



Ministry of Education

**POLICY ON
STUDY/TRAINING LEAVE
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1.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear procedures and guidelines on Study/Training Leave for education personnel. This will grant assurances that all education personnel applying for and undergoing Study/Training Leave are aware of and comply with education procedures and guidelines requirements.

2.0 POLICY

Education training as a part of Government training in Fiji supports the training division of the Public Service Commission (PSC) in carrying out systematic process of training to:

- 2.1 improve job performance through knowledge, attitude and skills upgrading
- 2.2 assist individuals in reaching their personal and professional goals
- 2.3 support all civil servants within the Ministry of Education (herein after abbreviated to MoE) build appropriate and relevant capabilities required now and into the future.

3.0 BACKGROUND

Over the years, the In-Service Training (herein after abbreviated to IST) unit of the MoE has on behalf of the Permanent Secretary of Education (herein after abbreviated to PSE) facilitated training opportunities to all cadres of the MoE.

Staff training and development in the MoE has grown and diversified due in part to bi-lateral training agreements, international and regional organizations and other donor agencies.

The MoE through its IST unit works in partnership Government Training Centre (GTC), Fiji National University (FNU), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and other national, regional and international agencies to provide professional training that is practical, suitable and up to date thus creating the need to establish proper procedures and guidelines in facilitating this partnership.

The MoE with its reviewed training needs analysis will be able to identify priority areas for qualification upgrades and up-skilling in the MoE. The MoE is currently developing and implementing other In-house training programmes through the newly established Professional Development Unit (PDU).

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- 4.1 Island service – this refers to serving outside of VitiLevu and Vanua Levu
- 4.2 IST Committee– consist of the Permanent Secretary for Education, Deputy Secretary-Corporate Services, Deputy Secretary- Primary/Secondary, Deputy Secretary- Professional, Director-Primary, Director-Secondary, Director-CAS/TVET, Director-Corporate Services, PEO HRM, PAO, SEO Policy, SEO PDU, EO PDU.
- 4.3 Study/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 s/he will take up his/her new appointment upon prior approval of the PSE and the PSC.
- 4.5 Work attachment – refers to those officers who are attached to identified Institutions or ministries where they will broaden their capacity through further training.
- 4.6 Remote and rural schools – schools classified as disadvantaged schools which are not easily accessible to urban centres.

5.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND AUTHORITIES

- 5.1 Education Act – 1978
- 5.2 Fiji Public Service Human Resource Training and Development Policy: PSC October 2010.
- 5.3 FNU Levy Order
- 5.4 People’s Charter for Change, Peace and Progress – 2008
- 5.5 PSC Act 1999
- 5.6 PSC Circular 21/85
- 5.7 PSC Circular 29/89
- 5.8 PSC Circular Memorandum ref. PSC 5/55 (85) of 2.8.84
- 5.9 PSC circular No.19/90 (Government’s revised bonding policy)
- 5.10 State Service Decree 2009
- 5.11 State Service Decree 2010

6.0 PROCEDURES

6.1 ATTENDANCE AT TRAINING COURSES:

- 6.1.1 The MoE shall systematically analyze and determine the officers’ training needs to ensure that officers benefit from the courses they attend and be able to apply them in their key areas of work. Officers may be nominated again for the same or similar refresher course after three-five years to keep them abreast with existing and new developments.
- 6.1.2 Training opportunities shall be equitably distributed to as many officers as possible within the MoE and essential training records kept for each trained officer. Equal consideration is to be given also to officers in rural and remote

interior schools with limited access to Distance and Flexible Learning (DFL) technology.

- 6.1.3 Endorsement for official training release *shall* be submitted to the PSC with prior approval of the PSE.
- 6.1.4 Direct approaches to aid donors and or foreign embassies for any training, scholarships and overseas travel grants is not *recommended*.
- 6.1.5 Informal enquiries with potential donor agencies are permitted and no commitment as to the choice of candidates must be made, particularly where the officers concerned belong to the general administrative cadre.
- 6.1.6 Application to local and overseas scholarship providers' *shall* be submitted first to PDU for processing.

6.2 CRITERIA OF SELECTION

6.2.1 Study/Training Leave Award:

6.2.1.1 Diploma and Undergraduate degrees

- a. Applicant shall be confirmed in his/her appointment or have an existing contract of employment.
- b. Those whose contract of employment has lapsed must renew it before their application can be further consideration.
- c. Programme applied for shall be relevant to the work and teaching duties.
- d. Applicant *shall* be 45 years or younger.
- e. Applicant shall **not** have any pending disciplinary cases either with Ethics and Disciplinary Unit (EDU), FICAC, Police or any other organizations or institutions.
- f. *Applicant shall have served at least 3years in the MoE.*
- g. *Applicant shall produce the latest programme audit from the institution.*
- h. Teacher applicant's *shall* complete at least 3 years of *rural/island service and passed at least 10 units or must complete at least 12 units or more towards their programme of study if they have not served in any rural areas* to be considered for study leave with pay.
- i. Applicant shall be actively registered with FTRB
- j. Spouses shall confirm their approval for their spouse to pursue *their* programme of study.
- k. Only one *shall be granted if the husband and/or wife or siblings applied for study leave with pay.*
- l. Applicants must produce their institution's offer letter.
- m. Continuing students shall submit likewise evidence of registration of units for the semester which they are undertaking the course.

- n. Applicants on scholarship whether on study leave with pay or study leave without pay shall produce full details of their scholarship offer.
- o. Availability of funds in the IST budget.
- p. Special consideration shall be granted to applicants with science subjects in item (e).
- q. Late & incomplete applications for SLWP will not be accepted. However SLWOP will continue to be processed as and when necessary.

6.2.1.2 *Postgraduate degrees*

Items (a) – (p) above apply except (h). Instead the criteria for the completed units shall be:

- i. Postgraduate Diploma, Masters or Doctorate with course work successful completion of half the required number of units for the award of the degree.
- ii. Masters with a thesis/supervised research or PhD. – production of the offer letter from the tertiary institution.

6.2.2 Officers applying to undertake a fully sponsored course of training and work must meet the requirements of the donor agencies.

6.2.3 For local sponsored students, the decision to qualify for SLWP under IST will be dependent on the monetary value allocated for the scholarship. Recipients of these scholarships studying overseas may be exempted due to the associated high cost of living. However each applicant will be considered on a case-by case basis.

6.2.4 For contracted officers, long term Study Leave commitments will be the prerogative of the IST Committee and the Permanent Secretary.

6.2.5 Waiver of Item 6.2.1.1 and 6.2.1.2 shall be the prerogative of the PSE upon the advice of the IST Committee.

6.2.6 **In-Service with pay/without pay criteria**

6.2.6.1 Fulfilling the criteria does not guarantee an officer to qualify for SLWP as awarding such incentive depends on MoE's priority areas and IST budgetary provisions.

6.2.6.2 The final selection of an officer to be granted either a leave with/without pay shall remain the PS's prerogative.

6.2.6.1 Government to Government Scholarship

The Ministry is not obligated to provide study leave with pay to overseas scholarship recipients but that each application will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

6.2.7 Extension of Study Leave

Failures to complete studies within the prescribed period will not be extended. Extension will only be considered to study leave if the applicant provides evidence from the institution stating the reason(s) for the extension. The PSE reserves the right to grant extension on SLWP or SLWOP.

6.2.8 Examination dates

All those on study leave shall provide PDU of their programme's exam dates at the beginning of each year.

6.3 APPROVED NUMBER OF UNITS FOR EXTENSION/PART TIME STUDIES

6.3.1 Practicing teachers and officers of the MoE who undertake Extension/Part Time studies either as funded or private students is entitled to a maximum of one unit per se(tri)mester. Practicing teachers and officers shall adhere to the following maximum level/units to be enrolled for, regardless of the institution(s) of study per se(tri)mester:

LEVEL OF STUDY	NUMBER OF UNITS
100	1
200	1
300	1
400	1

6.3.2 Practicing teachers and officers who exceed the above number of units/se(tri)mester will be deemed as full time students on leave without pay, hence their salaries will cease upon notification of the breach.

6.3.2.1 Special consideration shall be given to students studying through DFL mode.

6.3.3 Consideration for waiver of 6.3.2 shall be the prerogative of the PSE upon consideration of the following:

- 6.3.3.1 Recommendation from the Head Teacher/Principal of the school where the teacher serves or Senior Manager of the Section under whom the officer is located
- 6.3.3.2 Advice of the relevant Directors under whom the teacher/officer is answerable to.

6.4 ACADEMIC RESULTS/TRANSCRIPTS, BOND FORMS, COURSE REPORTS

- 6.4.1 An officer attending any institutions whether locally or abroad shall submit to the IST Section his/her results promptly at the end of each se/trimester.
- 6.4.2 Failure to submit the above within a month of se/trimester end shall prompt the termination of his/her study leave or immediate salary cessation.

6.5 TRAINING COURSE REPORT

- 6.5.1 An officer attending a training course of instruction, work attachment or other similar activities abroad shall submit to the IST section within two (2) weeks of returning to duties a duplicate report for onward submission to PSC's Government Training Centre.
- 6.5.2 Failure to submit the above will result in immediate cessation of salary upon commencement of teaching duties.
- 6.5.3 Officers who do a thesis shall submit to the MoE Research Unit a copy of their bound thesis upon graduation.

6.6 BONDING:

The MoE shall be responsible for all bonding arrangements for its officers, on training/studies either locally or abroad.

The bonding policy requires that:

- 6.6.1 Any officer who proceeds on training under government sponsorship including any on aid-made available by donor countries and organizations must be bonded before they proceed on training either on pay or without pay to serve in the Public Service or elsewhere for a specific period. An officer seconded to work in other organizations for training purposes must also be bonded according to PSC Circular 19/1990 and General Order 2011.
- 6.6.2 Any officer who proceeds on training for eight (8) weeks or more must be bonded.

- 6.6.3 If the duration of training is between eight (8) weeks and less than one (1) year, the officer shall be bonded for a minimum period of one year.
- 6.6.4 If the period of training is *more* than one year, the officer shall be bonded for the actual length of training multiply by 2 baselines **plus** the scholarship amount, **plus** the annual salary if on study leave with pay or study leave without pay, but it shall not exceed a maximum period of six (6) years.
- 6.6.5 Six (6) bond forms are to be completed by the trainee of which two (2) are to be sent to PSC; one (1) to be retained by the MoE; the other three (3) to be retained each by the bondee and guarantors.
- 6.6.6 Officers currently serving a bond may be granted further study leave either with or without pay only upon the approval of the PSE. Considerations for the PSE's approval shall include:
- 6.6.6.1 The officer's most recent certificate/diploma/degree qualification has a GPA of 3 or above
 - 6.6.6.2 That further training of the officer will greatly benefit education in Fiji
 - 6.6.6.3 The officer will be able to serve the bond period prior to reaching 55 years old/ retirement.
 - 6.6.6.4 Evidence of placement at the institution where the proposed study will be undertaken
 - 6.6.6.5 Favourable references from 3 referees to include Principals, SEO's, HT's, Religious Leaders, etc.
- 6.6.7 A bonded officer who wishes to leave the country must notify the Permanent Secretary [PSC] in writing through the PSE 30 days in advance. Approval is subject to clearance in full of the bond amount.
- 6.6.8 Serving Officers who are bonded and wish to transfer their bond to a statutory body or government owned organization or institution must submit their request in writing through the head of department, for the consideration and decision of the PSC.
- 6.6.9 In the event of a *transfer of bond* to a private sector organization, a supplementary bond must be entered into between the bondee, the government and the recipient organization on the tenure of service at that institution outlining the guidelines that are to be invoked should the bondee decides to leave before the bond period expires.
- 6.6.10 A bondee who does not complete serving his/her bond shall be required to pay the outstanding amount of the bond.

6.7 GUARANTEE OF BOND

- 6.7.1 There shall be two (2) guarantors none of whom shall be the spouse of the bondee.
- 6.7.2 The guarantors must be Fiji Citizens residing in Fiji earning separate minimum annual salary of \$15,000.
- 6.7.3 If the bondee is unable to complete his or her training through no fault of his or hers, then the bond obligations shall be deemed to have been cancelled. However should the officer fail to complete the course due to personal negligence or misconduct then the bond obligation shall continue to apply;
- 6.7.4 If a bonded officer on overseas training absconds from his 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. GO901 [a] [iv], [v] and [d] is relevant.
- 6.7.5 Failure to submit completed and signed bond forms and salary slips of 2 guarantors will result in immediate cessation of salary for those on SLWP or when the bondee resumes duties for those on SLWOP.

6.8 NATIONAL TRAINING PRODUCTIVITY COUNCIL [NTPC] REQUIREMENTS

The MoE shall comply with all training requirements of the FNU Levy Order & Training Grant Scheme. This will ensure effective training and maximum grant claim and refund to Government. The MoE shall pay particular attention to these requirements and to liaise closely with PSC Training Division accordingly.

6.9 PERSONAL EMOLUMENTS FIGURES

The FNU Levy Order, State Services Decree 2012, requires that each employer shall pay to NTPC the amount equal to 1% of the total gross wages/salaries in respect of all employees occupying leviable posts. The PSC is responsible for the payment of NTPC Levy for all government departments based on their leviable posts annually. The MoE shall keep and maintain records on all leviable and non-leviable positions under its control as required by the PSC.

6.10 TRAINING GRANT CLAIM

Under the same decree, PSC will claim training grants annually from NTPC for all training conducted in the Service. The MoE will be required to assist and support this exercise by adhering to the following NTPC requirements:

6.10.1 Registration of Training Staff

Officers involved in training activities shall be registered with the NTPC. Application for registration on the prescribed form shall be submitted to PSC as soon as an officer assumes training responsibility. The MoE shall develop and maintain a register on all registered and unregistered Training Instructors and Training Officers. The updated list of all registered training officers/instructors is to be forwarded to PSC by January of each year.

6.10.2 Training Needs Analysis (TNA)

Heads of Sections within the MoE shall ensure that Training Nomination/ Selection and Analysis form are properly completed for each officer and a copy kept in the officer's file. The forms shall reflect all aspects of training needs of the officer for the particular post and Section V of the officer's annual confidential report. This is also a requirement for GTC and NTPC quality assurance process.

6.10.3 Departmental Training Plan

All Sections of the MoE conducting in-house programmes (on-the-job/off-the-job) shall submit Training Plans to the PSC (GTC) through the IST Unit by 15th February each year. PSC compiles and forwards to NTPC the annual Master Training Plan for approval.

6.10.4 Training Facilities

The MoE shall develop and maintain records of all departmental training facilities and equipment. An updated list of the said is to be submitted to PSC by 31 January every year.

6.10.5 Formal Selection

All training should be based on identified needs and officers selected for any training must have those needs listed in their Training Nomination/Selection and Analysis Sheet.

All nominations for Study/Training Leave shall accompany the completed Training Nomination/Selection and Analysis form (TNA). Due to the limited training opportunities and resources, selection of trainees will be based on the most meritorious.

6.10.6 Training Records

The MoE shall keep accurate records of all training activities executed to include names of trainees, positions, course, location, dates, and training officer/instructor.

The MoE shall submit monthly returns for all in-house training activities (on-the-job and off-the-job) to PSC.

6.11 Special Courses

Each section of the MoE shall give special emphasis in the training of their department officers on various topics such as Induction, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS), Employee Relations and Management and Supervisory Development courses. The MoE will deliver some of these courses through PSC CTD.

6.12 Dress Code

The PSC dress code shall apply to all participants attending training.

6.13 Training Programmes for Government Wage Earners (GWE)

GTC schedules courses for GWE staff because of their role in contributing to the attainment of the Outputs in the Corporate Plan of their Ministries and Departments. The MoE shall assist GTC conduct some of the training courses for GWE where and when there are resources provided.

7.0 GUIDELINES

7.1 The MoE shall develop a systematic process of recording and maintaining all training records of all educational personnel of the MoE.

7.2 Short workshop, seminar or work attachment attendees or participants who represent the MoE as a group shall provide a group report to PSC through the In-Service Training Unit of the MoE.

7.3 The Officer who attended training shall submit to the immediate Supervisor a report on how the knowledge or skills acquired has been utilized at the work place after a

period of 3 months to ensure return on investment from training as well as contributing to education outcome.

7.4 This policy shall be bound by the relevant legislations and authorities.

8.0 EFFECTIVE DATE.....3rd July, 2014

9.0 REVIEW DATE.....3rd July, 2017

10.0 KEY SEARCH WORDS

Government Training Centre (GTC), University of the South Pacific (USP), Fiji National University (FNU), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Professional Development Unit (PDU), In-service Training (IST), Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET), Principal Accounts Officer (PAO), Government Wage Earners (GWE), Fiji Teachers Registration Board (FTRB), Study Leave with Pay (SLWP), Study Leave without Pay (SLWOP), National Training & Productivity Centre (NTPC), University of Fiji (UoF).

11.0 APPROVED BY THE HONORABLE MINISTER FOR EDUCATION, NATIONAL HERITAGE, CULTURE & ARTS, AMBASSADOR FILIPE BOLE


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DATE