

# GSE Staff Development Policy

## Introduction

1. The Centre for Alternative Technology (CAT) is committed to the support and promotion of staff development and training for all its members of staff. It aspires to create and maintain a culture of 'life long learning' for all members of staff, as well as students. The Graduate School of the Environment (GSE) at CAT aims to train and develop all the staff in the School. It sees the achievement of this as through providing accessible, high quality development opportunities in education, learning and scholarship. The quality and commitment of GSE staff are fundamental to achieving its vision and strategy; GSE aims to foster a professional approach in all our staff and to encourage their contribution as team members.
2. The development of all GSE staff is integral to the pursuit of quality, effectiveness and success. GSE seeks to maximise individual contribution at all levels by providing appropriate opportunities for personal and professional development.

## Definition

1. "Staff Development" is the acquisition and development of skills and knowledge through a planned and deliberate learning process in order to improve personal and organisational effectiveness. More broadly, staff development also includes other personal development activities and opportunistic learning which will enhance the individual's contribution in the work context.
2. The staff development process in GSE encompasses:
  - the identification of individual staff development needs
  - the design of individual development plans
  - the provision of appropriate development activities within the School and CAT-wide
  - access to development opportunities outside the School, all set in the context of the School's needs.

## Scope of the Policy

1. All individuals contribute to achieving the organisation's objectives. Since individuals and their roles vary, staff development activities will vary too. GSE will seek to make appropriate development opportunities available for all GSE staff.
2. Although the wider development needs of the School take precedence, the School also aims to support those development activities which are relevant to individuals in the context of their work and future careers. Thus the personal and professional needs of staff will be considered and supported where possible.

## Responsibility for Staff Development

The Head of School has overarching responsibility for policy implementation and promoting the development of all GSE staff. Individual staff, however, should expect to take ownership of their own development and are actively encouraged to do so.

Staff with managerial responsibility for others will be expected to give active support to staff to help them identify their training needs. Managers should also establish appropriate mechanisms for meeting these needs and review with the individual the success of any development process.

## **Resources**

1. Funding for individual staff development activities by academic staff is held by GSE. Funding for support staff is held centrally. The Head of School will determine how resources can be prioritised effectively to meet the needs of the School and the individual.
2. Personal development may be achieved in a number of ways, some of which may be less resource demanding than others e.g. action learning sets, e-learning, flexible learning materials, networking etc. When development needs are identified, consideration should be given to the appropriate mechanisms for meeting needs. It is also important to recognise that the development of staff can provide an important means of responding to increasing work pressures and that opportunities for development often arise as a natural part of work.

## **Applications and Funding Procedure**

The allocation of development funds for academics is through the Staff Development Committee. This Committee, chaired by the Lead Academic, invites bids against the available funds twice yearly. It then meets to determine the allocations. Minutes of the meetings are kept and sent to Academic Council for information.

Decisions on whether the development event is supported will depend on a variety of factors:

1. Appropriateness of development activity in line with the requirement of the post;
2. Availability of funding and the cost of the development activity;
3. Availability of staff to ensure suitable cover whilst the employee attends the development event;
4. Anticipated benefits from attendance at the training event for CAT and the individual, in that order.

Support staff should go through the Head of School to seek development funding from the central pot. This pot is managed and administered by the Head of Human Resources.

## **Funding**

Funding for professional updating, seminars, conferences, workshops and development relating directly to the individual's responsibilities are paid in full by GSE or CAT.

Funding for academic and professional qualifications, if applicable for the development of the job and the individual, may be met at a cost of 50% of the fees due. This includes Degree and Masters programmes and Doctorates as well as any relevant professional qualifications e.g. PGCE.

## **Expenses and Time**

Expenses for attendance for professional updating are paid in accordance with current agreed expenses and travel payments.

Time will be given attendance for the course of study, if during the standard working day:

Funds or time will not be provided for the following:

- Travel expenses for costs incurred attending regular classes connected with academic or professional qualifications;
- Time for residential courses connected with professional or academic qualification;
- Stationery, pens, postage, telephone calls, newspapers, professional journals, library subscriptions, membership subscriptions of professional associations etc;

## **Withdrawal/Repayment of Funds**

1. If an employee leaves CAT before completing the whole or a defined part of a recognised qualification, the employee may be required to repay the financial assistance given to them.
2. If an employee voluntarily leaves within two years of completing a course of study, they may be required to repay, in full, the expenditure incurred by CAT..
3. Funding may be withdrawn by CAT at any time if satisfactory progress is not being made.