SOAS
University of London

Sponsor Funding Guidance: Gaining support from your employer

Support from your employer can come in several forms. They can provide financial support, allow study time, or offering flexible working arrangements for academic commitments. Whatever the level of support from your employer, it will help you succeed in your studies. The following information is designed to you a methodology for seeking that extra support from your organisation.

Prior to making a business case

Know yourself:
- Why do you want to study this degree?
- What do you hope to achieve and what are your goals?
- Why have you chosen this specific degree?
- How will you manage your study time and combine this with your work commitments?
- What support are you seeking from your organisation?

You will need to ensure that you fully understand the programme you have chosen and what it entails (e.g., number of study hours per week, number of assignments or examinations). You should also be very clear about what you want to achieve, as this will form the basis of your request for support from your employer.

Know your organisation:
- What support is already available from your employer?
- Who holds training budgets and makes decisions surrounding these?
- Have other employees studied on this programme or something similar and what were their experiences? It is useful to talk to other employees who have followed a similar course of study to ascertain how they managed their study time and their experiences.
- Why will this programme benefit your organisation and its aims?

Understanding the above points will ensure you approach the right people in your organisation and possess all the relevant information that your organisation will need to make their decision.

Prepare your case:
- How important is sponsorship for you to be able to join and complete the programme?
- Are you willing to negotiate terms with your employer?
- How much does your line manager, HR department, etc., know about the programme?
- Do you have experience in writing reports or presenting an argument/business case?

Considering all these elements means that you will have all the information you need to request support from your organisation.

Making a business case

You may need to present to your organisation or submit a written report or request. Either way, following a simple structure will mean you convey all the information you need without losing your audience. A standard structure would be:

1. Title
2. Executive summary: summarise your case and the final recommendations.
3. Introduction
4. Analysis. This should review your current work situation, why you want to follow this course of study, what the alternatives are, and how this will benefit your organisation.
5. Alternatives. Highlight other programmes that cover a similar subject and what made this programme stand out for you. Identify specifics about the individual courses that have direct relevance to you and your team's objectives (you should avoid just listing the whole programmes). Aim to be clear about the benefits this course of study would provide to you, your team and the organisation.
6. Implementation proposal. Review how you will combine your studies with your working day and when your organisation can expect to see benefits, and how you will take what you learn from your programme of study and apply this to your work. Ensure you detail when you will be out of the office due to study days and exam periods and how you plan to ensure that your work and team are not affected by your studies.
7. Any other supporting evidence. Do not forget to include the cost of your programme and potential length of time for completion.

We hope this guide gives you a helpful starting point for planning your request. This document is intended as a helpful framework only; applicants should also conduct their own research and tailor their approach to their organisation's specific policies, processes, and priorities.