STUDY ASSISTANCE POLICY FOR JOHN TAOLO GAETSEWE DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

Council resolution no; 6.7.21/06/2017	Approved date: 21 July 2017
Effective date: 1 July 2017	Review Date: Annually and/ or as and when required.

Mr. M.W Molusi

AMM .....

Ms. P. Mogatle
Speaker .....

REVIEWED

1. PREAMBLE

The Study Assistance Policy is intended to assist the John Taolo Gaetsewe District Municipality in securing adequately qualified personnel for its service by providing financial assistance to employees to enable them to qualify themselves educationally for the Municipality's service and to enhance their level of competence to perform the duties assigned to them. The Scheme does not apply for students who would like to pursue full time studies or any overseas studies.

2. DEFINITIONS

All terminology used in this policy shall bear the same meaning as in the applicable legislation.

3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003
Skills Development Act 97 of 1998

4. SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This policy applies to all permanent employees of the John Taolo Gaetsewe Municipality

5. OBJECTIVES OF POLICY

To encourage career development of employees through further education.

To encourage self-development activities provided that they are along the lines regarded as beneficial to the municipality by management.

To provide financial assistance to employees who wish to improve themselves through formal courses of study.

6. POLICY CONTENT

6.1 Administration of Scheme

The Human Resources Manager shall be responsible for the administration and implementation of the scheme. The MM or his/her assignee shall have the power to conclude contracts in terms of the Scheme.

6.2 Financial Assistance

Financial assistance shall be given to permanent employee in respect of expenses to be incurred to enable him/her to obtain qualifications approved by the Municipal Manager or his/her assignee.

6.3 Financial assistance for Undergraduates students, to the amount of R10, 580.00, which will cover registration, tuition fees, and examination fees, shall be paid directly to the relevant educational institution upon receipt of proof of registration for the qualification and the relevant invoices. Post graduate students will be assisted with an amount of R21, 160.00 for registration, tuition fees, and examination fees.

Study assistance will be increased by 15% based the current approved study allowance. This increase must be reviewed on an annual basis and changes be made annually.

6.4 In the event where an employee is willing to pay for himself, an Employee will have to formally inform HR, so that she/he can qualify for leave and other benefits.

7. Contractual Obligations

Should an employee at any time suspend or abandon his/her studies for the approved qualification, be refused permission by the educational institution or examining authority to continue his/her studies, or not pass any qualifying course of study during 2 consecutive years, he/she shall be obliged, from a date fixed by the Municipal Manager or his/her assignee to repay the Municipality the full amount of the financial assistance given to him/her, inclusive of study leave, in terms of the Scheme plus. Where an employee has been granted leave on full pay he/she may, at his/her option, be permitted to have his/her accumulated annual leave reduced by an equivalent number of days taken as study leave provided that such action does not conflict with any leave regulations of the Municipality.

In the event of an employee retiring, resigning or being dismissed from the Municipality's service before having obtained the qualification in respect of which he/she was granted financial assistance in terms of the Scheme; he/she shall repay to the Municipality the amount equivalent to the amount paid for a period of one year.

With correspondence courses, the time frame in which an employee can complete a diploma qualification is at least four to five years with 18 to 22 modules that must be completed. The employee will be under an obligation to pay back all financial assistance over the period that he/she studied if the employee wants to resign, an employee has to remain in the service of

the Municipality for a period of one year of every year of assistance or the money equivalent to the number of years will be recovered. It does not place an obligation on the student to remain in the service until the qualification has been completed.

In the event of an employee dying or becoming physically or mentally incapable of completing the qualification in respect of which he/she was granted financial assistance in terms of the Scheme, under such circumstances, he/she or his/her estate, as the case may be, shall not be obliged to repay the money to the municipality.

For block release courses, an employee shall, whether or not he/she obtains the qualification concerned, serve the Municipality for two years in respect of each year in which study leave up to and including twenty-six weeks is taken in any one year, the period of obligation being one year for each period of study leave up to twenty six weeks per year taken.

Service obligation shall not be condoned on a pro-rata basis. Therefore, unless the employee remains in the service of the Municipality until the expiry date of his/her service obligation he/she shall remain liable for the full settlement of the financial assistance received in terms of the Scheme.

If an employee is unable to pay the Municipality the full amount owing to the Municipality in terms of the Scheme, the Chief Financial Officer shall, in consultation with the employee, make suitable alternative arrangements to facilitate full settlement of the amount owing to the Municipality, provided that such arrangement shall not extend beyond one year from the date on which the employee originally became liable for the full settlement of his/her debt to the Municipality in terms of the Scheme.

8. Study Leave

An employee who is a part-time or distance learning student and who is studying for an approved qualification, shall be granted examination, study leave as follows:

Examination leave for the date or dates on which he/she is required to present himself/herself as a candidate for such examination.

The employee may be granted study leave on full pay to attend lectures or to undertake practical work or to attend practical demonstrations in cases where he/she establishes to the satisfaction of the Municipal Manager or his/her assignee that such leave is essential for the fulfilment of the contract entered into in terms of the Scheme.

The study leave benefits shall not apply to an employee who wishes to repeat a qualifying course of study which was previously written

by him/her for which examination leave was taken and which he/she failed. If an employee was unsuccessful in an exam, the study leave should be converted to annual leave.

- o An employee who takes study leave shall be considered as having received financial assistance in terms of the Scheme and shall be required to sign the prescribed contract. The employee who did not receive any financial assistance in terms of the scheme but has made the necessary arrangements with HR for funding his/her own study will also qualify for study leave.
- o The number of leave days will be taken according to the leave policy.

9. Leave for Research

A maximum of 15 days special leave for research purposes shall be granted to an employee admitted for a post graduate course, provided relevant documentation is presented.

10.IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

This policy will be implemented and affected once approved by Council.

11.POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed as and when required

12.ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Municipal Manager or his assignee shall have the authority to:

Approve qualifications and its priority for inclusion in the Scheme.
Approve the continuation, extension, variation or termination of facilities to individual students on conditions laid down in the Scheme.

In conjunction with the Chief Financial Officer determine the method and terms under which money owing to the Municipality for financial assistance paid in terms of the scheme shall be repaid.

Adopt whatever actions are deemed necessary to address any anomalous situation which is not specifically addressed by the Scheme.

Continuously monitor the effectiveness of the Scheme and submit recommendations to the Municipality whereby the Scheme may be amended to accommodate changing or anomalous circumstances.

13. PENALTIES

Non-compliance to any of the stipulations contained in this policy will be regarded as misconduct, which will be dealt with in terms of the Disciplinary Code.