

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

The Legal Assistance Centre believes that proper utilisation of its human resources is very important for the achievement of its objectives. The Centre is committed to building the capacity of all its employees to become multi-skilled and efficient in their particular areas of work and interest. To this end, the Centre commits itself to creating a conducive environment in which staff members can improve their skills and knowledge by engaging in informal and formal studies.

### **2. DEFINITION OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

Staff development refers to courses of study designed to lead to an academic or other qualification, and which could entail a contribution from the Legal Assistance Centre in the form of a contribution towards course fees, prescribed books, study leave or unpaid leave. Most training which qualifies as staff development will involve some kind of competency test upon completion, which can result in a qualification which will be of long-term benefit to the individual involved as well as to the Centre.

A budget confirming available funds for staff development shall be confirmed by the CC at the commencement of every year.

Driving courses, completion of grade 12 and some types of computer training will be considered to fall under staff development. Staff development may also take the form of part-time or correspondence courses.



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Staff development will NOT include in-service training and short-term external training which will serve the needs of the Centre. These types of training will normally be funded by the Centre and will normally take place during paid working time. They will be arranged by various departments on a case-by-case basis and need not be approved by the Staff Development Committee, but by the Director. These types of training will not be subject to the provisions of this policy, such as the requirement to refund the training costs to the Centre under certain circumstances.

It is specifically recorded that staff development is a benefit to all employees and should not be viewed as an entitlement.

### **3. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

3.1 The following general terms and conditions apply in respect of staff development:

- i) The envisaged studies or training course must relate directly to the work of the Centre.
- ii) Should this relationship not be immediately apparent, the onus is on the staff member to provide a written motivation to the Staff Development Committee.
- iii) Should a staff member wish to make changes to a course of study, similarly a written motivation must be submitted to the Staff Development Committee for approval.
- iv) **ALL** staff development is subject to available funding and subject to the approval of the relevant co-ordinator taking into consideration any possible detrimental effect to the work of the Centre and previous staff development, length of studies, relevance and benefit to the work of the LAC as well as the



quality and commitment of the applicant's employment within the LAC. Such approval shall not be unreasonably withheld.

- v) Staff members who attend a conference, study visit, educational or training course, workshop or seminar for 2 weeks or longer, may be liable to have this period or a lesser period deducted from their sabbatical leave.
- vi) Any staff member aggrieved by a decision made in terms of this policy and/or requesting an exception to the provisions of this policy shall be entitled to appeal to the Coordinating Committee (the "CC") within 7 (seven) days from the date of such decision. The decision made by the CC shall be given within a further 7 (seven) days and shall be final.
- vii) When considering an application for staff development, the Staff Development Committee will follow these guidelines and will furthermore take into consideration the submissions from the relevant coordinator as referred to previously herein.
- viii) A staff member must work for the Centre for a minimum period of 1 (one) year before an application for staff development will be considered.

3.2 Before embarking on any studies or training, the staff member shall submit an application for staff development to the Staff Development Committee.

The deadline for an application made for staff development shall be the 28<sup>th</sup> of February in any given year.

No applications made after this deadline will be entertained.

3.3. A new application for ongoing staff development must be done annually. A motivation shall be provided for every application.

3.4 The Staff Development Committee will comprise of 3 people nominated by the CC, being one from the finance department, one from management and one from the administration department., who will follow these guidelines when



considering applications.. Applications and recommendations for nomination will be sent to the Director for endorsement. The CC will meet on submission of an application in order to consider same

#### **4. PART-TIME AND / OR CORRESPONDENCE COURSES**

- 4.1 The Centre will as far as possible accommodate requests for support to undertake such part-time and/or correspondence courses. The Centre will pay a maximum of 75% of the course fee which may include the cost of prescribed books.
- 4.2 Should the staff member not pass a course/subject on the first attempt, he/she will have to pay to repeat the course/subject, should they be inclined to do so, after which he/she may apply again for assistance for further courses.
- 4.3 If a staff member abandons a course during a particular year, he/she will be required to refund the Centre for that period, unless suitable proof is provided that the course is abandoned due to ill health or for another justifiable reason.
- 4.4 If a staff member leaves the Centre in the year following that in which he/she received staff development, the whole amount contributed to the studies for the prior year must be refunded to the Centre, unless there are extenuating circumstances. All staff members agree that such refund may be deducted from any amount due to the staff member at the end of his / her employment.

#### **5. FULL-TIME LONG TERM EXTERNAL TRAINING**



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If a staff member wants to undertake full-time long-term external training and or studies, (six months or longer), resulting in physical absence from work, the employee must resign. This will not qualify as staff development under this policy.



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