complete Course of Study](#)

The following terms within this policy are defined in the glossary:

No specific terms within glossary

You may also be interested in the following policies:

3.08 Special Leave, 5.01 Assistance to Study –Adult Further Education, 5.03 Subscriptions to Professional Bodies

This policy is version 6.

For a printable version please click the icon. Please make sure that your printed version is current with the one on this portal.

This homepage is only a guide to the policy, not the policy itself. In the event of any discrepancy between the content of this homepage and the associated policy, the wording of the policy shall apply.

5.02 Assistance to Study – Essential Qualifications

CONTENTS

1 Aim of Essential Qualifications.....	3
1.1 Policy Statement.....	3
1.2 Defining Recognised Qualifications.....	3
1.3 Procedures	3
1.4 Failure to Gain Qualifications	3
1.5 Transfer from Eligible Posts.....	3
2 Package of Assistance	4
2.1 General.....	4
2.2 Fees.....	4
2.3 Books	4
2.4 Travelling Expenses	4
2.5 Day Release	4
2.6 Special Leave.....	4
2.7 Equipment.....	4
2.8 Computers.....	4
2.9 Examination Results	5
2.10 Graduation	5
2.11 Residentials.....	5
2.12 Failure to Complete Course of Study	5
ANNEX 1	6
Qualifications Eligible for Support.....	6

5.02 Assistance to Study – Essential Qualifications

1 Aim of Essential Qualifications

1.1 Policy Statement

1.1.1 The Essential Qualification policy relates to formal education activities, which lead to the acquisition of recognised* qualifications which are regarded by the Department/Agency as **essential** to make a person competent in a particular post. Due to the essential nature of such qualifications, these will usually be specified as **mandatory** requirements in trawls/interest circulars or direct recruitment exercises.

* only the qualifications listed in Annex 1 (or subsequent revisions) that are a mandatory requirement for a post, will be included in this policy. Where a Department(s)/Agency wishes to encourage you to undertake a qualification that is not mandatory, a separate business case should be developed outlining the rationale, benefits to individual organisation, levels of funding/other support, and the like. Separate Trade Union Side (TUS) consultation will be necessary in such cases.

1.2 Defining Recognised Qualifications

1.2.1 Heads of Profession, in consultation with Training Commissioners Group (TCG), must agree that the qualification is a mandatory requirement for your post.

1.2.2 Having agreed the essential nature of the qualification, Heads of Profession will liaise with the relevant Training Commissioners on likely numbers requiring training to ensure that budget provision is made.

1.2.3 TUS will also be consulted on the inclusion of additional qualifications (including provision of special leave).

1.3 Procedures

1.3.1 If you wish to apply for support you should follow the Assistance to Study user guide in this handbook.

1.4 Failure to Gain Qualifications

1.4.1 The consequences of not gaining the necessary qualification will be outlined in the appropriate trawl notice, interest circular or candidate information pack (in the case of direct recruitment).

1.5 Transfer from Eligible Posts

1.5.1 As funding is linked to approved **posts**, should you leave the specified post during the period of study, you will cease to qualify for Essential Qualification funding. In such circumstances you may apply to be considered for funding under the Assistance to Study Scheme.

2 Package of Assistance

2.1 General

2.1.1 The following assistance is applicable for approved studies under the Essential Qualification Policy:

2.2 Fees

2.2.1 100% of course fees.

2.3 Books

2.3.1 Where reading material is not readily available within libraries, the cost of essential books will be met, up to maximum of £100 per academic year on provision of evidence from Educational Establishment, such as a signed letter from your course tutor.

2.4 Travelling Expenses

2.4.1 Normal Travel and Subsistence rates will apply – payment will be made from branch budgets.*

*in the case of a few Departments/Agencies, a central budget is held

2.5 Day Release

2.5.1 Day release will be granted in accordance with individual course requirements.

2.6 Special Leave

2.6.1 Departments/Agencies will grant time for examinations and/or related projects/assignments. Heads of Profession will specify the amount of special leave for study purposes that would be appropriate to the examinations relating to the particular qualification. The amount applicable to the qualification is set out in the attached Annex 1.

2.7 Equipment

2.7.1 Where equipment essential to the course is not readily available within Departments, the cost of necessary equipment will be met, on provision of evidence from Educational Establishment (such as a signed letter from your course tutor), subject to a maximum of £200.

2.8 Computers

2.8.1 Where departments have spare computers available they will aim to provide temporary use of basic computer/word processing facilities, or suggest another viable alternative.

2.9 Examination Results

First Resit	No study leave entitlement. Payment of resit fees plus time off to sit examination.
Second Resit	Only time off to sit the examination
Subsequent Attempts	No assistance

2.10 Graduation

2.10.1 Half a day special leave. All costs associated with graduation are your responsibility.

2.11 Residentials

2.11.1 Assistance will be given for fees (100%) and time off to attend residentials that are a compulsory* course requirement.

*evidence from Educational Establishments will be required, such as a signed letter from your course tutor, to include associated time period (such as the number of days)

2.12 Failure to Complete Course of Study

2.12.1 Where you decide not to complete the course, you will be required to refund costs on a pro-rata basis, except in exceptional circumstances.

Qualifications Eligible for Support

QUALIFICATIONS	NUMBER OF DAYS' SPECIAL LEAVE
ACCA – Professional Qualification – Level 1, 2 and 3	5 days per academic year, plus ½ day for each exam
Assessment of Professional Competence (Surveying)	5 days per academic year, plus ½ day for each exam up to and including 1 ½ hours. 1 day study for exams over 1 ½ hours. Day release where required.
Certificate of Purchasing and Supply	½ day release for daytime classes. ½ day leave in lieu of evening classes which must be taken within a 2 week period, subject to business needs. Max 1 day per week in total. Modules: 100% by assignment only – 1 day per module
CIPD Certificate of Training Practice	N/A
CIPFA – Diploma in Management Practice – Audit Skills	Time to attend 9 modules and verification interview. ½ day preparation for verification interview. One day per month to work on portfolio
CIPFA Diploma in Public Audit	3 days study leave (plus half day of exam) for examinable modules; and 1 day study leave for Level 1 assignment; 3 days study leave for Level 2 assignment
CIPFA Grant Skills Programme	Under Review
Diploma in Project Management	5 days per academic year, plus time off for exam (day release if appropriate)
HNC Civil, Electrical & Mechanical Engineering (TCEAs)	5 days Phase test study leave
IATI Accounting Technician	5 days per academic year, plus ½ day for each exam
Institute of Internal Audit	6 days per module (inclusive of exam) 3 days (inclusive of exam) for first resit
Master of Public Administration (Procurement Options)	½ day release for daytime classes. ½ day leave in lieu of evening classes which must be taken within a 2 week period, subject to business needs. Max 1 day per week in total. Modules: 100% by assignment only – 1 day per module
MSC in Construction and Project Management	5 days per academic year, plus time off for exam (day release if appropriate)
MSC in Careers Guidance	½ day leave in lieu of attendance at evening class in semester 1. 7 ½ days research for duration of programme (18 months)
MSC in Geodetic Survey	24 days study leave over the duration of the MSC

Northern Ireland Civil Service
HR Policy

QUALIFICATIONS	NUMBER OF DAYS' SPECIAL LEAVE
MSC in Human Rights Law	3 days per academic year
NC in Civil, Electrical & Mechanical Engineering (TCEAs)	5 days Phase test study leave
NEBOSH	5 days study leave per year plus exam leave for Certificate and Diploma
NVQ Level 4 in Advice and Guidance	1 day per month for candidates to work on evidence gathering and portfolio building
Post Graduate Diploma in Careers Guidance (QCG)	½ day study leave in semester 1 1 day study leave in semester 2
Post Graduate Diploma/MSc in Geographical Information Systems	14 days study leave over duration of the Diploma 24 days for MSc
Specialist Registrar	Higher Specialist Training – 5 half day sessions per week. No further study leave applicable.
Certificate in Higher Education in Rural and Countryside Management	Total of 4 days per academic year, consisting of: ½ day for each of four 2000 word assignments 1 day for each of two 3 hour exams
Advanced Diploma in Management Practice (with Procurement Options)	2 days day release per module (6 modules) ½ day for each exam
BSc Hons in Politics with Purchasing Options	2 days day release per module (max 10 modules – this will be dependent on exemptions available from standard BSc course arising from completion of Advanced Diploma or alternative relevant qualification) ½ day for each exam
BTEC National Certificate in Countryside and Fisheries Management	5 days special leave per academic year which can be taken as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Study leave for exams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ½ day for each exam up to and including 1 ½ hours; - 1 day for each exam over 1 ½ hours ▪ Project leave/Assignments (where required for successful completion of qualification): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ½ day leave for 3000 – 5000 words; - 1 day leave for over 5000 words <p>Time off to take all necessary exams</p> <p>Time to attend all necessary classes and for additional day release where required by the course</p>

