



## POLICY AND PROCEDURE ON STUDY LEAVE

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## **1. POLICY OBJECTIVE**

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide clear procedures and guidelines on Study/Training Leave for staff. This will allow all staff applying for and undergoing Study/Training Leave to be aware of and comply with Study Leave procedures and guidelines.

## **2. POLICY**

- 2.1 Training is part of the Ministry's staff development process to:
- 2.1.1 improve job performance through knowledge, attitude and upgrading skills
  - 2.1.2 assist staff reach their personal and professional goals to support the Ministry's mandate, and
  - 2.1.3 build appropriate and relevant capabilities of staff in the Ministry.

## **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Over the years, staff training has been orchestrated by the Public Service Commission for local and overseas training through bi-lateral training agreements, international and regional organizations and other donor agencies which invite potential candidates from across Ministries to attend.
- 3.2 The Ministry of Youth and Sports (MYS) has been part of this training where officers attended overseas training through scholarships offered by regional and international agencies to provide professional training.
- 3.3 With the Civil Service Reform process, the responsibility for staff training has devolved to the MYS.

## **4. DEFINITIONS**

- 4.1 **Bond** – a commitment made by the staff member to return and work with the Ministry or Government for the period of the study leave or to refund any costs associated with the study leave incurred by the Ministry where the bond is guaranteed by a family member of the staff concerned.
- 4.2 **Personal development plan** – a plan developed by a staff member and his/her supervisor to identify areas of development which would support the staff member's ability to improve productivity and outcomes for the MYS.
- 4.3 **Study or training leave** - approved leave to pursue further studies locally or abroad.
- 4.4 **Transfer of bond** - when a bonded person transfers his/her bond to a statutory body, government or institution where she/he will take up his/her new appointment upon prior approval of the Permanent Secretary (PS).
- 4.5 **Work attachment** - refers to those officers who are attached to Institutions or Ministries where they will broaden their capacity through further training.

## **5. RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND AUTHORITIES**

- 5.1 Fiji Public Service Human Resource Training and Development Policy: PSC October 2010.
- 5.2 FNU Levy Order
- 5.3 Civil Service Act 1999 as amended
- 5.4 State Service Decree 2009

5.5 State Service Decree 2010

**6. PROCEDURES**

- 6.1 The MYS shall analyze and determine staff members' training needs to ensure they benefit from the courses they attend and are able to apply the learning in their key areas of work.
- 6.2 Training opportunities shall be based on merit and applicability in relation to the staff member's personal development plan.
- 6.3 Endorsement for official training release shall be submitted to the PS with endorsement of Section Heads together with a plan of how the staff member's work will be covered in his/her absence.
- 6.4 Direct approaches to aid donors and or foreign embassies for any training, scholarships and overseas travel grants is not permitted.
- 6.5 Informal enquiries with potential donor agencies are permitted and no commitment as to the choice of candidates may be made; the PS has the final discretion on the selection of candidates.
- 6.6 Applications to local and overseas scholarship providers' shall be submitted to the PS for decision before being forwarded to Ministry of Civil Service (MCS) or direct to the agency as the case may be.
- 6.7 Long term study leave commitments of more than two (2) months full-time will be the prerogative of the PS.
- 6.8 A staff member on study leave overseas will need to apply for a post once their contract expires i.e. appointment is not guaranteed in line with the Open Merit and Recruitment Guidelines.
- 6.9 Should the staff member fail to complete a sponsored study programme within the prescribed timeline, then he/she may need to consider aborting the programme. The PS may only consider an extension to study leave if the applicant provides evidence from the institution stating the reason(s) for the extension which may reasonably lead to the applicant successfully completing the programme within a short period of time for which the applicant may need to take annual or study leave.
- 6.10 All staff on study leave shall provide their programme timetable and exam dates at the beginning of calendar each year to the Training Officer, Corporate Support.
- 6.11 All staff studying locally or abroad shall submit to the MYS their results promptly at the end of each term.
- 6.12 A staff member attending a training course of instruction, work attachment or other similar activities abroad shall submit to the MYS within two (2) weeks of returning to work a Training Report for onward submission to PS; failure to submit the above will result in the officer not been recommended for further training.

**7. CRITERIA FOR SELECTION**

- 7.1 *Short courses, Diploma, Undergraduate and Postgraduate degrees:* the following criteria shall be considered:
  - 7.1.1 An applicant who has been appointed for at least six (6) months by the MYS and has an existing contract of employment for a period at least twice as long as the period of study proposed may apply for study leave.
  - 7.1.2 Study proposed shall be relevant to the work performed by the staff member.

- 7.1.3 The applicant shall not have any pending disciplinary cases.
- 7.1.4 Officers applying to undertake a fully sponsored course of study must meet the requirements of the donor agency.
- 7.1.5 The applicant shall produce the latest programme audit from the proposed institution and the institution's letter of offer.
- 7.1.6 Continuing students shall submit evidence of registration of the units for the semester which they wish to undertake.
- 7.1.7 Applicants offered a scholarship shall produce full details of the scholarship offer.
- 7.1.8 The MYS is not obliged to provide study leave with pay to overseas scholarship recipients; the applicant's salary will be discontinued from the date he/she ceases work for the MYS until the date he/she returns to work save if the study leave is full-time overseas for a period of two (2) months or less.
- 7.1.9 Generally, all applicants will be expected to sign a bond.
- 7.1.10 Where an applicant wishes to study locally part-time during working hours, he/she is entitled to a maximum of one unit per trimester, he/she should seek support from his/her supervisor and the PS, indicating how he/she will make up any time taken off work using the MYS flexi-time policy.

## **8 BONDING**

- 8.1 The MYS is responsible for all bonding arrangements for its staff on training/studies either locally or abroad.
- 8.2 The bonding policy requires that:
  - 8.2.1 Any staff member who proceeds on training under government sponsorship including aid made available by donor countries and organizations must be bonded as approved by the PS.
  - 8.2.2 Staff will be bonded where training is valued at F\$2,000 and above.
  - 8.2.3 A staff member bonded must serve the MYS for twice the period of study upon returning from studies to ensure effective use and transfer of skills and knowledge within the MYS.
  - 8.2.4 The bonded staff member can serve his/her bond in any organization outside Government but the transfer of the bond must be approved by that organisation and the PS. A stop flight order will be placed with the Immigration Department by the Ministry to prevent the officer from migrating unless the period of bond expires. This is to ensure that organization capitalizes on the officer's knowledge, skills and experience.
  - 8.2.5 An officer seconded to work for another organization must also be bonded according to PSC Circular 19/1990 and the General Orders 2011.
  - 8.2.6 A bond amount is the actual amount spent on the staff member's training with the salary or other costs incurred by the MYS during the study or training period. Training shall not exceed a maximum period of three (3) years in line with the staff member's contract period.
  - 8.2.7 A staff member who is still bonded and is recommended for another programme may be considered if there is no other candidate available and if the course is relevant to his/her work and must be approved by the PS.

- 8.2.8 A bonded officer who wishes to resign and/or leave the country must notify the PS in writing at least six (6) weeks in advance. Approval will only be given subject to the full payment of the full bond amount.
- 8.2.9 A staff member who does not complete serving out his/her bond period is required to pay the outstanding amount of the bond in full.
- 8.2.10 Five (5) bond forms are to be completed by the staff member, two (2) of which will be retained by the MYS; the other three (3) by the staff member and his/her guarantor/s.
- 8.2.11 There shall be two (2) guarantors none of whom shall be the spouse of the staff member.
- 8.2.12 The guarantors must be Fiji Citizens residing in Fiji earning separate minimum annual salary of \$15,000.
- 8.2.13 If the bondee is unable to complete his or her training through no fault of his/hers e.g. the course is discontinued, then the bond obligations shall be deemed to have been cancelled. However, should the bondee fail to complete the course due to personal negligence or misconduct, the guarantors shall be required to pay immediately the full amount calculated on a pro rata basis.
- 8.2.14 If a bonded officer on overseas training absconds from his/her course or in case of default by the bondee, the guarantor shall be required to pay immediately the full amount specified in the bond in one lump sum or in installments the amount calculated on a pro-rata basis. The Government reserves the right to demand the surrender or declaration of assets from the bondee or guarantors as a measure to assist in the recovery of any sum due to the Government (refer G0901 [a] [iv], [v] and [d]).

## **9. NATIONAL TRAINING PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL [NTPC] REQUIREMENTS**

- 9.1 The MYS shall comply with all training requirements of the FNU Levy Order and Training Grant Scheme. This will ensure effective training and maximum grant claim and refund to Government. The MYS shall pay particular attention to these requirements and to liaise closely with MCS Training Division accordingly.
- 9.2 The FNU Levy Order, State Services Decree 2012, requires each employer to pay to NTPC the amount equal to 1% of the total gross wages/salaries in respect of all employees occupying leviable posts.
- 9.3 The MCS is responsible for the payment of NTPC Levy for all Government Ministries based on their leviable posts annually. The MYS shall maintain accurate records of all leviable and non-leviable positions under its control as required by the MCS.
- 9.4 The MCS will claim training grants annually from NTPC for all training conducted in the civil service. The MYS will be required to assist and support this exercise by adhering to the following NTPC requirements:
  - a. Officers involved in training activities shall be registered with the TPAF.
  - b. Applications for registration on the prescribed form shall be submitted to the MCS as soon as an officer assumes training responsibility.
  - c. The MYS shall develop and maintain a register of all registered and unregistered Training Instructors and Training Officers which will be submitted to the MCS by January of each year.

d. The MYS shall keep accurate records of all training activities executed to include names of trainees, positions, course/workshop/seminar/work attachment, location, dates, and training officer/instructor for inclusion in the annual report. The MYS shall submit monthly returns for all in-house training activities (on-the-job and off-the-job) to MCS.

**10. GENERAL**

- 10.1 The MYS Training Officer shall maintain an accurate record of all Ministry training facilities, available equipment and training conducted internally.
- 10.2 Each section of the MYS shall give special emphasis on training their officers on Induction, Occupational Health and Safety, Employee Relations and Management and Supervisory Development courses.

This policy shall be bound by the relevant legislations and authorities

**EFFECTIVE DATE** .....2017

**REVIEW DATE** ..... 2018

**RECOMMENDED BY PERMANENT SECRETARY**

**Name :** Alison Burchell

**Signature:**  ..... **Date** 4/10/2017 .....

**ENDORSED BY THE MINISTER FOR YOUTH AND SPORTS**

**Name:** Hon. Laisenia Tuitubou

**Signature:**  ..... **Date** 24/10/2017 .....

**Appendix 1**

**YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY  
SEXUAL ABUSE/HARASSMENT**

**REPORT FORM**

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION OF REPORT: \_\_\_\_\_

LOCATION OF INCIDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE & TIME OF INCIDENT: \_\_\_\_\_

WHO WAS INVOLVED: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT HAPPENED: \_\_\_\_\_

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DATE & TIME REPORTED TO YPO: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE & TIME REPORTED TO LAW ENFORCEMENT: \_\_\_\_\_



