



## Policy on Internal Bursaries

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## **1. Policy Aim**

The aim of this policy is to:

- 1.1. Ensure consistent, fair and effective awarding and monitoring of bursaries allocated to Departmental<sup>1</sup> employees.
- 1.2. Address the knowledge and skills gap in the organisation.
- 1.3. Address the challenge of scarce and critical skills in the Department identified in the Human Resource Plan by offering financial assistance in fields that seek to achieve the strategic objectives of the Department.
- 1.4. Promote development and career management, performance management and good employer/employee relationships.

## **2. Legislative Framework**

2.1. This policy draws upon the following legislation:

- Minister of Public Service and Administration (MPSA) Directives
- Employment Equity Act (Act 55 of 1998)
- National Human Resource Development Strategy
- National Qualifications Strategy
- Public Service Commissioning Bargaining Council Resolutions and MPSA Determinations
- Skills Development Act, (Act 97 of 1998)
- Skills Development Levies Act, (9 of 1999)
- South African Qualifications Act, (58 of 1995)
- National Development Plan 2030

## **3. Policy Scope**

3.1. This policy applies to all permanent employees of the Northern Cape Department of Transport, Safety and Liaison as well as new entrants to the Public Service whose probation has been confirmed.

## **4. Policy Statement**

It is the policy of the Northern Cape Department of Transport, Safety and Liaison:

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Transport, Safety and Liaison

#### 4.1. Bursaries

- 4.1.1. The awarding of bursaries within the Department will depend upon the availability of funds.
- 4.1.2. Bursaries are granted in terms of core competencies, scarce and critical skills needs, identified in the Departments' approved Human Resource Plan, subject to availability of funds.

#### 4.2. Bursary Conditions

- 4.2.1. The bursar is contractually bound to serve the Department for at least a period of 2 years studies.
- 4.2.2. No application fee shall be covered by the employer.
- 4.2.3. Monies due to an educational/tertiary institution for registration and tuition will be paid directly to the institution after receipt of specified account from the applicant.
- 4.2.4. Monies will be paid to an employee If employee made a payment to the institution whilst the department is finalising the bursary payment.
- 4.2.5. Bursary amounts will **ONLY** cover registration and tuition.
- 4.2.6. Only application for bursaries in terms of permanent employees whose probation has been confirmed will be considered.
- 4.2.7. Preference will be given to Non-SMS members whereby 80% of bursaries will be awarded to Non-SMS members and 20% to SMS members.
- 4.2.8. Should the bursar resign from the public service whilst he/she is studying, he/she shall be obliged to pay the full cost of the bursary and any interest applicable to debts due to the state as determined by the Minister of Finance.
- 4.2.9. Should the bursar, who has completed their qualification, resign from the public service, whilst he/she is still serving the terms and conditions of the bursary contract, he/she shall be obliged to pay pro-rata portion of the total bursary allocated to him/her.

#### **4.3. Abandonment of Study**

- 4.3.1. In the event that the bursar fails to continue immediately with his/her studies in the next academic year, the bursar will be deemed to have abandoned their studies. Abandonment of studies constitutes a breach of contract.
- 4.3.2. In the event of abandonment of studies, bursars shall be held accountable for repaying all the bursary costs incurred in terms of the bursary contract including any interest due.
- 4.3.3. Should special circumstances<sup>2</sup> exist, which causes a bursar to abandon their studies, the bursar is required to immediately provide the Human Resource Development Unit with valid reasons and evidence to this effect.
- 4.3.4. The reasons and evidence will be submitted to the Departmental Bursary Committee for consideration and decision by the Accounting Officer.
- 4.3.5. After consideration of the reasons and evidence, the Department may hold the bursar accountable for repaying all bursary costs incurred in terms of the bursary contract including any interest applicable to debts due to the State as determined by the Minister of Finance.

#### **4.4. Change of Bursary Direction**

- 4.4.1. The Department will cancel the bursary contract in cases where the bursar changes the field of study (*without valid reason*) and the bursar will be obliged to repay the bursary with interest applicable to debts due to the state as determined by the Minister of Finance.

#### **4.5. Take-over if Employee is Transferred from other Departments**

- 4.5.1. The Department may take over bursaries in the study fields applicable to the Departmental Human Resource Plan.
- 4.5.2. The taking over of the study debt will be made in terms of the guidelines of the Public Finance Management Act, Act 1 of 1999.

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<sup>2</sup> Special circumstances refer to major illness experienced by the bursar

- 4.5.3. No financial settlements should take place between Departments when employees with obligations towards a particular department are transferred as stipulated in Schedule 1 and 2 of the Public Service Act, 1994 as amended.
- 4.5.4. After approval the Department will cover 100% of the take-over from the registered institutions for that specific academic year, excluding interest.
- 4.5.5. Proof of debt and progress should be submitted.

#### **4.6. Withdrawal and Recovery of Financial Assistance or Bursaries**

- 4.6.1. Financial assistance given to an employee will be withdrawn and the amount so owed shall be deducted from his/her salary on an instalment basis over a period to be agreed to by the Accounting Officer if:
  - 4.6.1.1. The bursar is excluded or expelled from the institution or discontinues his / her studies on his/her own accord.
  - 4.6.1.2. The bursar fails to register in the year for which the bursary is awarded.
  - 4.6.1.3. The employee fails to submit results.
  - 4.6.1.4. The employee fails to complete the studies in record time and has not applied for extension.
  - 4.6.1.5. There is a failure to make progress.
  - 4.6.1.6. The bursar resigns from the Government service before he/she has fulfilled his/her contractual obligation. Study debt will be repayable in full, or pro-rata depending on the obligatory service time remaining before resignation. The amount owing may be recovered from the employee's pension. If the pension is insufficient, the official will be held liable to pay the amount out of own sources before departure from the Government service.
  - 4.6.1.7. Dismissed due to misconduct.
- 4.6.2. The employee authorizing the department to effect such deductions must complete an Acknowledgement of Debt Form. This shall be effected a month following cancellation.

#### 4.7. Granting of Extension for Bursaries

- 4.7.1. As soon as the bursar realises that he/she cannot complete his/her studies within the minimum duration of the course, a well-motivated application for extension, with examination results must be submitted to the HRD Unit no later than January of the next study year. Failure to adhere to the requirements may result in the cancellation of the bursary.
- 4.7.2. A motivation and recommendation from the Human Resource Development Unit must accompany applications for the extension of the duration of the study and approval must be sought from the Accounting Officer.
- 4.7.3. **Work pressure may not be accepted as a valid reason for not fulfilling bursary obligations.**
- 4.7.4. With regard to the period for which the extension may be granted, each case must be considered on merit with a maximum period of two (2) years as a guideline for extension purposes.

#### 4.8. Qualification Recognition

- 4.8.1. The Bursary holder will be required to submit proof of qualification after completion of studies to the HRD Unit.
- 4.8.2. A congratulatory letter will be issued out to the official after receipt of written proof or a certified copy of the Certificate, Diploma, Degree or Post-graduate qualification is received from the institution.
- 4.8.3. Promotion is not automatic after obtaining a higher qualification. Bursary holders must apply for available posts when advertised.

#### 4.9. Termination – Bursary Funds

- 4.9.1. In a case of termination of service by a bursar, allowance must be made for the possible existence of other agreements entered into by the Bursar, which also gives rise to service obligations.
- 4.9.2. In case of death or the bursar being incapacitated by any mental or physical disability, any liability for the refund of any moneys that may be owed to the

Department must be communicated to the Accounting Officer to obtain authority to write off the debt.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. The **Accounting Officer** or his or her delegate is responsible:

5.1.1. For approving the granting of a bursary.

5.1.2. To waive the whole or part of the study debts subject to Treasury Regulations.

5.2. The **line manager** is responsible for, after considering the needs of his or her unit, proposing the granting of a bursary to the Bursary Committee who shall in turn make recommendations to the Accounting Officer for approval of the bursary.

5.3. **Employees** are responsible to submit applications for bursaries to the HRD Unit on the prescribed application form.

## 6. Review and Distribution

6.1. The senior manager for Corporate Services is responsible for this policy and for ensuring that it is reviewed and updated.

6.2. This Policy will be reviewed after 18 months but no later than 3 years of the last publication date. If necessary, an updated version will be issued and if not a formal cover letter will be issued to supplement the cover of this Policy (identifying a revised publication date).

6.3. The senior manager for Policy & Planning will distribute updated versions to:

- Member of the Executive Council
- Head of Department
- All senior managers who will in turn distribute to their staff as appropriate.