

British Transport Police Authority

Self Development SOP

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1 AIM

- 1.1 This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) aims to provide guidance for employees applying for sponsorship or variation to hours/use of flexitime in order to study a course of further education for the purpose of personal and professional self development.
- 1.2 This SOP provides a clear and concise outline of procedures relating to the self development process.

2 OVERVIEW

- 2.1 British Transport Police Authority (BTPA) is fully committed to ensuring that our employees have the necessary knowledge, skills and experience to achieve present and future organisational objectives.
- 2.2 BTPA will support employees who are sufficiently self-motivated to attend and complete further education and professional courses, providing that the training is relevant to organisational objectives as outlined in the strategic and policing plans and BTPA Business Plan.
- 2.3 It is the responsibility of the employee wishing to attend the self development training to demonstrate how attending the programme will enhance their own performance, benefit the organisation and improve the service BTPA provides.

3 SCOPE AND DEFINITIONS

3.1 Scope

- 3.1.1 This SOP applies to all staff who are on a full time or part time contracts and have satisfactorily completed their probationary period¹.
- 3.1.2 BTPA is dedicated to the delivery of high quality training and will use training providers requested by or recommended to employees, which offer appropriate and effective teaching, support and assessment to students.
- 3.1.3 Self development is undertaken for the purpose of personal and professional development. This SOP does not cover essential training required to fulfil the duties of job roles. Any essential training that is identified through the performance appraisal process will be arranged through your line manager.

3.2 Equal Opportunities Statement

- 3.2.1 All employees have a responsibility to ensure that no unlawful discrimination occurs on the grounds of age, colour, disability, ethnic origin, family commitments, gender, gender dysphoria, marital status - marriage or civil

¹ As stipulated in their individual contracts.

partnership, nationality, national origins, political beliefs, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, trade union activity or any other unacceptable grounds when operating this SOP.

4 TYPES OF COURSES

4.1 The following examples of self development will be supported by BTPA in the appropriate circumstances:

- Evening classes.
- Part time/day courses
- Correspondence courses.
- Open University courses.
- Distance learning.
- Computer based training.

5 CRITERIA FOR APPLICATION

5.1 All candidates applying for self development courses must have a satisfactory attendance and performance record and have completed their probationary period.

5.2 Applicants for self development must have maintained a satisfactory attendance record. Further information is available in the Sickness Absence SOP².

5.3 Any request for self development will be recorded on the candidates Individual Performance Appraisal (IPA) Record, if funding is agreed; the programme of study will form part of the employee's personal objectives and their progress will be reviewed regularly via the performance appraisal process and documented accordingly. The employee must be sufficiently motivated to complete the programme.

5.4 Managers are responsible for recording details of the agreed self development in the employees IPA Record, and reviewing progress. Managers may request progress updates from an employees training provider.

5.5 The programme of study must be in line with BTPA's objectives and be appropriate to the development needs of the employee. In some cases, training suppliers manage a selection procedure to assess suitability to engage in a programme of study. The programme of study should directly improve the service BTPA provides through the improved performance of the individual.

² Details for which are available in section 14 - Further information.

- 5.6 The employee must be prepared to contribute through study in their own time. Refer to Section 9 – Study Leave and Course Attendance for further details.

6 APPLICATION PROCESS

- 6.1 Applicants must complete the Application for Sponsorship by BTPA for Self Development and Loyalty Agreement – (Appendix A), ensuring that both the applicant and the manager sign it.
- 6.2 The completed application for Sponsorship Form and Loyalty Agreement should be returned to their line manager. On receipt of the application the employee will receive an acknowledgement via email.
- 6.3 The application will be reviewed by the Senior Management Team at its next meeting.
- 6.4 The applicant will be informed of the results within seven working days of the review date. If an application is refused, reasons will be provided. If the Senior Management Team is unable to reach a decision, the applicant may be asked to provide additional information³.
- 6.5 If an employee is not satisfied with a decision from the Senior Management Team, they should seek advice from their manager⁴.
- 6.6 The applicant will be responsible for ensuring that BTPA is provided with any registration forms that may be required and must advise if a letter confirming sponsorship is required.
- 6.7 No retrospective applications will be agreed for courses that have already commenced and have been funded by the applicant.
- 6.8 Details of all self development applications (successful and refused) will be held by the Senior Management Team.
- 6.9 On completion of the programme of study the employee is responsible for advising BTPA of the results.
- 6.10 All achievements will be recorded on the employee's personal file.

7 FUNDING

- 7.1 If funding is agreed, BTPA may fund up to 100% of fees for a first time application.

³ The Sponsorship Application Process can be viewed as a process flowchart at Appendix B.

⁴ If following the advice, an employee wishes to raise an official grievance; they should refer to the Grievance Resolution SOP, reference details for which are available in section 14.

- 7.2 If an employee has previously been provided with funding through the self development scheme for a previous programme, a period of five years must have elapsed since the beginning of the previous study programme.
- 7.3 The applicant must have satisfactorily completed the previous programme before another application can be considered.
- 7.4 BTPA may fund up to 50% of the course fees for an agreed 'second time' application.
- 7.5 BTPA will not fund more than two applications per individual.
- 7.6 Funding is provided through the training budget which is agreed annually.

8 PAYMENT OF FEES

- 8.1 Course fees will be paid, subject to % funding agreed (refer to section 7), by BTPA when required by the course provider, normally at the start of the academic year.
- 8.2 In certain specific circumstances, e.g. in the case of a repeated term or exam re-sit, it will be necessary for the employee to pay the additional fees.
- 8.3 Fees will be repayable to BTPA in instances where the employee fails to complete the course without good reason.
- 8.4 Course fees will not be paid until such times as funding has been agreed (refer to Section 6 - Application Process) and a Loyalty Agreement (Appendix A - Part three) has been completed.
- 8.5 Fees will be repayable to BTPA in cases where employees leave BTPA within two years of completing the course, based on the following:

Leaving Within	Percentage Repayment
Six Months	75%
One Year	50%
Two Years	25%

- 8.6 For more information refer to section 8 - Education Assistance, of the Loans, Advances and Overpayments - BTP Recovery of Monies Owed SOP.
- 8.7 BTPA will not fund the cost of any course materials e.g. text books.
- 8.8 Fees for 'study camps', 'summer schools' etc will only be funded if the costs form part of the initial programme fees.
- 8.9 BTPA may obtain course progress and attendance reports from the course providers. BTPA may withdraw part or all of the funding of course fees should these reports not be found to be satisfactory. Any withdrawal of funding will be in full consultation with the employee and their manager to ensure that all factors are considered.

9 STUDY LEAVE AND COURSE ATTENDANCE

- 9.1 Employees who receive financial support are allowed up to five days study leave in one calendar year at the discretion of their manager for the purpose of attending residential programmes, revision, etc.
- 9.2 Where an individual is self funding a course of study which will directly benefit them in their job role and support BTPA objectives section 9.1 applies.
- 9.3 Attendance at exams will be classed as a duty day. However as much notice as possible to managers must be provided.
- 9.4 All changes of duty necessary to undertake a course of study must be approved by the manager.
- 9.5 The approval of financial assistance does not authorise change of duties which will be dependent on operational commitments and should not inconvenience other employees.
- 9.6 Employees should seek a programme of study where there is minimal, if any, release required to attend during duty time. If attendance is in duty time, this time is to be made up i.e. use of TOIL, flexible working hours, etc.
- 9.7 Managers should take into account the effects on employees undertaking self development study classes, combined with the normal working day, and should consider varying hours to accommodate this where possible.
- 9.8 Day release may be granted only when **no** possible alternative is available.
- 9.9 If it is necessary for the employee to work overtime to cover work that needs to be completed as a result of time off being allowed to attend study, no overtime payment will be granted.
- 9.10 Any cost incurred by the employee to travel to and from the place of study will be at the employee's own expense and will not be reimbursed by BTPA.

10 REIMBURSEMENT OF SUBSCRIPTIONS

- 10.1 BTPA will reimburse subscriptions following a course of self development, to professional bodies or associations relevant to an employee's duties where one or more of the following applies:
- Membership arises from the attainment of a qualification or post, which has been obtained through sponsorship by, or support of, BTPA.
 - Membership allows or facilitates access to professional knowledge or information relevant to the employee's current or anticipated future duties.
 - Membership allows access to relevant professional or vocational advice and support.

- 10.2 To claim reimbursement the employee will need to submit a Claim for Expenses and Allowances Form⁵ to their manager who will verify and authorise the application.
- 10.3 The application will then be forwarded to Payroll, FHQ who will pay the expense claim through the normal process.
- 10.4 A database will be maintained of all applications made for reimbursement of subscriptions to professional bodies or associations by the Office Support Manager.
- 10.5 Up to a maximum of two annual subscriptions may be reimbursed for an employee any one year.
- 10.6 A list of approved bodies and associations is obtainable and is based on that published at www.inlandrevenue.gov.uk/list3.

11 AUDIT AND COMPLIANCE

- 11.1 This SOP will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 11.2 If there are high levels of non-compliance with this SOP prior to the formal review, these will be addressed through an internal audit process.

12 RECORD KEEPING AND MONITORING

- 12.1 Administration, including record management, will be undertaken by the Business Management Cluster. It is their responsibility to ensure that data is captured, managed and preserved in an organised system that maintains its integrity, security and authenticity in compliance with the BTPA Data Protection Act Policy and BTPA Document Protective Marking Scheme.⁶
- 12.2 The Business Management Cluster will ensure that records are securely maintained to prevent unauthorised access, alteration, damage or removal. The level of security will reflect the sensitivity and importance of the contents in a manner that protects the interests of both BTPA and its employees.
- 12.3 All employment and personal records will be kept in confidential storage for the required length of time as set out in the BTPA Records Retention and Disposal Policy.

13 REFERENCES AND LEGISLATION

- 13.1 The Self Development SOP will be subject to regular review and BTPA reserves the right to amend the procedure from time to time in accordance

⁵ Expenses and Allowances forms are available from the Finance and Corporate Services Department.

⁶ Reference details for which are in Section 14 – Further Information.

with any requirements of law or good employment practice. Employees will be given reasonable notice of any such changes.

14 FURTHER INFORMATION

14.1 Related Policies/Procedures and Information

14.1.1 The following policies can be accessed via G:\Policy, Performance and Stakeholders\Policy\Policies\HR Policies:

- Flexible Working SOP
- Sickness Absence SOP
- Grievance Resolution SOP

14.1.2 The following belong can be accessed via G:\Policy, Performance and Stakeholders\Policy\Policies\Information Management:

- BTPA Document Protective Marking Scheme
- BTPA Records Retention and Disposal Policy
- BTPA Data Protection Act Policy

14.1.3 BTP policies can be found on the BTP intranet

- Loans, Advances and Overpayment SOP

14.2 Guidance and Advice

14.2.1 Guidance and advice is available from the following internal BTP Departments:

- HR Business Partner
- Business Management Cluster
- A list of frequently asked questions is attached at Appendix C.

This policy is available in different formats on request.

15 APPENDICES

Appendix A Application for Sponsorship by BTP for Self Development and Loyalty Agreement

Appendix B Application for Sponsorship Process Flowchart

Appendix C Frequently Asked Questions