

Human Resources Policy

Seminar and conference leave – Within and outside Australia

Policy Number: C50 (QH-POL-226)

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Purpose: To outline leave and other arrangements for employees to attend seminars and conferences within and outside of Australia for professional development or as an official representative of Queensland Health.

Application: This policy applies to all employees of Queensland Health, including medical superintendents with private practice and medical officers with private practice

This policy does not apply to employees accessing professional development leave and professional development allowance entitlements in accordance with certified agreements and other HR policies, unless the employee requests/accesses additional financial support and/or leave (other than recreation leave) from the Department of Health/Hospital and Health Service to attend a conference or seminar.

Delegation: The 'delegate' is as listed in the relevant Department of Health Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual, or Hospital and Health Services Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual, as amended from time to time.

Legislative or other authority:

- Health Practitioners and Dental Officers (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No.3) 2019
- Medical Officers' (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No.5) 2018 (MOCA5)
- Nurses and Midwives (Queensland Health and Department of Education and Training) Certified Agreement (EB10) 2018
- Queensland Public Health Sector Certified Agreement (No.10) 2019
- Nurses and Midwives (Queensland Health) Award – State 2015

Related policy or documents:

- Travelling, relieving and living expenses HR Policy D2 (QH-POL-157)
- Department of Health Travel Policy (QH-POL-046)
- Department of Health Overseas Travel Standard (QH-IMP-046-1)
- Department of Health Domestic Travel Standard (QH-IMP-046-2)
- [Queensland Government Air Travel Policy](#)
- Individual Overseas Travel Report
- Conflicts of interest guideline (QH-GDL-113-1:2021)

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1 Policy

The approved conditions under which Queensland Health employees may attend seminars, conferences, conventions and similar meetings are set out below.

The arrangements set out in section 4 do not apply to study/conference leave for senior medical officers (refer to Medical Officers' (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No. 5) 2018).

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the following resources:

- Travelling, relieving and living expenses HR Policy D2 for overseas and domestic travelling allowances
- Travel and Accommodation Information Service QHEPS site for official overseas travel
- Whole-of-Government Air Travel Policy.

2 Financial support for employees attending seminars and conferences

A range of financial support is available to employees attending seminars and conferences. The amount of support depends upon:

- the relevance of the seminar or conference
- whether the employee is attending as an official or unofficial representative
- whether the employee is presenting a paper or conducting a session at the seminar or conference.

The agreed level of reimbursement (or the items to be covered) is to form part of the approval from the relevant delegate and is to be known in advance by the employee.

When submitting applications from employees for attendance at seminars and conferences, it is necessary to include details of estimated costs of airfares, registration fees, travelling allowances and expenses. These estimated costs are to be obtained from the preferred corporate travel service.

In cases where approval is given for the payment of daily travelling allowance while attending a seminar or conference, receipts do not need to be produced.

3 Attendance of an employee as an official representative at seminars and conferences held in Australia

Applications for employees attending as an official representative at a seminar or conference held in Australia may be approved by the Director-General (or delegate) when:

- the aims and objectives of a society or association are directed towards the dissemination of knowledge or improvement in the practice of a profession and
- attendance at a seminar or conference which the society or association has arranged is considered to be of benefit and relevant to the efficient activities of Queensland Health.

This includes approval for the:

- employee to be paid salary for the period involved in travelling to, attendance at, and returning from the seminar or conference
- payment of travelling expenses in accordance with the approved arrangements, or as determined from time to time
- payment of other reasonable and necessary expenses to enable the employee to attend the seminar or conference.

4 Overseas visits as governmental or Queensland Health representatives

All applications for official overseas travel are to be approved by the Director-General/Minister for Health in accordance with the whole-of-Government Air Travel policy. Applications are to be submitted for approval at least six weeks prior to the proposed departure date.

When an employee is recommended to undertake a particular investigation overseas, or to attend an international seminar or conference that is of substantial benefit to Queensland Health, the matter of attendance and level of financial support is to be approved by the Director-General/Minister for Health in accordance with the whole-of-Government Air Travel policy.

Submissions for approval are to include recommendations on the level of financial support for allowances and expenses.

An individual overseas travel report (refer Travel and Accommodation Information Service QHEPS site) is to be submitted to the relevant Executive Management Team member or Chief Executive Officer for approval within 14 days of the employee returning from overseas. An electronic copy of the report is to be forwarded to the Senior Policy Officer (Travel) via OverseasTravel@health.qld.gov.au for filing and onforwarding to the Minister for Health and Director-General, if appropriate. This report may also be circulated to other interested employees within Queensland Health.

The arrangements set out in this section (section 4) do not apply to study/conference leave for senior medical officers (refer to Medical Officers' (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No. 5) 2018).

5 Attendance as other than an official representatives at a seminar or conference

5.1 Attendance as other than official representatives at seminars or conferences in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Vanuatu

The following arrangements are to apply in respect of employee attendance at seminars or conferences in Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Fiji and Vanuatu. Employees who hold appointments as government representatives to any board, commission, council, committee, authority or similar organisation in their official capacity and by reason of such appointments are required to attend seminars, conferences or meetings of such boards etc. during office hours, are excluded.

5.1.1 Seminars and conferences associated with the area of employment

When the employee is a member of a society or association of similar interest, and the seminar or conference is associated with the area of employment of the employee, Queensland Health may grant leave of absence on full pay not chargeable to any leave account for the normal working days necessarily involved, on condition:

- Queensland Health is not involved in any additional costs
- the employee receives payment at ordinary time and not on the basis of projected rosters
- the period of absence is confined to the period required for attendance at the seminar or conference, and is not to cause any undue inconvenience to Queensland Health
- the period of absence be deemed to include time necessarily spent in travelling to and from the seminar or conference by the most practically approved means of transport
- the employee submits a report on the results of the seminar or conference proceedings to the approving delegate within 14 days of the employee returning from overseas. This report may be circulated to other interested employees within Queensland Health. The approving delegate may include additional reporting conditions on the approval, for example presentation to the local work area or branch forum
- there is no conflict or perceived conflict of interest
- leave for attendance and travel to and from the event is up to a maximum of five working days per calendar year non-cumulative. Leave may be granted for attendance at more than one seminar or conference.

5.1.2 Seminars and conferences not associated with the area of employment

Employees, other than those referred to in section 3, may be granted leave on the following conditions subject to the requirements and the convenience of Queensland Health if:

- the period of absence required is for one day or less and the employee does not have sufficient credit time available (time off in lieu (TOIL) or the variable working hours scheme), they may be permitted to attend on condition the time lost is made up outside normal starting and ceasing times, or is debited against a flex time credit or flex time debit
- the period of absence required for attendance (including time necessarily spent in travelling to and from the seminar etc.) is more than one day, the employee may be given the option, of either:
 - recreation leave
 - flex (if available)
 - TOIL (if available)
 - or
 - special leave without pay.

Note: For Pre-retirement planning seminars, refer to Special leave HR Policy C7.

5.2 Attendance as other than an official representative at seminars or conferences in other overseas countries

An employee who is not an official representative and attends a seminar or conference associated with their area of employment may be granted leave for the event if:

- they are a member of the society or association responsible for the event and/or
- they contribute substantially to the event by way of delivery of a paper, or some other way.

Approval is subject to:

- Queensland Health's convenience

- Queensland Health not being involved in any additional costs
- any conflicts or perceived conflicts of interest being managed
- the employee submitting a report on the results of the seminar or conference proceedings to the approving delegate within 14 days of the employee returning from overseas. This report may be circulated to other interested employees within Queensland Health. The approving delegate may include additional reporting conditions on the approval, for example presentation to the local work area or branch forum.

Leave for attendance and travel to and from the event is up to a maximum of five working days on full pay (not debited to any leave account) per calendar year non-cumulative. Leave may be granted for attendance at more than one seminar or conference.

Definitions:

Seminar and conference	Includes seminars, conferences, conventions and similar meetings.
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History:

April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy formatted as part of the HR Policy review • Policy amended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – update references and naming conventions – update approval process, and include process flowchart – include Fiji and Vanuatu in section 4.
August 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy amended to reinstate original April 2010 version policy provisions as a result of the restoration of conditions under the <i>Industrial Relations Act 1999</i> effective 11 June 2015.
December 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy updated as part of the HR Policy Simplification project. • Policy amended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – update application to clarify requirements for employees accessing 'Professional Development Leave' and 'Professional Development Allowance' entitlements – update overseas travel application process and reporting requirements (including the removal of the overseas travel approval flowchart attachment) – update delegates in accordance with the whole of Government Air Travel Policy – update references and naming conventions.
April 2010	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected IRM 11.6-1 reformatted as part of the HR policy consolidation project in accordance with EB7.
March 2000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRM 11.6-1 Leave - Study/Conference - Within and Outside Australia amended.
Previous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRM 11.6-1 Leave – Study/Conference – Within and Outside Australia.