ADVICE WHEN TALKING TO EMPLOYERS ABOUT STUDYING ONLINE
How to ask your employer for support in furthering your education online:

1. **Talk to them.**
   You may feel nervous about speaking to your employer about your plans to study online, but in our experience most employers are supportive of their staff undertaking further education.

2. **Do your research.**
   Know all relevant information about the programme or course you want to study. For all the information you need on cost, duration of study, commitment required, and support offered, please visit abdn.ac.uk/online

3. **Emphasise the rigour of the institution.**
   You’ll be studying at the University of Aberdeen, an institution which is over 500 years old. You will receive a world class education from one of the best ranked universities in the world. The only difference between an online degree and an on campus degree is the mode of learning.

4. **Ask about the possibility of getting a period of time at work dedicated to your studies.**
   Most employers will allow their employees to either take a half day off a week to study, or perhaps even let them use the office to study after hours.

5. **Make your employer aware of your deadlines and exam times.**
   Your line manager may offer some sort of leeway with regards to work hours. Most employers want to help their employees succeed with their further education.

6. **Your employer may offer to support you financially with the cost of your studies.**
   The University can support sponsorship payments. Please see the following pages for more detail on how to approach your employer for financial support.
First steps when seeking sponsorship from your employer:

Ask! An ideal time to discuss with your line manager your wish to pursue further education is during your annual performance review. Many organisations may offer scholarships to employees as part of their benefits package. Even smaller organisations may be willing to fund further study if you can demonstrate that your training will benefit the business. You may have to prepare a business case to outline the benefits of your professional development to your employer.

There may be two main reasons why you would seek sponsorship from an employer:

1. You may wish to gain the skills or qualification which would facilitate career progression.
   In this case your business case would need to address:
   - What you can bring to the role?
   - What have you done in preparation for the opportunity?
   - How will it benefit your employer? In what aspects do your goals align?

2. You may wish to improve your skills to be better equipped for your current role.
   In this case your business case would need to address:
   - How will further education help you overcome obstacles in your current role?
   - Will the training be solely for you, or will it have a positive knock-on effect on others in the business? (e.g. leadership skills)

When preparing your business case for either scenario, you may want to ask yourself the following questions:

1. Will I add new skills to the workforce?
2. Will I be more productive and therefore able to increase company revenue?
3. Will I be able to take on new assignments and generate additional revenue?
4. Will I be able to take on a leadership or managerial role within the company?
5. Will I be able to train or transfer new skills and knowledge to fellow employees?
What is likely to be expected of you once granted a sponsorship?

If your employer does offer or agree to fund your studies they are likely to expect something in return. It is probable that you will:

**Have to sign an agreement or contract.**
This usually stipulates a prescribed period of time you must continue working with the employer after receiving your qualifications.

You will want to read this document very carefully and discuss with your HR manager any clauses that you either don't understand or don’t agree with. Do not sign if you disagree with the terms of the contract.

Ensure that you know what you are signing and read the contract thoroughly. You should be aware of the following points:

1. Who is paying? And are they paying the full amount or partial?
2. How will the payment be made? Directly to the institution? Or to you?
3. Will you have to commit to working for the company for a set period of time? If so how long?
4. Will specific academic standards have to be met and upheld?
5. What will happen if you can no longer complete the program? (illness, personal issues)
6. If there are physical exams can these be taken during work hours? Or will you have to take leave to complete it?

Keeping your studies confidential

At University of Aberdeen all student details are kept confidential. It is completely within your right not to bring your online studies to the attention of your employer.

Employer testimonial

"Employers are always seeking individuals who stand out from the crowd, and can demonstrate their worth above the other candidates for the role. If an applicant has demonstrated they have the commitment and determination needed to achieve their academic goals while at the same time juggling the added demands of work or a busy home life, then that individual is definitely someone I would be keen to speak to."

Scott Burnett Santander
University Relationship Manager