



agriculture & rural development

Department:
agriculture
& rural development
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

POLICY ON INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL BURSARIES


CUSTODIAN DIRECTORATE	HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT
DATE OF APPROVAL	22/04/2021
DATE OF REVIEW	21/04/2024
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT'S APPROVAL	

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE	
	DEFINITION OF TERMS 4
	1. INTRODUCTION 6
	2. POLICY MANDATE 6
	3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION 7
	4. POLICY PURPOSE 7
	5. POLICY OBJECTIVES 7
	6. POLICY PROVISIONS 8
	6.1 CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE MAY BE GRANTED: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STUDENTS 8
	6.1.1 INTERNAL PART-TIME STUDENTS 8
	6.1.2 INTERNAL & EXTERNAL FULL-TIME STUDENTS 9
	7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES 10
	7.1 FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENTAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE 10
	7.2 FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE DEPARTMENTAL BURSARY COMMITTEE 11
	7.3 THE FUNCTIONS OF THE HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COMPONENT 13
	8. DURATION OF STUDY 14
	9. SELECTION CRITERIA FOR BURSARY HOLDERS 14
	9.1 INTERNAL EMPLOYEES 14
	9.2.EXTERNAL FULL-TIME STUDENTS 15
	9.3.RECOMMENDATION AND APPROVAL PROCESS 16
	10. ADMINISTRATION OF PAYMENT OBLIGATION 17
	11. CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS 17
	12.BREACH, SUSPENSION OR VARIATION OF CONTRACT 19
	12.1 BREACH OF CONTRACT 20

12.2.SUSPENSION OF CONTRACT	21
13. EXTENSION OF STUDY CONTRACT	22
14.CHANGES IN STUDY DIRECTION OR INSTITUTION OF HIGH LEARNING	22
15. RECOVERY OF DEBT	23
16. TRANSFER TO/FROM ANOTHER DEPARTMENT	24
17. COMPLETION OF CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION	25
18. RESTRICTIONS AND LIMITATIONS	25
19. OVERSEAS STUDY	26
20. DISCRETIONARY GRANTS	27
21. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING	27
22. CONTROL MEASURES	30
23. REVIEW	30
24. DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISM	30
25. EFFECTIVE DATE	30

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Accounting Officer	Means the Head of Department
Bursary	Means the financial assistance granted by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) to an external candidate and employees
Bursar	Shall mean any person to whom a study bursary/aid is granted
Contract	Shall mean a contract and /or agreement regarding education, training and development entered into by the DARD and the bursar
Critical skills	Means those skills which are crucial and unique to the DARD to ensure efficient service delivery or essential to meeting the strategic objectives of the Department
DBC	Departmental Bursary Committee.
Designated groups	Means black people, women and people with disabilities.
Department	DARD, a provincial Department or a provincial government component listed in Schedule 1,2 and 3 respectively of the Public Service Act, 2016
Delegated official	Means any person to whom power has been delegated or who has been authorised to perform a duty in terms of a formal delegation in relation to external and internal bursaries
Discretionary grant	Means funds set aside by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for allocation by Members of the Executive Council (MEC) with the concurrence of the delegated official which funds must be utilised to finance the studies of needy youth in KwaZulu-Natal Province.
EEA	Employment Equity Act
General education	Means the compulsory school attendance phase as referred to in Section 3 of the South African Schools Act 84 of 1996
Higher education	Means education as defined in Section 1 of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997
HOD	Head of Department
HRD	Human Resource Development
DSDC	Departmental Skills Development Committee.

Institution	Shall mean any South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) recognised university, University of Technology, Institute, College, Secondary or High School inside the boundaries of South Africa.
Qualification	Means the formal recognition of the achievement of the required number and range of credits and such other requirements at specific levels of the National Qualification Framework (NQF) as may determine by the relevant bodies registered by the SAQA.
SAQA	South African Quality Assurance.
Scarce skills	Means those skills which are difficult to recruit and expensive to replace.
Sector Skills and Training Authority	Means an industry specific body established in terms of the Skills Development Act, 1998.
SRC	Student Representative Council.
Student	Means a successful applicant whose studies are being funded directed by provincial department or by a partner funder of the Department.
Tuition fees	Means the fees determined by the educational institution for the study courses for which a student has registered in a particular year.
WSP	Workplace Skills Plan

1. INTRODUCTION

The principal aim of the bursary policy as mandated by the Public Service Regulations is to provide financial assistance towards the attainment of formal educational qualifications in order to develop the skills of internal and external applicants in line with the Employment Equity Act. It is envisaged that through this financial assistance the beneficiaries will realise their full potential thereby addressing the skills shortage in sectors relevant to the Department. The allocation of bursaries shall take into account the hard to fill positions (scarce and critical skills) as identified in the Departmental Workplace Skills Plan (WSP).

The Department commits itself to developing of its employees and also unemployed youth to meet the future human resource requirements, as outlined in the Departmental Human Resources Plan (HR Plan), in its endeavour to realise its strategic objectives.

2. POLICY MANDATES

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996;
- Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998;
- Public Service Act, 1994 as amended
- Higher Education Act 101 of 1997;
- Further Education and Training Act 98 of 1998;
- Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995; as amended
- National Human Resource Development Strategy (HRD-SA) 2020-2030 beyond;
- National Skills Development Strategy 2010-2014;
- Promotion of Administrative Justice Act 3 of 2000;
- Protection of Equality and Prevention of Unfair Discrimination Act 4 of 2000;
- Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999;
- Public Service Regulations, 2016
- Skills Development Act 97 of 1998 as amended;
- Skills Development Levies Act 9 of 1999;
- South African Qualifications Authority Act 58 of 1995;

- Technical Assistance Guidelines on the Employment of People with Disabilities, 2003.
- White Paper on Integrated National Disability Strategy, 2001; and
- White Paper on Public Service Training and Education 1997.
- Public Service Human Resource Development Strategic Framework Vision 2015
- White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service, 1997

3 SCOPE OF APPLICATION

- 3.1 This policy is applicable to all employees within Kwa-Zulu Natal Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) who are employed on a permanent or fixed-term contract and have an intention to study on part time basis and full time basis, if the course cannot be studied on part-time basis and must be SAQA accredited qualifications in line with the Departmental Workplace Skills Plan (WSP).
- 3.2 The policy shall also apply to unemployed youth (between ages of 18 years to 35 years) or any other designated groups within KwaZulu/Natal province (KZN) who have an intention to study for qualifications within approved by the DARD which are SAQA accredited qualifications.

4 POLICY PURPOSE

- 4.1 The policy aims to address skills shortages in disciplines that are identified as hard to fill positions or scarce and critical. It provides the framework within which the DARD procedure to select applicants to whom bursaries shall be awarded, based on budget availability. It further, aims to empower employees and youth that are financially challenged by providing them an opportunity to gain access to institute of learning and obtain qualifications though full-time or part-time study.

5 POLICY OBJECTIVES

- 5.1 The objectives of this policy are to:

- 1) Grant financial assistance to DARD employees and external applicants who have applied to undertake studies in specifically identified areas where there

is scarce and critical fields or hard to fill positions within the DARD and sector in line with the HR Plan of the DARD.

- 2) Give effect to DARD's Employment Equity Plan (EEP) and HR Plan.
- 3) Assist DARD employees and external bursary holders with necessary required support inline with their field of study.

6. POLICY PROVISIONS

6.1 CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE MAY BE GRANTED: INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL STUDENTS.

6.1.1 INTERNAL PART-TIME STUDENTS

- (i) The DARD shall approve the granting of bursaries for pre-tertiary study i.e. Grade 10 to Grade 12; or equivalent and tertiary studies for its employees.
- (ii) The Bursary allocation will cover the normal costs associated with studies, which includes registration fee, tuition fee, tutorial classes when required, examination fees in exceptional cases, prescribed books study material, SRC fees, payment of project fees recommended by the institution in consultation with HRD, equipment, editing of theses, and payment of practicals.
- (iii) The internal part-time bursary holder shall be provided with accommodation and transport at Departmental expense provided that such employee has to attend compulsory contact sessions/classes/exams as determined by the institution located outside 100-kilometres radius from Headquarter/District Departmental office/Service Centre.
- (iv) The bursary holder must submit to his/her supervisor a written invitation from the institution of learning accompanied by the timetable or proof for blocked booking classes before the provision of official accommodation and transport be provided. It should be noted that the provision of accommodation and transport would only be limited to instance where it is not possible or not cost effective for an employee to travel to and from the institution.

- (v) The cost associated with the provision of accommodation and transport shall be borne by the Directorate under which the employees or internal bursary holder is managed including S&T Claims. In order to ensure the availability of funds for this purpose, these costs must be factored into the budgetary planning process of the components.
- (vi) In order to ensure that bursaries are granted to financially needy applicants;
- Bursaries will not be awarded to applicants who are current recipients of another bursary or scholarship unless such assistance does not cover the full cost of the qualification.
 - It is therefore incumbent upon the applicant to disclose the information relating to any other existing financial aid for studies.
 - Priority will be given to female employees and employees with disabilities as well as municipalities that are more rural and in line with EE Plan
- (vi) All scholarship and unforeseen priority studies whether there are local based or abroad will be presented before the DSDC for necessary recommendation together with approved work arrangement (motivation from employee's responsibility manager) by the HOD. Any abroad scholarship or study will be approved by the Executive Authority

6.1.2 INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FULL-TIME STUDENTS

- (i) The DARD may approve the granting of bursaries for post-matric studies at accredited institutions in the scarce and critical skills fields as defined by the WSP.
- (ii) The Bursary allocation covers the normal costs associated with studies which include registration fee, tuition fee, prescribed study material, tutorial classes, other prescribed practicals, examination fees, meals, Personal Protective Equipment/clothing (PPE), Student Representative Council (SRC) fees, research or prescribed project fees, payment of accommodation and meals as well as payment for prescribed work/study during vacation. The DARD will provide work

integrated learning, if it is a requirement for the course or qualification.

- (iii) The DARD may undertake to purchase special learning aids for student/s living with disability as long as such request is supported by the institution and registered medical practitioner.
- (iv) The DARD shall pay for accommodation provided by the tertiary institution's residences. In instances, where internal residence is not available, if it is the private landlord's accommodation must be within close proximity of the campus or institution and private landlord must be approved by the institution or entered into agreement with the institution.
- (v) Lease agreement outlining the conditions of the occupancy of the private accommodation must be approved by the institute. The cost for accommodation should not cost more than institution's campuses, otherwise the bursary holder will be liable for any other extra cost.
- (vi) The DARD may refund students for any costs related to the bursary terms and conditions that the student may have incurred, provided that the written proof thereof can be furnished to the DARD.
- (vii) Bursaries are granted to financially needy applicants and will not be awarded to applicants who are current recipients of another bursary schemes or scholarships. It is, therefore, upon an incumbent or the applicant to disclose information relating to any existing financial aid for his or her studies. Failure to disclose such information may result in the bursary being immediately withdrawn and money paid to be recovered.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- (a) For effective and efficient administration of bursaries within the DARD, the following structures play a role in the selection and awarding of bursaries.

7.1 FUNCTIONS OF THE DEPARTMENTAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

- (b) The Departmental Skills Development Committee (DSDC) will:
- (i) ensure that skills development interventions take place within the Department;
 - (ii) ensure that management and employees are involved in the development of skills development planning and interventions;
 - (iii) ensure that the Directorate: Human Resource Development (HRD) is consistent with individual and departmental needs which are relevant to career development programmes;
 - (iv) ensure that all employees have access to skills development interventions;
 - (v) Render continuous evaluation of skills development programmes within the DARD
 - (vi) Facilitate the determination of the hard to fill (scarce and critical) skills for external bursaries in the Sector, Province and Department to inform decisions regarding the awarding of bursaries.
 - (vii) Support the functioning of the Departmental Bursary Committee (DBC) and other Departmental Skills Development Committees.
 - (viii) Advice and make recommendations to the Head of Department (HOD) on bursary issues and
 - (ix) Oversee the effective and efficient operation of the Sub-Committees.

7.2 FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE DEPARTMENTAL BURSARY COMMITTEE

- (c) The following are functions of the DBC which is the sub-committee of the DSDC:
- (i) Rendering advice in the prioritisation of qualifications to be funded through bursary schemes;
 - (ii) Recommending deserving candidates who have the potential, but lack the financial resources to further their education at the recognised tertiary institutions within advertised fields;
 - (iii) Collating and submitting reports on the management of bursaries and scholarships to the DSDC.
 - (iv) Making recommendations on the review of the Bursary Policy.
 - (vi) Making recommendations on the appropriate placement of the student on in-service training as a pre-requisite for the purpose of completing a qualification.
 - (vii) Participating in the overall monitoring of the student study progress.
 - (viii) Monitor academic progress of bursary recipients on a continuous basis and advise the DSDC in cases of deviation from the policy provisions.
 - (ix) Addressing the concerns of the bursary holders identified during site visits.
 - (x) Consider applications for extension of duration of study, change of field of study and the institution.

7.3 THE FUNCTIONS OF THE HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COMPONENT

- (e) In order to ensure the effective administration of the bursary function, the Directorate: Human Resource Development (HRD) will perform the following functions:
- (i) Ensure placement of advert inviting applications in identified skills.
 - (ii) Pre-screen applications.
 - (iii) Take over bursary recipients who are transferred from other Departments.
 - (iv) Chair and render secretariat to the DBC.
 - (v) Scrutinise the course content of qualifications to be funded with the view to determine, whether they meet the Service Delivery requirements of the Department.
 - (vi) Communicate the outcome of the applications with recorded reasons to the applicants and relevant component or office.
 - (vii) Ensure that successful applicants conclude their contractual agreements with the DARD and captured them on PERSAL.
 - (viii) Process payments in respect of successful candidates.
 - (ix) Facilitate partnership with identified educational institutions with a view to ensure that quality service is rendered to the DARD.
 - (x) Monitor qualifications and update the bursary register.

- (xi) Any interest generated from the Institution as a result of the departmental monies paid to the institutions will be transferred back to the Departmental account as a revenue.

8. DURATION OF STUDY

8.1 In the case of internal bursary holders (part-time), the duration of study period will be doubled. In the case of external bursary holders, the period for which a full time bursary is awarded will coincide with the prescribed duration of the specific field of study.

9. SELECTION CRITERIA FOR BURSARY HOLDERS

(a) Candidates shall be selected based on the following minimum criteria:

9.1. INTERNAL EMPLOYEES

- (i) Applicants must be permanently employed by DARD and be a South African citizen.
- (ii) Applicants must be in possession of an acceptance letter from a reputable institution of learning.
- (iii) There must be a written recommendation from the Responsibility Manager.
- (iv) Certified copies of qualifications.
- (v) A fully completed application form.
- (vi) Certified copy of barcoded South African Identity Book or Card.
- (vii) Preferences will be given to Employment Equity as per Human Resource Plan.
- (viii) The DBC should ensure that there is equitable allocation of bursary spaces to the Districts; if it is possible.

- (ix) Priority should be given to an applicant who has not been a beneficiary of the DARD bursary recently years.
- (x) The committee may have recommended full-time bursaries to the candidates who are employed on permanent basis on the core function of the Department provided the following conditions are met:
 - a) Written motivation from the Responsible Manager supported by the Branch: Head indicates that there is no way to attend the course on part-time basis and
 - b) The Head of Department has approved a work arrangement that covers the applicant/s leave of absent.

9.2. EXTERNAL FULL-TIME STUDENTS

- (i) Successful completion of a Matriculation (Grade 12) with Agriculture/ Science and Mathematics
- (ii) Priority for awarding bursaries will be given to South African citizens who are residents of KwaZulu/Natal Province and the bursary will contain a service agreement on completion of the study.
- (iii) The primary relevance is the field of study and how it relates to the functions performed by the DARD to achieve its objectives.
- (iv) Compliance with the minimum requirements for admission as prescribed by the relevant academic institution.
- (v) Proven academic performance through latest academic reports.
- (vi) Equity representation (gender, race and people with disabilities) in line with the EE Plan and provincial EE demographics. Preference must be given to applicants between the ages of 18 and 35.
- (vii) An applicant may be granted a bursary/scholarship if he/she has arrear fees which preclude the external bursary holder from

registering. In this case, a bursary/scholarship may be granted for the payment of both arrear fees and funding for the year applied for on conditions that the qualification falls in the hard to fill positions (scarce or critical skills category).

- (viii) An applicant may not be granted a bursary or scholarship where he/she is receiving funding.
- (ix) Certified copies of qualifications are required.
- (x) A fully completed application form is required.
- (xi) Certified copy of a South African identity document or Card is required.
- (xii) Screening and selection of applicants using national 14 points system as follows:

Quantile rating of the schools (5 points)

Schools	Quantile 1	Quantile 2	Quantile 3	Quantile 4	Quantile 5
Scores	5	4	3	2	1

Gender and Disability (3 points)

Disability	Female	Male
3	2	1

Academic Record (3 points)

75%-100%	60%-74%	50%-59%
3	2	1

Financial Backgrounds (3 points)

Below R5 000.00	R5 001-R5 000.00	R15 001 and above
3	2	1

9.3 Recommendation and Approval process

- a) The DBC should sit within 30 days after receiving applications to verify information provided;
- b) The DBC should verify and record the authenticity of information provided;
- c) Priority should be given to an applicant who has not benefitted from the DARD bursary scheme in the past three years.
- d) Chairperson present the recommendation and report of the DBC to the DSDC
- e) Seek approval from the HoD of the recommendations after rectification by the DSDC.

10. ADMINISTRATION OF PAYMENT OBLIGATION

- (i) The DARD may cover the costs of a students' arrear fees (where applicable and as allowed in terms of this policy), compulsory levies, compulsory practical field trips/experiential learning and in-service training which are a requirement for a course or qualification but excludes the payment for any supplementary examinations or modules which must be re-written due to failure and non-compulsory levies.
- (ii) The DARD may refund a bursary holder for any costs related to the bursary or scholarship, which the bursary holder may have incurred provided that written proof thereof can be furnished to the DARD.
- (iii) DARD is not liable for payment of interest fees, which may accumulate on the fee account of the bursary holder/s as a result of late registration by the student/s.

11. CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

- (i) The DARD must prepare a contract of whereby the bursary holder must enter into a written contract with the DARD.

- (ii) The candidate must commence the course in the year for which a bursary is granted and agreed to by the DARD.**
- (iii) The bursary holder must submit proof of registration to the HRD Component within one month of registration.**
- (iv) The Director: Human Resource Development will sign the contract on behalf of the DARD as a delegated official.**
- (v) No deviation from contractual terms and conditions may be allowed unless agreed to in writing by both parties.**
- (vi) The DARD to encourage its completed external bursary holders to apply for Internship opportunities as Graduate Interns for a pre-determined fixed timeframe not exceeding twenty- four (24) consecutive months.**
- (vii) Where the DARD is unable to find suitable graduate interns placement for the bursary holder within 3 month of completion of his/her qualification, the bursary holder must be released from the obligation and the bursary holder must be informed of this release in writing. (Public Service Regulations 2016).**
- (viii) Unless otherwise stated in this policy, a bursary holder studying full-time may be sponsored up to a maximum of the number of years enrolled for that qualification as determined by the Institution unless the bursary holder fails to obtain his/her qualification within this period, in which case his/her contract must be terminated permanently and a debt recovery plan must be instituted against him/her. Prescription of debts.**
- (ix) Where contractual obligations cannot be fulfilled, due to mental disability resulting from ill health or incapacity or in the case of the death of the bursary holder, any liability for the repayment of any**

monies, which may be due in terms of the contract, shall lapse. In the case, of an internal bursary holder who undertakes part-time study, he/she will redeem the bursary by serving the Department for at least one year after attaining his/her relevant qualification.

- (x) Non-compliance with the terms and conditions may lead to the termination of the bursary agreement, and the recovery of expenses already incurred by the DARD.
- (xi) The placement of individuals in fulfillment of their bursary obligations will be at the discretion of the DARD; which will be guided by service delivery requirements.
- (xii) Where a candidate has to perform mandatory community placement as part of the course, this will be regarded as repayment in lieu of the outstanding bursary amount owed for each year of such service to the DARD.

12 BREACH, SUSPENSION OR VARIATION OF CONTRACT

The HRD and DBC must be consulted:

- a) Where a bursary holder needs to temporarily suspend or discontinue his/her studies, due to illness or any other circumstance, he/she must furnish proof requesting for a deferment of the contractual obligation from the Department. If deferment is approved, it may not exceed a period of one (1) year;
- b) Where an external bursary holder has his/her funding temporarily suspended or discontinued due to failed modules, he/she must immediately request approval for a deferment of the contractual obligation from the DARD. He/she must present the DARD with a proposal to enable him/her to complete the relevant subjects or modules within a period not exceeding one (1) year at his/her own expense to avoid immediate steps being instituted to recovery the bursary or scholarship funds already incurred by the DARD. Upon

successful completion of the failed subjects or modules the bursary holder reinstatement of the bursary or scholarship will take place in line with subsequent subjects or modules;

- c) The bursary holder must submit in writing a request for extension of the bursary contract, due to further studies;
- d) The bursary holder could not complete his/her studies or has been suspended or expelled from the Higher Education institution.;
- e) The bursary holder has to re-write the subjects at his/her own cost, within the following semester, or reasonable time in order to suspend payment for that particular period;
- f) Where a bursary holder is found guilty of an offence by the Institution of high learning, a court of law or any competent disciplinary committee, to have participated in illegal activities including, violation of the institution of high learning' code of conduct, unbecoming conduct by a bursary holder that tarnishes the image of the Department, taking of drugs which pose a danger to him/herself and others, funding will be immediately be terminated.

12.1. BREACH OF CONTRACT

(a) Breach of contract will occur when a bursary holder fails to fulfill the conditions of the bursary contract. The following constitute breach of the bursary contract and will result in the bursary being immediately withdrawn:

- (i) Discontinuation of studies for which the bursary was granted;
- (ii) Changing the field of study to other field other than specified in the contract;
- (iii) If academic performance in all registered subjects/modules is below satisfactory (all failed subjects or modules);

- (iv) Failure by the bursary holder (both internal and external) to furnish the DARD with examination results within 30 days of its release;
- (v) Resignation from the Public Service prior to fulfilment of bursary obligations;
- (vi) In the case of a bursary holder who fails to complete his/her studies satisfactorily or does not fulfill, for any reason his/her service obligation, an "out of service" debt must be instituted against him/her within 3 months of such breach and he/she is liable for the full repayment of the bursary amount which was granted to him/her including interest.
- (vii) Where a bursary holder is suspended or expelled from an institution, due to plagiarism, cheating or copying, the DARD must immediately terminate the bursary or scholarship;
- (viii) Where a bursary holder is found to have falsified information to obtain a bursary or scholarship, funding must be immediately terminated and action to recover amounts already paid on behalf of the student must be instituted by the Department.

12.2 SUSPENSION OF CONTRACT

- (i) Where a bursary holder needs to temporarily suspend or discontinue his/her studies due to illness or any other circumstance, he/she must immediately request for a deferment of the contractual obligation from the Department. Deferment where approved may not exceed a period of one (1) year.
- (ii) Where an external bursary holder has his/her funding temporarily suspended or discontinued due to failed modules, he/she must immediately request approval for a deferment of the contractual obligation from the Department. He/she must present the DARD with a proposal to enable him/her to complete the relevant modules within a period not exceeding one (1) year at his/her own expense to avoid

immediate steps being taken to institute a recovery of the bursary or scholarship amount. Upon successful passing of the failed subjects or modules, the student may apply to the delegate official for a reinstatement of the bursary or scholarship.

13. EXTENSION OF STUDY CONTRACT

13.1 The bursary holders are required to complete their qualifications within the duration of study as specified by the tertiary institution. However, in exceptional circumstances the DBC may consider application for extension of study contracts based on proof of compelling reasons beyond the bursary recipients' control. Such applications must be made in writing and must be directed to the Director: Human Resource Development for administration purpose who will report to the DBC for noting.

13.2 When granting of extension, the Director: Human Resource Development must ensure that such an extension is not in excess of one year period.

13.3 Should a bursary holder fall on his/her first attempt at writing an examination in a specific subject(s), and a supplementary examination is granted to the bursary holder, the DARD will fund the writing of such an examination for external bursars as once off.

14. CHANGES IN STUDY DIRECTION OR INSTITUTION OF HIGH LEARNING

(i) A bursary holder must consult with and make application in writing to the Director: Human Resource Development when requesting a permission to change his/her study course, any modules or study direction, failure of which may result in immediate termination of the bursary or scholarship. The Director: Human Resource Development will present it before DBC for support before is presented before DSDC for approval.

(ii) Authority may be granted in exceptional circumstances to a bursary

holder to change his/her direction of study provided that the new field of study complies with the criteria specified in this policy.

- (iii) In cases where authority has been granted for a change in study direction, funding must only be provided for the remaining years of the original field of study for which the bursary or scholarship was granted.
- (iv) Authority may be granted in exceptional circumstances to a bursary holder to change his/her institution of learning provided that the field of study is not offered at any institution of higher learning in KZN, complies with the criteria specified in this policy and that the new institution of learning is a recognized and accredited institution and , if there is no financial lost from the DARD..
- (v) The DARD must not fund any subjects or modules in the new field of study for which credit has not been granted by the institution of higher learning in the event that the bursary holder has transferred to that institution.
- (vi) Should a student change institutions or study direction without the approval of the DARD, the DARD must terminate funding and the student must be regarded as having breached the contract.
- (vii) A bursary holder may decide to request a change in either subjects or modules or institution of learning; this must within awarded bursary field and same duration of the bursary scheme or scholarship.

15. RECOVERY OF DEBT

15.1 Where a contract is breached, HRD will work with Legal Services and Financial Management Directorates to:

- (i) calculate the debt, including interest from the date the contract was breached;
- (ii) notify the bursary holder in writing of the applicable clauses of the contract, the amount of the breach, and any remaining service

obligation;

- (iii) utilise the Breach of Contract pro-forma letter to the bursary or scholarship holder mend or endorse the contract if it is in the interest of the department to do so;
- (iv) ensure that the debt is registered on BAS by the Debtors Section or designated component;
- (v) Recover the debt from the bursary or scholarship holder's pension benefits in the case where the student is within the Department, in the case of internal bursary holder whose debt owed to the Department, the PFMA, PSR 2016 and other relevant legislation will apply.
- (vi) External Bursary holder legal service will facilitate the process

16. TRANSFER TO / FROM ANOTHER DEPARTMENT

- (a) In the event of the transferred employee who has completed his/her qualification, but he/she has not honoured his/her service obligation with the releasing Department, arrangements must be made to ensure that such obligation is served with the receiving Department;
- (b) Request for take-over of existing bursary contract from the transferred employee must be made in writing. Such request must be directed to the DBC for a recommendation and ratification by DSDC before an approval be sought from the HOD;
- (c) A request for a take-over of bursary in respect of a transferred employee, who has a bursary contract from a previous employer, may be approved where the field of study will add value to the DARD. Such a request must accompany the application for transfer by the affected employee and must indicate the field and level of study.

- (d) Where an employee joins the DARD through promotion or appointment, the information relating to the bursary take-over must be declared by the employee upon assumption of duty. Such must be reported to the DBC by HRD.
- (e) On transfer of a bursary holder, the receiving Department must not reimburse the granting Department but will take on the responsibility of monitoring that the bursary holder completes his or her remaining years of study.

17. COMPLETION OF CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATION

17.1 Once all subjects are passed and the qualification completed, HRD must:

- a) Verify that the subjects passed correspond with the educational institution's qualification syllabus;
- b) Record the details in the bursary register/database and the employee's bursary file;
- c) Ensure that proof of all subjects passed are received from the educational institution;
- d) Ensure that the employee provides a certified copy of the completed qualification; and
- e) Remove the liability from PERSAL, using #4.5.2.

18. RESTRICTIONS AND LIMITATIONS

- (i) Participation in the bursary and scholarship programmes is limited to deserving students who are not currently holding other financial assistance in the form of a bursary, bursary loan, sponsorship or scholarship.
- (ii) Awarding of the bursary or scholarship preference is given to first

qualification at a tertiary level. However, consideration may be given to specific qualifications that require professional registration, or where the qualification is a foundation for certain scarce and/or critical skills.

- (iii) The bursary or scholarship offers shall be valid for four (4) months from the date of issue of the Granting/Awarding Letter after which the award lapses should the bursary holder does not register or accepted by the institution of learning.
- (iv) The bursary or scholarship is limited to applicants who produce proof of acceptance at an institution of higher learning in the field for which the bursary or scholarship was awarded, otherwise the award lapses.
- (v) Transfer of bursary or scholarship holders who have not completed studies, from one Department to another, may not be accepted during the period of study.

19. OVERSEAS STUDY

- (i) Requests to study overseas must be forwarded to the relevant Chief Directorate Skills Development Committee before it is presented before DSDC for a recommendation to the HOD and Member of the Executive Council (MEC). Upon submission of such a unique request, detailed motivation must be provided by the applicant and supported by the Responsible Manager and Branch Head and approved by the HoD as to why it is in the best interest of the Department for the applicant to embark on such studies.
- (ii) Requests from applicants for study overseas must take into account any existing prescripts or agreements governing overseas study and exchange programmes with other countries that are currently in place, which may accommodate such requests.
- (iii) An applicant who is granted permission to study overseas shall provide the Department with all relevant documentation. The applicant shall undertake to cover all necessary expenses related to passports,

visas and medical costs related to his/her travel and shall ensure that he/she is in possession of medical cover for the duration of his/her studies.

- vi) In the event, where the bursary holder is not able to cover the cost of the visa application, passport, medical examination and other similar expenses, the Department will keep on paying salary, but the applicant will utilise his or her leave day that will be administered by the Directorate: Human Resource Administration and Policy Practices.
- v) The DARD may fund either undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications at the discretion of the delegate official and must conduct orientation for the student, to assist the student to prepare for studies abroad.
- (iv) The DARD, through its international partners, may facilitate scholarships to students either for postgraduate qualifications.
- (v) The DARD must enter into a contract with the student wherein the student must commit to returning to the DARD upon completion of his/her studies and serve the DARD for the number of years that the scholarship is offered. Failure by the student to return to the country shall result in debt recovery being instituted against him/her within three months after failure to do so.

20. DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

- 20.1 The MEC may award discretionary bursary from the minimum of three (3) to maximum of five (5) external applicants. The recipients must however first, meet all tertiary requirements within hard to fill positions (agriculture and rural development fields) that are identified scarce and critical skills in line with Workplace Skills Plan:

21. MONITORING, EVALUATION AND REPORTING

- 21.1. HRD functionaries will conduct quarterly visits to tertiary institutions to ensure continuous evaluation of academic progress and compliance

with the conditions of the bursary as follows:

- (i) Students who are awarded bursaries have registered.
- (ii) That registration is in-line with the field of study funded by the DARD.
- (iii) Payments are made for the awarded courses.
- (iv) That funded students attend classes as required.
- (v) The Departmental banking account will be given to the institution, in order to clear Department's suspense account by transferring the interest onto the Department's account as revenue.

21.2 Counselling shall take place on an ongoing basis either telephonically for students at a distance or personally for students in close proximity.

- (i) Counselling sessions shall include issues relating to health, personal circumstances, financial problems, family matters and academic progress.
- (ii) After the first semester results are obtained and analysed, students shall be visited on campus for a counselling session, where the greater emphasis shall be on academic performance.
- (iii) Students who have performed poorly will be alerted to impending cancellation of funding where the poor performance continues. Reasons for poor performance shall be identified and corrective action agreed on.

A consultation report on each student visited shall be compiled. This shall form the basis for further monitoring of academic progress.

- 21.3. Specialists In various careers funded by the External Bursary Scheme** will be invited to motivate the students.
- 21. 4. Academic performance.** First semester results shall be analysed to assess academic performance and poor performers shall be identified. Funding of students who performed poorly and whose continued funding is conditional upon improved academic performance shall be terminated and they shall be advised accordingly.
- 21.5 Visits to residents.** As a result of the inherent benefits of residing on campus, students shall be encouraged to choose this option. Where this is not possible and students are residing at private residences, on-site inspections shall be undertaken to determine the suitability of the premises for study purposes. If the premises found to be unsuitable then students shall be urged to find more suitable premises.
- 21.6 Academic assessments.** Academic half yearly and year-end results shall be collected and analysed. Conditional funding may be that funding is provided for the first semester only, and, depending on performance, funding may be terminated or continued.) Recommendations shall also be made for termination of funding.
- 21.7 The report emanating from such visits** must be presented in the Bursary Committee for monitoring and evaluation purposes.
- 21.8 For Internal monitoring which entails communication** with students such meetings to ascertain performance and render support where necessary will be conducted by HRD.
- 21.9 The bursary holder must furnish the respective HRD component,** with examination results within (2) weeks after being released by the institution.

21.10 A consolidated academic progress report shall be compiled on half – yearly basis and submitted to the DBC for deliberation onward transmission to the DSDC.

22. CONTROL MEASURES

22.1 The bursary must be updated on the PERSAL, which will automatically advise of the obligation when a service termination is done. The bursary or scholarship information on file and the database must be reconciled on a regular basis.

23. REVIEW

23.1 This policy will be reviewed based on the outcome of the monitoring and evaluation process. Additionally, HRD will review the policy as and when necessary.

24. DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISM

24.1 Disputes arising from the interpretation and implementation of this Policy and Procedures shall be dealt with in accordance with the existing dispute resolution procedures.

25. EFFECTIVE DATE

FORMAL APPROVAL

This Policy is approved for implementation with effect from 1st May 2020 and replaces all other Policies on Internal and External Bursaries

Mr SD Sibande
Head of Department


SIGNATURE

22/04/2021
DATE