

DEPARTMENT : PUBLIC WORKS, ROADS AND TRANSPORT

POLICY TITLE : BURSARY POLICY

1. Introduction

The pursuit of further education and training is important as it exposes employees to new development in their professional careers, thus staff members need to be encouraged to pursue training and development interventions that will equip them with competencies to be able to improve their job performance and contribute to the overall vision and mission of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport.

This ensures continued supply of learned human resources that will enhance and sustain service delivery in the Department, therefore it is of utmost important that resources are allocated to support and encourage this initiative that is geared at developing the human resources to sustain present and future survival of the Department.

2. Policy Statement

The Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport reaffirms its commitment in increasing the current skills base by providing employees with opportunities for further education and development.

The core challenges that this policy seeks to address comprises of the following related elements:

- 2.1 Lack of systems, outcomes and competency based approach to Education, Training and Development initiatives directly linked to the requirements and needs of the department as outlined in the Skills Development Act, Further Education and Training Act and the Departmental Strategic Plan.
- 2.2 Lack of intergrading academic programmes into normal daily operations.
- 2.3 Lack of synergy between what bursary holders are studying and their current work.

3. Purpose

To provide financial assistance in a fair and equitable manner to employees of the department in order to increase the knowledge and skills available to the Department in designated fields by:

- 3.1 Providing financial assistance to the critical and scarce skills negatively affecting service delivery,
- 3.2 Promoting the culture of a learning organization.
- 3.3 Assist in the development of career paths for employees of the department, thus retaining a skilled and dedicated workforce.

4. Purpose and Objectives

- 4.1 To develop a skills base for possible succession planning and achievement of the Department's objectives.
- 4.2 To cater for scares and critical skills as identified by the Departmental HR plan.
- 4.3 To develop a culture of life long learning.
- 4.4 To provide current employees with financial assistance and opportunities for further development.
- 4.5 To afford previously disadvantaged individuals an opportunity to gain technical and professional qualifications.

5. Scope of Application

The bursary policy is applicable to all employees of the department of Public Works, Roads and Transport as well as prospective employees funded to further their development. This bursary will cover the funds from undergraduate up to Masters Level. The bursary will cover the following critical skills in the department.

Core-function

- Asset Management
- Quantity Survey
- Electrical Engineering
- Civil and Structural Engineers
- Mechanical Engineering
- Property valuation and management
- Architectural Studies
- Project Management
- Investment Analysis
- Transport Planning
- Transport economics

Support Function

- HRM & D Management
- Information management and technology
- Communications
- Risk Management
- Internal Auditing
- Accounting and Financial Management
- Labour Relations
- Public Management

6. Principles

The provision of financial assistance will be done in accordance with the under mentioned criteria:

- 6.1 Equity representation
- 6.2 Succession Planning
- 6.3 Financial Constrains
- 6.4 Skills Development Plan
- 6.5 Scares and Critical Skills

7. Pre-requisite for allocating Bursaries

- 7.1 The allocation of bursaries must be aligned to the Department's priorities and individual performance development plans.
- 7.2 Recommendations by the relevant line managers shall be taken into consideration when allocating bursaries.
- 7.3 Initiatives aimed at promoting equity representation will be given preference.
- 7.4 In order to qualify for financial assistance applicants may not be beneficiaries of other bursary schemes at the time of application or have an outstanding study obligations after financial assistance has been granted.
- 7.5 Bursaries are granted to all relevant studies undertaken at Institutions granting nationally recognised Degrees/Diplomas or studies leading to a qualification. Only programmes from SAQA and Council of higher education accredited institutions will be funded by the bursary scheme.

- 7.6 The bursary will fund study programmes that have duration of twelve months or more.

8. Types of Bursaries

The following types of bursaries are available to employees and prospective employees of the Department to pursue academic programmes relevant to the Department's skills needs:

8.1 Bursary for part-time studies (employed learners)

- 8.1.1 This bursary is intended for current and prospective employees i.e. employees who have been transferred from other department (through take over of study obligations) to enable them to study on a part time basis while employed by the Department.
- 8.1.2 Bursary holders shall be contractually bound to the Department for the number of years equivalent to the years of study.
- 8.1.3 Employees will not be allowed to undertake a full time study. However where the study program requires block attendance, the HoD may grant special leave based on the submission of adequate evidence from the training institution.
- 8.1.4 Where the employer undertakes the initiative for intervention in addressing the critical and scarce skills and the Department allocates a bursary, full time studies with full benefits for both local and international studies may be considered by the HoD under the special leave policy.
- 8.1.5 Bursary will be allocated to employees who have been employed for 12 months and more and whose probation has been confirmed.
- 8.1.6 The bursary shall cover the following:
- a. Registration and administration fees
 - b. Tuition fees
 - c. Practical training where applicable i.e. attendance of bridging courses
 - d. Prescribed text book fees.
 - e. Travelling, Accommodation and meals during block attendance

Payment of prescribed text books should be accompanied by proof from the relevant study institution. Costs for recommended or additional books shall not be covered in this regard.

8.1.7 In order to qualify for additional fees for study material (e.g scientific calculators) the bursary holder shall be expected to submit a letter from the institution stating the course material requirements. Should the student purchase the prescribed materials before submitting the institutions letter to the HRD the student will be required to submit proof of purchase.

8.1.8 The bursary funds shall not cover the following:

- a. Subject cancellation fees
- b. Late registration fees
- c. Parking fees
- d. Photocopies
- e. Internet access
- f. Courses being repeated

8.1.9 The following guidelines should be followed to apply for a bursary:

- a. All bursary applications must be completed in the prescribed form available in HR.
- b. The form must be accompanied by a study motivation signed by both the applicant and the supervisor.
- c. A letter of admission from the institution must accompany the application forms.
- d. If the applicant is already studying academic report or most recent results should be submitted.
- e. It is the responsibility of the applicant to get himself/herself admitted at an accredited institution.
- f. The closing date for all bursary application is 30 November each year.

8.2 Bursary for full-time studies(Unemployed learners)

8.2.1 The Department will only consider applicants who have successfully completed their level one subjects and studying towards level two subjects as well as those who have successfully completed level two and studying towards level three

8.2.2 The application must clearly state the students study direction and preferred major subjects.

8.2.3 The bursary shall cover the following:

- a. Registration and administration fees
- b. Tuition fees
- c. Meals (Breakfast, lunch and supper)
- d. Hostel Accommodation
- e. Book fees

8.2.4 Expenses outlined under part 8.1.8 above shall not be covered.

8.2.5 Renewals of the bursary shall be subject to the bursary holders' satisfactory progress in his/her studies.

8.2.6 The following guideline should be followed to apply for a bursary

- a. Application must be on a prescribed application form
- b. Submission of proof of income of the guardian/parent
- c. Applicant's academic results from the institution
- d. A comprehensive CV
- e. The letter of acceptance from the institution must accompany the application forms
- f. Closing date for application is 30 August of every year.

9 Employment of full time bursary holders

9.1 The department may offer the bursary holder a permanent employment upon successful completion of their studies if a suitable vacancy exist (at entry level) within the department.

9.2 Bursary holders who are required to serve internship programme will do so with the department.

10 Financing and accounts payment

10.1 Financing

10.1.1 The budget is centrally controlled. The Directorate: Human Resource Management is responsible for drafting a comprehensive annual Business plan and budget to utilize and access funds for the issuing and maintenance of new bursaries. The following must be considered in the drafting of a budget and business plan:

- a. The availability of funds

- b. The workplace skills plan
- c. The Human Resource Plan and
- d. Escalating costs of tertiary education

10.2 Payment of accounts

- 10.2.1 Payments will be made within 30 days after receipt of proof of registration by the bursary holder. If the institution requires upfront payment for registration the employees should provide proof of acceptance from the institution.
- 10.2.2 No payment for bursaries shall be made to the bursary holder, payment will be made to the institutions.
- 10.2.3 Under no circumstances will interest be paid on any overdue accounts. All bursary holders are expected to submit accounts on time to the HRD.
- 10.2.4 Where a bursary holder has paid money from his/her pocket to the institution, the money will be refunded on receipt of an authorized invoice which must fall under the contract period. This is inclusive of study material as per the provision of this policy.
- 10.2.5 Continuous Payment of bursaries will only be made upon receipt of the academic results or performance report from the bursary holder. It is the responsibility of the bursary holder to submit progress report annually and half yearly to the HRD unit so as to qualify for the continuous granting of the bursary.

11. Bursary obligation

- 11.1 Bursary holders must complete and submit contracts before any payment may be made towards their accounts. This should be accompanied by a consent form giving the department permission to have direct access on the student's academic records, financial statements and contacts with their lecturers or deans.
- 11.2 The fully completed contract and consent form must be signed by the bursary holder as well as countersigned by two witnesses on each page of the contract.
- 11.3 A student is contractually bound for the period stipulated on the contract plus approved additional years of extension in accordance with the duration of the study.

- 11.4 Should the applicant wishes to change the course or field of study originally approved this shall be permitted only if the intended course is in line with the Departmental strategic plan and the HoD has approved the change.
- 11.5 If the applicant wishes to change the institution s/he must put the request in writing and state the reasons for such intensions. The students will be liable for any extra costs incurred.
- 11.6 No bursary holder shall be allowed to enter into another bursary contract before completing the contractual obligation of the existing contract.
- 11.7 A bursary holder who has failed a particular course(s) shall repeat such course(s) at own expense.
- 11.8 A part time bursary holder should pass 50% of the first level subjects for the current academic year for bursary to continue.
- 11.9 A bursary holder who discontinued or fails to complete his/her studies will have to pay all the expenses incurred plus interest at a rate determined by the Supply Chain Management Directorate.
- 11.10 A bursary holder who leaves the Public Service before the contractual obligations are met will have to pay all the expenses incurred.
- 11.11 Bursary holders must submit progress reports on a semester or annual basis

12 Withdrawal of bursaries

- 12.1 Any breach of the term of the contract on the part of the bursary holder constitutes the withdrawal. The amount paid for the studies will be recovered by the Supply Chain Management Directorate.
- 12.2 The applicant's failure to admit him/herself at the relevant institution during the academic year for which the bursary was approved, such bursary will be withdrawn depending on the motivation and circumstances that resulted in non-admission to the institution.
- 12.3 The applicant's failure to sit for examination on a specific semester or de-registers without providing the HRD with the necessary information or such intentions.

13 Recovery of financial assistance given to employees

- 13.1 The department will recover money provided as a form of financial assistance with interest to the bursary holder if s/he discontinues studying or resigns from the department of Public Service before s/he has fulfilled his/her contractual obligation.
- 13.2 Bursary expenses will be recovered with interest in cases where bursary holders fail to submit results on request by the HRD.
- 13.3 Bursary expenses will also be recovered with interest in cases where bursary holders accept a transfer to another department and the new department does not take over the bursary obligation and related costs.
- 13.4 Study debt will be redeemed from any amount payable to the official on resignation. If the amount payable is insufficient the balance will be redeemed from the official's pension. Alternatively the official will be liable to pay the amount out of own sources.

14 Extension for bursaries.

- 14.1 The maximum permissible period for extension purposes is two years.
- 14.2 Each case will be considered on the basis of its merit with regard to the extension.
- 14.3 The bursary holder must apply for extension of period through their line managers to the HRD unit.
- 14.4 Work pressure will not be accepted as a valid reason for not fulfilling bursary obligations unless supported by the line manager. The HoD shall have the discretion to approve or disapprove such request.

15 Taking over of study debt and bursary obligations

- 15.1 The Department is not obligated to take over any study debt. The applicant should inform HRD of his/her study obligation as soon as they have accepted the Department's offer.
- 15.2 Granting and taking over of bursaries must have direct relevance to the functions performed within the Department.

- 15.3 An official who is a Public Service bursary holder from another Department will be considered for a bursary take over subject to signing of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport bursary contract.

16 Bursary committee

- 16.1 A Bursary committee shall be appointed and it will be required to allocate bursaries to individual applicants according to the requirements of this policy, in a transparent justifiable manner. The committee shall be accountable to the HOD.

The committee shall consist of the following persons:

- a. The Director: HRM
 - b. The Skills Development Facilitator;
 - c. The Deputy Director: Human Resource Planning
 - d. Deputy Directors: HRM and Building in Regions
 - e. Director: Buildings
 - f. Deputy Directors from Directorates and districts
 - g. Deputy Directors from legal services
 - h. Representatives from Office of the MEC and Office of the HoD
- 16.2 The HRD unit shall serve as secretariat to the committee however the chairperson and deputy chairperson will be elected by the committee.
- 16.3 The committee shall be required to report twice a year on the following:
- a. The total number of bursaries awarded and the costs incurred at the end of each semester, per field of study, occupation category and according to age, race, gender and disability of recipients; and
 - b. The projected total number of bursaries and costs that will be incurred in the remainder of the financial year, per field of study, age, race, gender and disability of recipients.

16.4 Decisions of the committee

The decisions of the committee shall be:

- a. Through consensus, otherwise a simple majority, and the chairperson shall have a casting vote; and
- b. Binding on all members.

17 Roles and responsibilities

17.1 Head of Department

- a. Approve /disapprove allocation of bursaries
- b. Appoint members to serve in the bursary committee
- c. Approve/disapprove writing off of bursary debts. The HoD will approve to waive the whole or part of the study debts in terms of the PSR 2001 as amended by **PART IX E**. If the department is unable to place full-time bursary holders in the department a letter informing the student of his/her release from his/her contractual obligation will be approved.

17.2 Bursary Committee

- a. Prioritize bursary allocation based on mutually agreed criteria by members.
- b. Ensure that the application meets the criteria as stipulated in the policy

17.3 HRD unit

- a. Advertise bursaries in advance of the closing date for applications. The advertisement should give details of the bursaries on offer as well as minimum requirements and application procedures, with deadlines.
- b. Allow time for the applications to be processed properly before the beginning of each academic year. No applications received after the closing date will be considered.
- c. Serve as secretariat to the bursary committee
- d. Facilitate bursary payments
- e. Review the bursary policy annually
- f. Inform applicants of the outcome of their bursary applications
- g. Inform external bursary holders of the status of their bursary obligations in the department, should the department be unable to place the bursary holders.
- h. Ensure that members sign contracts on time
- i. Keep and update bursary holders files regularly
- j. The HRD shall report to the committee on the progress of each student in receipt of a bursary.

17.4 Supervisor/Line manager/ Regional Managers

- a. Recommend staff members' study direction on the application form
- b. Submit bursary needs to HRD as per skills needs
- c. Make recommendation for the extension of the bursary contract.

17.5 Bursary holders

- a. Submit study accounts to the HRD
- b. Submit proof of registration before any payment can be done
- c. Submit progress report 2 weeks after official publication of the examination results
- d. Inform the HRD six months in advance about the intentions to change study direction
- e. Inform the HRD in writing within seven days of the de-registration of the study otherwise the bursary holder will be liable for the de-registration costs.
- f. Submit motivation requesting contract extension with academic results to the HRD after recommendation of the bursary holders line manager.

18 Monitoring, evaluation and support

- a. The HRD unit will monitor and keep record of all bursary holders and their progress
- b. The bursary policy will be reviewed annually
- c. The Bursary Office shall establish links with the institutions at which students pursue their studies and make arrangement for support and guidance to be given to students in receipt of bursaries.
- d. Communication with the institutions shall be on a regular and systematic basis, to set up monitoring procedures, which ensure that the department becomes aware of problems as they arise.

19. IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING AND REPORTING

The Head of Department or his/her delegate shall monitor the implementation process and ensure adherence to these policy provisions. He/she shall report on specific cases when required to do so.

If and when any provision of this policy is amended, the amended provision will supersede the previous one.

APPROVED



MS M. R. NTSHABELE
ACTING HEAD OF DEPARTMENT

9/3/10

DATE