



**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT
KWAZULU NATAL**

POLICY ON BURSARY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The policy on Bursary sets out the parameters in terms of which the department may financially assist serving employees, prospective employees to acquire necessary qualifications. This in turn is expected to enable them to perform specific occupational, general administrative, strategic and technical tasks aimed at establishing a more dynamic public service. The bursary policy should support the Human Resource Plans of the department; and
- 1.2 An application for a bursary / financial assistance must be judged on its own merits. Prior consideration must be given to applicants who wish to study in fields where difficulty is experienced in the recruitment of suitably qualified staff. Persons who wish to study must give careful consideration to the field of study in terms of their capabilities and aptitudes when deciding on a course of study. Employees not qualifying for financial assistance must however, be encouraged to pursue and be given advice on alternative studies - to equip themselves better in their present employment and future careers.

2. PURPOSE

- 2.1 To grant financial assistance to serving and prospective employees who undertake studies in specifically identified areas where there is a critical shortage of personnel with suitable qualifications within the department, and where these posts cannot be readily filled through the recruitment of suitably qualified people;
- 2.2 To make use of the Affirmative Action (AA) initiatives of the department to support and address the Employment Equity (EE) in terms of the Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act No.55 of 1998), as amended;
- 2.3 To incorporate the four (4) pillars of the Human Resource Development Strategy, which are identified as strategic intervention to add value for development where learning environments are created for people to develop themselves. Those four pillars are outlined as follows:
 - (a) Capacity Development Initiatives;
 - (b) Organizational Support Initiatives;
 - (c) Governance & Institutional Development Initiatives; and
 - (d) Economic Growth and Development Initiatives.

3. OBJECTIVE

The objective of this policy is to provide a room for development of employees in order to improve Department's effectiveness and service delivery.

4. SCOPE OF APPLICABILITY

This policy is applicable to all employees of the Department of Social Development and prospective employees.

5. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation No.103 of 1994), as amended;
- 5.2 Public Service Regulations, 2001 as amended (Part IX);
- 5.3 Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No.97 of 1998), as amended;
- 5.4 Public Finance Management Act,1999 (Act No. 1 of 1999), as amended;
- 5.5 Labour Relations Act, 1995 (No.66 of 1995), as amended;
- 5.6 South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act No.58 of 1995), as amended;
- 5.7 National Skills Development Strategy 2005-2010;
- 5.8 National Human Resource Development Strategy 2006 – 2009; and
- 5.9 Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act No.55 of 1998), as amended.

6. DEFINITIONS, ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- 6.1 **“Base qualification”** means a qualification of a minimum of three years or as prescribed by the recognized institution for the attainment of a certificate, diploma or degree;
- 6.2 **“Breach of contract”** means the bursary holder did not meet a condition or conditions of the bursary contract;

- 6.3 **“Bursaries / Financial Assistance”** means financial assistance which the department disburses in the following manner:
- (a) Payment of fees for tuition, registration, examination and the cost of prescribed study material (*at the discretion of the department*) for serving employees whilst studying for full time or part-time qualifications offered by accredited academic institutions. The choice of study course should be relevant to the functions performed by the individual and should be in the best interest of the department granting the bursary / financial assistance; and
 - (b) Payment of fees for tuition, registration, examination, cost of prescribed study material, accommodation expenses and meals (*limited to an amount determined by the department*) of prospective employees whilst they are studying full-time. Such studies should be towards completion of a diploma or degree which is relevant to the functions performed by the department granting the bursary / financial assistance.
- 6.4 **“Bursary Committee”** means a body evaluating bursary applications;
- 6.5 **“Department”** means the KwaZulu-Natal Provincial Government, in its Department of Social Development;
- 6.6 **“Employee”** means any person, excluding an independent contractor, who works for another person or for the state and who receives or is entitled to receive any remuneration; and any person who in any manner assists in carrying or conducting the business of an employer, and “employed” and “employment” have a corresponding meaning to that of “employee”;
- 6.7 **“Pre-tertiary Qualification”** means the general education, specifically Junior and Senior Certificates;
- 6.8 **“Prospective Employees”** means persons outside the employment of the department but whose studies are financed by the department. Such persons may be obliged to serve the department for a specified period once they have obtained their pursued qualifications;
- 6.9 **“Serving Employees”** means employees who are currently employed in a permanent capacity by the Department of Social Development; and

6.10 “**Tuition Fees**” means the fees determined by the educational institution for tuition in the study courses for which a bursary recipient has registered in a particular year.

7. CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE MAY BE GRANTED: SERVING EMPLOYEES/PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES

7.1 Serving Employees

7.1.1 The Department may approve the granting of bursaries for Tertiary and pre-tertiary study (*the equivalent of Grade 1 to Grade 12 / Matric or formal schooling*) to serving employees. This should be under the auspices of the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No.97 of 1998), as amended;

7.1.2 Financial assistance may be granted to employees for the duration of their studies: Provided that the amount granted does not exceed the costs of tuition, registration, examination fees and prescribed study material (*at the discretion of the department*) for the minimum number of subjects recommended by the tertiary institution concerned. Any cost resulting from the attendance of lectures or workshops must be borne by the officials;

7.1.3 Employees studying towards the attainment of a qualification (*which is in line with the core functions of the department*) must be given preference in the granting of financial assistance over applicants who wish to study towards a postgraduate qualification or higher. If there is a deviation from this, there must be an accompanying motivation as to why preference should be given to an officer who has acquired the base qualification(s). The approval must be made, considering, the merits of the case and availability of funds;

7.1.4. Granting of bursaries / financial assistance is a State privilege and not an entitlement under the auspices of the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No.97 of 1998), as amended. In exercising its discretion, the Bursary Committee should use the awarding criteria of departmental and individual ‘need to have’ than ‘nice to have’ priorities in terms of qualifications;

- 7.1.5. The Head of Department through the advice of the Bursary Committee may outline the critical skills shortage areas for study purposes per given MTEF for the department. All managers are expected to inform the committee of such areas;
- 7.1.6. The Head of Department has the final say in the approval of such assistance and in exercising this prerogative, may refuse applications for study purposes owing to various reasons. One of the reasons may be on grounds that the applicant initially asserted that they had the necessary skills / competencies during the job interview when in fact she/he did not. If such information was to mislead the Selection Panel, the performance agreement of the individual concerned may be reviewed;
- 7.1.7 Employee receiving financial assistance and who fails in any subject / course(s) or year of study, must immediately repeat the failed subject / course or the entire year of study (*whichever is applicable*) in his/her own time and expense. Should the candidate be exempted from repeating the subject(s) / course(s) in order to proceed, a written deferment must be submitted to the Bursary Committee of the awarding department for financial assistance. However, should the candidate successfully repeat the relevant subject(s) / course(s) or year of study, the financial assistance granted to him/her may resume for the remainder of the course;
- 7.1.8 The Department may at any time suspend the financial assistance to an employee in its sole discretion if the employee is not making satisfactory academic progress. An employee shall be deemed to be making satisfactory academic progress if (s) he has attained 50% or more of the course (s) / subject (s) registered for in an academic year;
- 7.1.9 The total period of study towards a qualification cannot be extended for more than the minimum prescribed/recommended duration as applicable to full-time or part-time study as prescribed by the institution;
- 7.1.10 A bursary may be awarded to an employee who pursue studies which are in line with the current post he/she holds or career path; and

7.1.11 Financial Assistance will only be granted to employees who intend to pursue studies on part-time basis with an accredited tertiary institution where evening class are provided or during weekends.

7.2 Leadership Development Management Programmes

7.2.1 The department will identify generic managerial and leadership training programmes for the managers that are critical in the attainment of the goals and objectives of the Public Service. The leadership development management programmes are planned to improve the leadership qualities of managers to effectively execute their duties and provide strategic direction in the department. The strategic focus is to ensure that leadership and management development courses are aligned with manager's competency framework;

7.2.2 The Head of Department may grant financial assistance to managers who intend to pursue their studies on part-time basis for a Postgraduate Certificate with a recommended Tertiary institution delivering the management programme;

7.2.3 The financial assistance will only be limited to managers who intend to top up their professional skills portfolio by completing a relevant programme to earn a credit bearing certificate of competence;

7.2.4 The Head of Department has the final say in the approval of financial assistance to managers who are studying towards Masters degree qualification which might be deemed to be in the interest of the department, in exercising this prerogative, may refuse applications for study purposes owing to various reasons. Such grant may not exceed 50% of the total costs of study for the duration of their studies prescribed by the recognized Institution. Such financial assistance will be reviewed annually depending on the availability of funds and the performance of the individual manager; and

7.2.5 The total period of study towards a qualification cannot be extended for more than the minimum prescribed/recommended duration as prescribed by the relevant Institution.

7.3 Administrative Requirements:

- (a) Circular/Advert inviting applications for a bursary shall be distributed before 31 July of every year;
- (b) All applicants shall be informed of the outcome of their bursary applications before 31 October of every year;
- (c) The final approval of the bursary shall be subject to applicant's acceptance at the tertiary institution;
- (d) The line manager should recommend granting of financial assistance and non-support for granting a financial assistance shall be substantiated with valid reasons;
- (e) The department must have a counselling service to advise officials during the selection of courses;
- (f) Successful applicants must complete and sign a prescribed contract;
- (g) If this *contract* is not completed and signed correctly, no monies will be paid to the institution on behalf of the prospective student;
- (h) The Finance Office of tertiary institutions must submit to the department the relevant demands for payment of all relevant fees timeously in order to allow for sufficient time for financial processes to be completed before the payment can be made. Should it be found that delays are experienced due to the Finance Office of the tertiary institution not having submitted the relevant documentation to the department in time; such officers will be required to make the necessary payment to the institution concerned and then claim re-imburement from the department. In the latter instance, proof of payment has to be submitted;
- (i) The employees should supply the department with original satisfactory proof of enrolment for the course at the commencement of each year of study;

- (j) The employees should inform the department on a regular basis of their progress. They should also supply the department with official proof of examination results immediately after the results have been made known by the examining authority; and
- (k) Should it be found that delays are experienced due to bursary holders not submitting the relevant documentation timeously, such officials will be requested to make the necessary payment to the institution concerned and then claim re-imburement from the Department. Any penalties/interest as a result of late payment will not be reimbursed / paid by the Department.

7.4 Prospective Employee(s)

7.4.1 Financial assistance may be granted to prospective employees for the duration of their studies provided that the amount granted does not exceed the cost of tuition, registration, examination and accommodation fees and meals (*limited to an amount determined by a department*), in the event the amount is higher than the determined amount, the employee shall be responsible for the balance, in the event it be lesser, the balance must be claimed back to the department. Further costs such as purchase of stationery/prescribed reading material and attendance of workshops/seminars may be borne in some instances by the employee. One has to distinguish between a bursary and a scholarship. The latter normally covers 100% of fees and includes a stipend for living expenses;

7.4.2 The total period of study towards a qualification cannot be extended for more than the minimum prescribed/recommended duration as applicable to full-time or part-time study;

7.4.3 Administrative Requirements Prospectus

The Finance Office of an accredited tertiary institution must timeously submit to the financing department the relevant demand for payment of all relevant fees. This is in order to allow for sufficient time for the administration processes to be completed before the payment can be made. Should it be found

that delays are experienced due to the Finance Office of the tertiary institution not having submitted the relevant documentation in time; such students will be required to make the necessary payment to the institution concerned and then claim re-imburement from the department. In the latter instance, proof of payment will also have to be submitted. The onus therefore is on the student to ensure that the department receives the necessary payment statements in time for expeditious processing;

- 7.4.4 Every successful applicant must complete and sign a prescribed contract;
- 7.4.5 No monies shall be paid on behalf of the student if this contract is not completed and signed correctly;
- 7.4.6 The student must provide the department with satisfactory proof of enrolment for the course at the commencement of each year of study;
- 7.4.7 The department must be provided with official proof of examination results immediately upon receipt of such proof from the examining authority;
- 7.4.8 Payment of registration and tuition fees must be made directly to the relevant educational institution upon receipt of proof of registration; and
- 7.4.9 The applicant should be a South African citizen, unless valid reasons exist to justify a deviation from this ruling.

8. CRITERIA TO BE CONSIDERED WHEN AWARDING BURSARIES

- 8.1 The following criteria must be considered when awarding financial assistance to a serving employee/prospective employee:
 - 8.1.1 The applicant must demonstrate the potential for successful completion of study and priority must be given to persons with verifiable limited financial resources who cannot afford the cost of studies; the Bursary Committee shall establish methods to meet this criteria, for instance, determining the income ceiling of a guardian/parent/applicant;

- 8.1.2 Preference must be given to employees who upon attainment of their qualifications bind themselves contractually to serve in specific geographic area(s) where there is a particular critical skills shortage of personnel within the department;
- 8.1.3 The employee's work performance and academic record must be taken into account;
- 8.1.4 Bursaries / financial assistance will in general not be awarded to an employee who wish to studies a qualification equal in value to the one they already have. The exception to the rule is only to consider such an application if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the department;
- 8.1.5 The department must include specific plans to meet the training and development needs of historically disadvantaged persons;
- 8.1.6 A serving employee must study at a tertiary institution which is most economical and least disruptive to the official hours of work of the department. This could include changing from part-time study attendance to distance/correspondence learning;
- 8.1.7 Employees who are newly appointed in the public service and still on probation must not be granted financial assistance;
- 8.1.8 Attendance of any lectures must not adversely affect the functions of the department;
- 8.1.9 It must be ensured that the purpose of study is needs based, i.e. studies are as close as possible to the nature of the work to be performed and which will enhance service delivery. This should be read together with clause 8.1.4 of this policy; and
- 8.1.10 Applications for post-graduate studies must be considered by the respective line manager, recommended by the Bursary Committee and forwarded to the Head of Department for approval.

9. CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT AND BREACH OF CONTRACT

- 9.1 The participant in the scheme must contract to serve the department after attainment of the relevant qualification;
- 9.2 The participant who undertakes full-time study will redeem the bursary by serving the department on the basis of one year for each year of study once the qualification is obtained;
- 9.3 An employee who studies part-time will redeem the bursary by serving the department for at least one year after attaining the relevant qualification;
- 9.4 Where an employee receives financial assistance towards the attainment of a Senior Certificate, contractual service in recompense is not required;
- 9.5 If obligations cannot be fulfilled owing to death or incapacity due to any mental or physical disability, any liability for the refund of any monies that may be due in terms of the contract shall lapse;
- 9.6 If an employee leaves the service before completing the studies, does not make satisfactory progress towards obtaining the qualification, and/or elects not to continue with studies, the employee may be required to re-imburse the department the full amount of bursary money (plus interest) granted to him/her. In the case of a person who leaves the service, the amount owing will be re-claimed from his/her pension money, failing which an "out of service" debt must be set up. In certain instances, which are covered in the bursary contract, a portion of the debt may be redeemed by service obligation;
- 9.7 In the event of a participant in the scheme wishing to temporarily suspend or discontinue studies or having made unsatisfactory academic progress, it will be incumbent upon him/her to immediately request the department for a deferment of contractual obligation. He/she has to present to the department with a proposal to enable him/her to complete the relevant course/qualification on his/her own time and at his/her own expense to avoid immediate steps being taken to institute a recovery of study fees. However, this deferment shall be approved by the Head of Department and shall not exceed period of two (2) years; and

9.8 In the event the prospective employee fails to complete his/her studies satisfactorily and/or does not fulfill, for any reason other than those mentioned in clause 8.5, his/her service obligation, an “out of service” debt will be instituted against him/her and he/she may be liable for the full amount of the bursary (*plus interest*) which was granted to him/her.

10. RELEASE FROM DUTY TO STUDY FULL-TIME: SERVING EMPLOYEES

10.1 Employees will not be permitted to study at a tertiary institution on a full-time basis with retention of salary, if they are granted financial assistance;

10.2 If a particular field of study is directly relevant to the core functions of the department concerned, cannot be undertaken through correspondence or on a part-time basis and where the employee is not granted financial assistance, he/she may be released from duty to study full-time at a tertiary institution with retention of salary, provided it can be proved that the person cannot function in the department without acquiring this qualification;

10.3 This type of financial assistance is not recommended, however in deserving cases, a submission, for the deviation, must be made for approval by the Head of Department; and

10.4 The employee must complete the contractual obligation and submit proof of payment to the Head of Department before he/she is released from duty.

11. CHANGE IN STUDY DIRECTION

Authority may be granted to employees/prospective employees to change their direction of study: Provided that the new field of study complies with the criteria laid down in clause 8 of this policy;

12. OVERSEAS STUDY WITH RETENTION OF SALARY

Applications for overseas study with retention of salary must be sent to the Executive Authority via the Head of Department for consideration. Upon submission of such a unique request, a detailed motivation has to be given as to why it is in the best interest of the department for the employee to embark on such studies.

13. TAKE-OVER OF BURSARIES AND/OR STUDENT DEBTS

- 13.1 An employee who is transferred from one department to another (*national/provincial*) is regarded as having breached his/her bursary 'contract' but;
- 13.2 A cession of a bursary contract may, however, be negotiated between departments: Provided that the employee's study direction when considered in the context of the functions of the receiving department, complies with the criteria set out in clause 8 of this policy;
- 13.3 The cession of a bursary contract may impose a duty on the receiving department to reimburse the department that initially granted the bursary for any year of study that has not been redeemed by service obligation. The responsibility for any future financial/service obligations resulting from the granting of the bursary will be borne by the receiving department; and
- 13.4 In specific identified areas where there is a critical shortage of qualified personnel within the department, and where the post cannot be readily filled through recruitment, the department may as an added incentive take-over a student's study debt on recruitment. The student will, in exchange, complete a contract approved by the department to redeem this debt by service obligation. Any breach of this contract will result in the measures contained in clause 7 being instituted. The length of the service obligation will equal the number of year's study that the debt spans.

14. ADMINISTRATION OF BURSARIES

- 14.1 In view of the importance accorded to training and development by the *White Paper on Human Resource Management*, it is essential that the department manages/administers bursaries in an efficient and effective manner;
- 14.2 It is imperative that the personnel selected to administer bursaries are well-trained in all aspects of the scheme, including the general operation of academic institutions. The Bursary Committee will be responsible for all matters relating to bursary administration, including recommendations regarding the awarding of bursaries, financial management of the scheme, budgeting and the maintenance of a Bursary Register;

14.3 In accordance with the provisions of Treasury Regulations of 2000 a *Bursary Register*, which reflects all payments, must be kept. The following information must be recorded:

- (a) Date of payment;
- (b) Warrant voucher or cheque number;
- (c) Voucher number;
- (d) To whom paid;
- (e) Amount;
- (f) The allocation; and
- (g) Where practical, a description of the transaction.

15. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REVIEW

15.1 The Human Resource management of the Department is responsible for communicating the provisions of this policy to all employees; and

15.2 The policy will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed on regular basis to ensure that it achieves the intended purpose.

16. EFFECTIVE DATE

The effective date of this policy will be the date of approval.

17. TITLE OF THE POLICY

This policy shall be called Policy on Bursary.

18. POLICY APPROVAL

This policy supersedes all other policies on Bursary promulgated before. This policy is approved with effect from the 26th day of January in the year 2011 and will be effective on the date of approval.



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MR BL NKOSI
HEAD: DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT