



Secretariat

7 May 2021

Administrative instruction

Education Assistance Programme for General Service staff members and National Professional Officers

1. The purpose of the present instruction is to inform staff members of the eligibility requirements, criteria and relevant procedures of the Education Assistance Programme, which is applicable to General Service staff members and National Professional Officers only.
2. The purpose of the Programme is to encourage and assist General Service staff members and National Professional Officers to pursue learning activities that lead to the acquisition of competencies by providing them with financial support.

Eligibility

3. All General Service staff members and National Professional Officers are eligible to apply for funding under the Programme, provided that they have held a fixed-term appointment under the Staff Rules of the International Seabed Authority ([ISBA/ST/SGB/2020/1](#)) for a period of at least six months immediately preceding the date of application and that they have an expectation of remaining with the Authority for not less than 12 months immediately following completion of the learning activity.
4. All General Service staff members and National Professional Officers applying for funding under the Programme must have completed all mandatory training required by the Authority.
5. Owing to limited availability of funds, once a staff member has received funding for a learning activity under the Programme, he or she will not be eligible to apply for funding under the Programme for a period of five years following completion of the learning activity.

Criteria

6. In order to qualify for funding under the Programme, the proposed learning activity must be endorsed by the staff member's head of office and meet at least one of the following requirements:
 - (a) Learning is related to the acquisition, enhancement or expansion of knowledge and skills in relevant focus areas of the Authority, including management practice, and leads to an academic qualification, such as a degree, diploma or certificate, in that area;



(b) Learning is relevant to the current or future job responsibilities of the staff member concerned;

(c) Learning is part of a short- or long-term professional development plan for the staff member concerned that has been agreed with the respective head of office and is reflected in the individual development plan.

Funding and learning days under the Education Assistance Programme

7. Upon satisfactory completion of the learning activity, the staff member may request reimbursement of 70 per cent of the total expenses incurred for registration, tuition and course materials, where applicable, subject to a maximum of \$3,000 per year.

8. Any request for reimbursement under the Programme should first be approved by the respective head of office and thereafter submitted to the Learning Advisory Board for its endorsement. On the basis of recommendations of the Board, the Secretary-General will decide whether to award funding.

9. No advance payment may be claimed under the Programme. It is the responsibility of the staff member to pay the full cost of the learning activity and seek reimbursement in line with the present instruction.

10. Requests for reimbursement under the Programme should be submitted on form F.10 (voucher for reimbursement of expenses) within 12 months of successful completion of the learning activity. The claim must be accompanied by a related certificate or diploma or other evidence in writing of the staff member's attendance at, or participation in, the learning activity, satisfactory completion of the course of study and original invoices and receipts for the reimbursement of the registration fees, tuition and course materials, where applicable.

11. If a staff member withdraws from the learning activity or fails to complete the programme, the staff member should notify the Learning Advisory Board in order to ensure reallocation of the committed funds.

12. In the event that a staff member separates from service on his or her own initiative within 12 months of completing a learning activity supported under the Programme, the staff member shall return to the Authority any funds reimbursed under the Programme in the 12-month period prior to the date of separation.

13. Under the Programme, staff members are entitled to five working days per year for learning activities. If so approved by the respective head of office, those working days can be claimed as learning days, which should not be charged to annual leave.

14. All learning activities and individual learning reports of staff members, as well as the total amount of funding awarded to all staff members under the Programme, will be monitored and reviewed regularly by the Learning Advisory Board.

Final provisions

15. The present administrative instruction shall take effect on the date of its issuance and remain in effect until further notice.

16. Information circular [ST/IC/2011/02](#) is hereby withdrawn.

(Signed) Michael Lodge
Secretary-General