

Professional Development Fund Guide

1. Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to outline requirements and procedures regarding Edith Cowan University's (the University) Professional Development (PD) Fund.

This guideline supports the University to operationalise the PL290 policy and must be complied with.

2. Scope

All University Professional Employee and Academic Career Development Fellows.

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4. Guideline

4.1 Principles

- The PD Fund provides eligible Professional Staff and Academic Career Development Fellows an opportunity to apply for up to \$5,000 to support an individual's career development.
- Funding is available for professional career development activities aligned to university strategic and business needs and personal professional aspirations and is administered by People and Culture.
- PD funding is available for relevant professional development activities aligned to the University's strategic and business needs.
- Applications to access the PD Fund will be assessed according to eligibility, the PD Fund principles, criteria and merit in alignment with the University's strategic priorities and the employee's work.
- The PD Fund will support development opportunities identified as objectives arising from participation in Management for Performance discussions.
- The PD Fund will not support development activities and programs that are substantially equivalent to those already offered by the University as part of its professional development offerings.
- During selection the University will consider the total professional development contribution already provided to the employee by the University, including any previous successful PD Fund applications.
- The Joint Staff Consultative Committee (JSCC) will monitor the number of applications and nature of awards on an annual basis and be consulted on any changes to the assessment criteria.

4.2 Who is Eligible to Apply

- A Professional Employee will be considered eligible to apply for PD funding:
 - After 12 months continuous service with the University.
 - If performance over the previous year has been assessed as at least satisfactory.
 - After a two year period from the date a previous successful PD funding was granted.
 - If their line manager confirms the application is consistent with a career plan discussed as part of the Management for Performance process.
 - When the professional development activity is directly relevant to their current or future role at the University, and will result in demonstrable contributions to the University's work and productivity.

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- If the application has the endorsement of the relevant line manager and relevant line executive.
- An Academic Career Development Fellow will be considered eligible to apply for PD funding:
 - Within the first 12 months of their appointment.
 - Where their line manager confirms the activity is consistent with objectives identified within the employee's Management for Performance Plan.

4.3 What development activities are eligible for funding?

- PD funding may be provided for the following development activities:
 - Accredited courses offered by a Higher Education Provider or Registered Training Organisation.
 - Professional development courses or programs offered by professional institutions or accredited private providers.
 - Conferences, seminars or workshops that provide clearly demonstrable outcomes and a justified cost/benefit.
 - Mentoring or coaching support that is formally required for employees who have exhausted the Joondalup Learning Precinct (JLP) mentoring system and is arranged by the relevant line manager as an outcome of Management for Performance discussions.

4.4 What can be covered by the funding?

- The PD Fund only covers costs, or partial costs, related to:
 - Approved registration and/or course fees, excluding incidental or amenities fees.
 - Travel and accommodation for approved conferences or courses.
 - Prescribed study material (e.g. text books) for the approved event.
 - Professional facilitation, coaching or mentoring fees.
 - Approved expenses by the shadowing or secondment host.
 - Other costs as deemed appropriate.

4.5 FBT application in respect of Professional Development

- Guidance can be obtained from the ECU Taxation Team – tax@ecu.edu.au.
- Examples of PD events that would attract FBT (accurate at time of publishing):

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A legal officer undertakes a six-month pre-admission course at the College of Law, which would qualify them for admission as a solicitor. This is considered a higher qualification, that does not directly relate to the performance of the employee's current duties, nor would it lead to increased earnings in their current job. The course costs would attract FBT.

A trainee accountant is studying an undergraduate commerce degree part-time at university. They are enrolled in an Undergraduate Commonwealth Supported Place. Although the course helps the employee maintain or enhance the specific knowledge required for their current role and improves their performance, the costs of the course would still attract FBT, as Undergraduate Commonwealth Supported course fees are always subject to FBT. The FBT outcome is the same whether the fees are paid upfront or deferred via a HECS-HELP loan.

- Examples of PD events that would not attract FBT (accurate at time of publishing):
 - An employee undertakes a management course at a TAFE college to assist with performing new managerial responsibilities following a promotion. The course costs would not attract FBT, as it supports the employee in performing their current duties more effectively.
 - Fees for an accountant's CPA qualification would not attract FBT. The professional qualification enables them to maintain or increase specific knowledge required in their role as an accountant.

4.6 Assessment Criteria

- Applications will be assessed according to the following criteria:
 - Extent to which the application meets the individual's personal career plan.
 - Demonstrated satisfactory performance as assessed and documented as part of the Management for Performance System.
 - Alignment with the University's strategic priorities and their work.
 - The cost of the course or program.
 - Availability of alternatives.
 - FBT implications of the application.
 - Availability of funding.

4.7 Conditions of Funding

- Pre-approval: Funding must be approved before the PD activity is attempted.

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- Funding will be based on the principle that the person enrolled is either self-funded or sponsored by the business area, with reimbursement made upon proof of payment and successful completion of the approved activity.
- For courses of study leading to a formal degree, certification or qualification, reimbursement will only be made upon both receipt of proof of payment and evidence of successful completion.
- For non-qualification PD activities, the successful applicant's Business Unit may cover the upfront costs. The Business Unit will be reimbursed once proof of payment and successful completion or attendance is provided.
- An applicant who holds a scholarship or award, that provides a payment of fees, may only apply for PD Fund related expenses not covered by the scholarship or award.
- An employee, sponsored by their business area, may be required to reimburse the University for all or part (on a pro rata basis) of the allocated PD funding if they fail to not attend or complete the approved PD activity, within the prescribed timeframe or if they resign from the University within 12 months of completing the activity.

4.8 Applications for the Professional Development Fund

- Details of the PD Fund application process can be found at:
<https://intranet.ecu.edu.au/staff/centres/human-resources-service/our-services/performance-recognition-and-career-development/professional-staff-career-development-fund>
- Applications are open all year round.
- Applications will be assessed and ranked on merit, based upon the assessment criteria and principles.
- Applicants will be informed of the outcomes of their applications via email.
- Unsuccessful applicants are eligible to resubmit applications at any time.

4.9 How will the Professional Development Fund be dispersed?

- Claims for reimbursement should be submitted as soon as practicable after completion of the PD activity.
 - Reimbursements of approved funds will be available up to 12 months from the date of approval in accordance with completion dates of PD activities.
 - Any taxation incurred by the University in relation to activities and expenses will be reduced from the amount dispersed to an individual accordingly.

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- Successful applicants receive approval of a contribution towards the cost of an approved PD activity up to a maximum amount of \$5,000 per person, subject to availability of funds.
 - Only approved actual costs, or partial costs, related to the approved PD activity, as described in this PD Fund Guide will be reimbursed upon submission of the following documents to People and Culture (pdfund@ecu.edu.au):
 - Proof of completion or attendance
 - Tax Invoices, receipts and foreign currency conversion documents.
 - Proof of payment if the invoice provided does not show a nil balance owing: i.e a merchant receipt, EFTPOS receipt, payment confirmation or bank statement showing the charge (ensure personal information is blanked out).
 - [100% Business Use Declaration](#), available in the Finance Forms Kiosk – Taxation page, if not previously provided.
 - **If payment was made by the individual:** Completed and signed Payment Request for Reimbursement Form available from the [Finance Forms Kiosk – Accounts Payable](#) page.
- And / or
- **If payment was made by the School/Centre:** Provide the flexi field code (e.g. 98765.4321.xxxx.SA.06.01) where the reimbursement is to be journaled, along with the name of your area's Business Manager.

5. Related documents

Legislation	Relevant Industrial Agreements
Policies	Management for Performance System (MPS) Policy Staff Code of Conduct Professional Development Fund Policy PL290
Operational Documents	Professional Development Fund Application Form
Contracts	

6. Document information

Owner: Chief People Officer	Approver: Chief People Officer
Approval Date: 05/09/2025	Review date: 04/09/2028
Document code: NA	File number: SUB/87863
Contact information: pdfund@ecu.edu.au	
This document will be reviewed a minimum of every three years.	

7. Revision History

Date	Version	Changes
June 2021	1	Guidelines were reviewed and updated to reflect the current organisation structure and process, align content with the updated Professional Development Fund Policy and using the current Guidelines template.
May 2023	1.01	References to Human Resources Service Centre were updated to People and Culture
September 2025	2	Updated to new ECU branding. Removed reference to Manager, Workforce Strategy and Capability and change of approver/owner from Director P&C to Chief People Officer

8. Definitions

Term	Definition
Academic Career Development Fellow	An employee appointed to an Academic Career Development Fellow fixed-term contract as set out within the Industrial Instrument.
Industrial Instrument	Edith Cowan University Enterprise Agreement 2022 or successive versions.
Management for Performance	The University's performance cycle, planning and review process
Professional Development Fund or Funding	Funding contribution provided by the University to support professional development activities as set out within the Industrial Instrument.
Professional Employee	means an employee employed by the University in the classifications listed in Schedule 2, Part 1 of the Industrial Instrument