



POLICY ON TRAINING AND BONDING



CONTENTS

TOPIC		PAGE
1.0	BACKGROUND	1
2.0	DEFINITIONS	1
3.0	POLICY OBJECTIVE	2
4.0	POLICY	2
5.0	RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND AUTHORITIES	11
6.0	PROCEDURES	11
7.0	GUIDELINES	13
8.0	EFFECTIVE DATE	15
9.0	REVIEW DATE	15
10.0	KEY SEARCH WORDS	15
11.0	APPROVAL	16
	APPENDIX	17

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Human resource development is a vital part of an Organisation in order to improve performance and enhance productivity. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs ('**MOFA**') in this regard recognizes the importance of continuous learning and development of staff to meet the challenges of the dynamic environment and the evolving expectations of our stakeholders/clients.
- 1.2 This policy document shall ensure that all staff of the Ministry will prioritize training to improve their skills and knowledge which will ultimately lead to a resourceful, competent and cost effective workforce.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

2.1 Bond

Legal document which binds an officer while undergoing any study/training as per the Public Service Commission Circular No. 25/2013 and amended to bind the officer to the Ministry rather than to Government generally.

2.2 Guarantor

A person signing the Bond Form who is a resident of Fiji and has the ability to meet the bond obligations, should the Obligor default.

2.3 Long-Term Donor Funded

Refers to long term courses over 6 months, funded by donor agencies.

2.4 Short-Term Donor Funded

Refers to short term courses, ranging between 1 to 6 months, funded by donor agencies.

2.5 Senior Executive Management

Officers on Director Level and above [USO4 and above or equivalent].

2.6 Training

Any course, workshop, meeting, seminar, symposium, conference and work attachment attended either locally or overseas.

2.7 Training Period

The duration of a study or training programme.

2.8 Work Attachment

A way in which officer obtains practical experience in his/her line of work.

3.0 POLICY OBJECTIVE

The purpose of this policy is to provide the standard procedures and guidelines in relation to Training and Bonding within the Ministry.

4.0 POLICY

4.1 General

4.1.1 This policy shall provide direction on training in the Ministry.

4.1.2 The Ministry shall –

- a) provide a working environment where continuous learning and development takes place;
- b) ensure that staff are supported and enabled to meet changing demands of the organisation and its stakeholders/clients;
- c) ensure that the organisation achieves its strategic objectives; and
- d) facilitate staff development at work and/or personal development through assisting employees to broaden, deepen and enhance their existing skill base.

4.1.3 The policy shall apply to the following categories of employees –

- a) Established Staff;
- b) Government Wage Earners;
- c) Interns, Project Officers [on short-term local training programs]; and
- d) Temporary Officers [for overseas training programs, temporary officers shall only be considered, if there are no existing permanent or contracted officers available to participate in the programme].

4.1.4 Where individual training needs have been identified through support and supervision or the appraisal process, employees are

encouraged to discuss this with their respective managers and develop an Individual Learning Plan. This shall specify the training required, the method through which it will be achieved, what organisational objective it relates to, whether there are cost implications and the timescales involved.

- 4.1.5 The Corporate Services Unit ('Unit') shall compile a Learning and Development Plan; identify the training and development needs of officers at individual, occupational and organisational levels.
- 4.1.6 The Unit shall develop a Training Plan and Training Calendar for the Department.
- 4.1.7 The Department shall ensure that all Established Officers attend at least **40 hours** of training in a year.
- 4.1.8 Work-related training requirements shall also apply to Government Wage Earners and Project Officers to attend at least **20 hours** of training in a year.
- 4.1.9 The Unit shall ensure that officers approved to attend overseas training are provided with appropriate allowance in line with the relevant Finance Circulars.
- 4.1.10 All employees shall be required to compile and submit a Training Report using the template attached as **Appendix I**.
- 4.1.11 Employees who fail to submit their Training Reports within the timelines stipulated below shall not be considered for any training opportunity for the next six (6) months.

4.2 Short Term Training

- 4.2.1 Requests for overseas and local trainings shall be facilitated by the Unit in accordance with the Learning and Development Plan, as per the outlined criterion and training requirements.
- 4.2.2 Requests for specific or selected short-term training programmes provided by other local accredited institutions shall also be

considered by the Unit subject to approval by the Permanent Secretary ('PS').

4.3 Administration

4.3.1 The Unit shall maintain an accurate record of all training conducted within the calendar year.

4.3.2 Staff are encouraged to keep a record of all training (**training log**) and development that they have undertaken.

4.3.3 The Unit shall coordinate the following mandatory training programmes –

- Induction;
- Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)
- Employment Relations (Schedules A, B, C, D);
- Management and Supervisory Development; and
- any other relevant training.

4.4 Mentoring/Coaching

4.4.1 The Unit shall maintain a record of the mentoring/coaching system. All identified mentors/coaches shall be trained and selected specifically, for their interpersonal skills and interests in developing staff.

4.4.2 Individual Unit Heads shall be responsible for maintaining accurate records within their respective Units in relation to this.

4.4.3 Mentors/coaches shall maintain proper documentation of such activities.

4.5 On-The-Job Training

4.5.1 The Unit shall implement on-the-job training using 'real work' in 'real time' as a basis for effective transfer of job related knowledge and skills.

4.5.2 Supervising officers shall reinforce the knowledge, skills and

attitudes gained by subordinates in such training programs by direct supervision, documentation and maintenance of records for inspection.

4.6 **Bonding**

4.6.1 All officers shall be bonded if they are:

- i. granted study leave with salary;
- ii. on sponsored full-time or part-time studies by the Ministry or Development Partners;
- iii. on sponsored short-term or long-term programmes, in a local or overseas institution;
- iv. on work attachments;
- v. pursuing any other Ministry or Donor sponsored programme that is related to capacity building; and
- vi. attending a training programme that is valued at FJD 2000 and above.

4.6.2 Calculation of Bond Period:

The calculation of bond period shall be done in line with the conditions tabulated below:

	<u>Bond Calculation</u>
For trainings and work attachments with cost of more than FJD 2,000 and a duration of up to 3 months	The bond period shall be 6 months.
For trainings and work attachments with a duration of more than 3 months but up to 6 months	The bond period shall be 12 months.
For trainings and work attachments with a duration of more than 6 months but up to 1 year	The bond period shall be 18 months.

For trainings and work attachments with a duration of more than 1 year	The bond period shall be calculated at a ratio of 1.5 years for every year of training or work attachment undertaken.
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4.6.3 Cost of Bonding/Training

The cost of bonding shall be calculated based on the actual cost paid inclusive of course/tuition fees, accommodation and any allowances paid as applicable. In cases of donor funded trainings, the cost of training shall be determined through acquiring the costs accounted for by the donor where possible or the salary paid to the officer for the duration of the training.

4.6.4 Bond Service:

- i. All employees shall serve their bond within the Department after attending training;
- ii. This will ensure the effective use and transfer of skills and knowledge acquired through training to the organisation; and

4.6.5 Bond Administration:

The Corporate Services Unit shall be responsible for the following:

- i. Executing the initial bonding arrangements with individual officers using the Bond Forms attached as **Appendix II**;
- ii. Verification and confirmation of bonds;
- iii. Monitoring of bonds;
- iv. Recovery of all loans owing in terms of abscondment of bonds and redeeming the monetary value of unserved bonds;
- v. Granting official clearance when required;
- vi. Ascertaining bonding details of employees who wish to resign and granting approval and clearance if bond has been cleared; and
- vii. Clearance of served bonds.

4.6.6 In the situation, where an employee who is still bonded is

recommended to attend another programme, the following criterion shall apply:

- i. there is no other suitable candidate available or the training is necessary for the officer recommended;
- ii. approval has been granted by PS MOFA; and
- iii. the value and duration of the new bond runs concurrently to the existing Bond, the latter Bond beginning at the date the officer returns from the latter training.

4.6.7 If the officer is unable to complete his/her training through no fault of his/her own and is able to provide relevant justifications, then the bond obligations shall be deemed to have been cancelled. The same shall apply if the Officer's employment ends before the completion of the Bond or Bonds the Officer may be serving and the Permanent Secretary shall only pursue civil recovery proceedings if, in the Permanent Secretary's opinion, the recovery is warranted by the Officer's conduct. In the same vein, if the Officer fails to complete the course due to personal negligence or misconduct then the bond obligations shall continue to apply.

4.6.8 If the bonded employee defaults, the employee shall pay one third of the bond amount immediately in one lump sum and the balance to be paid by monthly instalments over a period of three [3] years or within a period as determined by PS MOFA. The execution of the bond shall commence immediately upon completion of the undertaking by the bonded employee. The Permanent Secretary shall have discretion to accept reduced payment, if in his/her opinion, the same is warranted. In exercising this discretion, the Permanent Secretary must give due consideration to existing legislation and subsidiary legislation as listed at 5.0.

4.6.9 A bonded employee who wishes to migrate or resign from the service but has yet to fulfil his/her bond obligations shall notify PS MOFA in writing through their respective Unit Manager at least six [6] weeks in advance. Approval will only be given subject to the full payment of the bond amount owed to the Ministry. The Permanent Secretary shall have discretion to accept reduced

payment, if in his/her opinion, the same is warranted. In exercising this discretion, the Permanent Secretary must give due consideration to existing legislation and subsidiary legislation as listed at 5.O.

- 4.6.10 In the case of a bonded employee who has absconded, the guarantor[s] who must be Fiji citizens, will be required to pay one third of the bond amount immediately in one lump sum payment and the balance to be paid by monthly instalments over a period of three [3] years or within a period as determined by PS MOFA. The Permanent Secretary shall have discretion to accept reduced payment, if in his/her opinion, the same is warranted. In exercising this discretion, the Permanent Secretary must give due consideration to existing legislation and subsidiary legislation as listed at 5.O.
- 4.6.11 A bonded employee or Guarantor[s] who wishes to take leave abroad will need to seek the approval and clearance to travel from PS MOFA.
- 4.6.12 Officers who default their bond obligations shall pay the Ministry the monetary value of the bond period not served.
- 4.6.13 All bonds shall be signed by at least two (2) Guarantors, who shall meet the following criteria:
- i. The Guarantors shall be residents or Fiji citizens. They shall not hold dual citizenship;
 - ii. The Permanent Secretaries/Heads of Department shall be satisfied with the ability of the Guarantors to meet the bond obligations;
 - iii. Guarantors shall earn a combined gross salary which is similar to or higher than the salary of the Bondee; and
 - iv. Have not been declared bankrupt.
- 4.6.14 In the event that a Guarantor dies or wishes to migrate, the Bondee shall inform the Unit and arrange for a new Guarantor.
- 4.6.15 With regards to Guarantors for overseas courses, the Unit shall

verify and confirm the financial status of the Guarantor and their ability to pay the bond amount should the Bondee default in payment or absconds.

4.6.16 The Ministry reserves the right to demand the surrender or declaration of assets from the Bondee/Guarantors, as a measure to assist in the recovery of any sums owed. The Unit shall be responsible for the facilitation of bonding arrangements of the officers on training, and advise officers accordingly.

4.6.17 The Officers who accompany delegations to attend meetings, conferences, seminars and symposiums shall be the only ones exempted from the provisions of bonding.

4.6.18 A list of all officers who are bonded shall be submitted to the Fiji Revenue and Customs Authority for monitoring purposes.

4.7 Induction Training

4.7.1 The Unit shall ensure that all new recruits, staff transferred and promoted shall undergo relevant induction training within the first three (3) months of commencing work at the Ministry.

4.7.2 All new appointees shall receive at least one week of relevant training while the duration of induction training for staff transferred and promoted could be varied depending on the nature of training required.

4.8 Occupational Health and Safety Training

4.8.1 OHS trainings/exercises shall be conducted once every six [6] months.

4.8.2 Other programmes that are essential to upholding and promoting OHS initiatives and requirements for individuals and the organisation shall also be conducted.

4.9 Employment Relations Training

Employment Relations trainings shall be conducted by the Unit as set out in Schedules A to D (see **Appendix III**).

4.10 **Monitoring and Evaluation of Training**

4.10.1 The Director Corporate Services ('DCS') through the Unit shall be responsible for ensuring that a central record of employee training is created and maintained, and that all training and development activities are monitored and evaluated in terms of suitability, effectiveness and value for money.

4.10.2 Post Evaluation

The immediate supervisor shall conduct the Post evaluation of the trainee and submit the same to the Unit and Training Coordinator (if required) respectively.

4.11 **Knowledge Management**

4.11.1 Employees returning from training shall ensure that they impart and share with their colleagues and subordinates the experiences and knowledge gained from all forms of trainings that they attend.

4.11.2 This shall be done through brief presentations within Knowledge Sharing Sessions and staff meetings as organised by the Unit.

4.11.3 An Overseas Training Report shall be produced within two (2) weeks from the date of resumption after training. This shall be compiled and submitted through the respective Unit Manager (ufs) to the Director Corporate Services.

4.11.4 The Unit shall then facilitate the progression of the Training Report to the Executive Management.

4.11.5 A Local Training Report/Brief shall be produced within two (2) weeks from the date of resumption after training and submitted to the Unit.

4.11.6 These Training Reports shall be prepared in accordance with the template attached as **Appendix I** and also be uploaded on the Ministry's Shared Drive facility in the Public Folder for information sharing.

5.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATIONS AND AUTHORITIES

- 5.1 Constitution of the Republic of Fiji;
- 5.2 Fiji Public Service Training and Bonding Policy;
- 5.3 General Orders 2011;
- 5.4 Terms and Conditions of Employment for Government Wage Earners 2010;
- 5.5 Examinations Act 1978;
- 5.6 Public Service Commission Circular Memorandum dated 11/10/2013;
- 5.7 Procurement (Amended) Regulations 2012;
- 5.8 Fiji National University (Amendment) Decree 2010;
- 5.9 Higher Education Promulgation 2008; and
- 5.10 Internal Circular No. 12/2015 dated 11/05/2015
- 5.11 Finance Circular 3/2015.

6.0 PROCEDURES

6.1 Overseas Training

- 6.1.1 Training offers from donor agencies shall be submitted to the DCS through the Unit.
- 6.1.2 DCS recommends to the PS MOFA through the DSO in consultation with the relevant Section Managers and Director the most suitable officer to attend the training. Recommendations at the most shall correspond to the Learning Development Plan.
- 6.1.3 Once the nomination is approved by the PS, the names shall be conveyed to the respective Section Heads and Director and the officer nominated will be advised to complete the application form and submit to the Unit on or before the due date.
- 6.1.4 The nominated officer shall then be required to complete a Training Needs Analysis (TNA)/Survey Form together with any other relevant documentation required and submit to the Unit before the stipulated deadline. The TNA Form is attached as **Appendix IV**.
- 6.1.5 The Senior Training Officer shall send the application as required to the respective focal points for Civil Service Trainings and donor agencies for facilitation from their ends.

- 6.1.6 The officer selected for overseas training shall be issued letter of official release for the Overseas Training. The officer must complete the necessary bond form and suffice any other relevant requirements.
- 6.1.7 The Unit shall undertake any visa facilitation after the nominated officer has filled the visa forms. Further information required by the Embassies will be made known to the Officer.
- 6.1.8 The Unit shall be responsible for the facilitation and issuance of Diplomatic Notes to expedite visa and travel facilitation when required.
- 6.1.9 The Unit shall ensure that prior written approval has been taken from PS in relation to the participation of officers in any training programme, seminar or workshop (both local and overseas) funded by any foreign Government or international organisation.
- 6.1.10 All requests for the participation of officers in any such training programme, seminar or workshop must be submitted in writing to the Permanent Secretary for endorsement.
- 6.1.11 The Unit shall be responsible for facilitating the travel arrangements, Visa, itinerary, accommodation, etc in consultation with the Officer who will be travelling.
- 6.1.12 Calculation of per-diem shall be done in accordance with Finance Circular 8/2017 in line with the rates obtained from Ministry of Finance. The Unit shall be responsible for this provided that the initial request has been raised countersigned by the officer travelling and verified by the Unit Director and Director Finance.
- 6.1.13 The request for per-diem payment shall be submitted by the Unit to the PS for approval. The payment shall be made before the officer departs the country. The Unit shall also facilitate transport requirements for the officer.

- 6.1.14 Upon return from the overseas training, the officer shall prepare and submit a Training Report to the Unit within two (2) weeks of his/her resumption and conduct internal presentations to share the knowledge acquired from the training as and when notified.

6.2 Local Training

- 6.2.1 The Unit shall request for nominations from the Directors who will consult the Sections Heads on relevant trainings that will be done for that month in accordance with the training calendar.
- 6.2.2 The Unit shall then submit nominations to PS through DCS for approval. The nominations shall be based on the Individual Training Needs for all staff as per the approved Training Plan and the content of the course offered.
- 6.2.3 Once the nomination is approved, the officer shall be required to complete a Training Needs Analysis/Survey Form provided as **Appendix IV**, and submit to the Unit before the commencement of the training.
- 6.2.4 The officer shall be issued with a "Letter of Official Release" to attend the training.
- 6.2.5 Upon return from local trainings, the officer shall prepare and submit a Training Report/Brief to the Unit within seven (7) days from the date of resumption and conduct internal presentations if required to share the knowledge acquired from the training.

7.0 GUIDELINES

7.1 Prior Notification for Non-attendance of Training Programmes

- 7.1.1 An employee who is not able to attend a training programme assigned to them, shall notify the Unit as soon as possible so that alternative arrangements can be made prior to the scheduled date of training.
- 7.1.2 Employees who fail to attend training courses selected for them shall provide written justification(s) to the Director Corporate

Services and may be liable for disciplinary action subject to the justification provided.

7.2 Submission of Training Reports

- 7.2.1 All Training Reports shall be submitted to the Senior Training Officer in line with the timelines detailed above.
- 7.2.2 Employees who fail to comply with the guidelines specified in relation to this shall not be considered for future training opportunities and may be subject to disciplinary action.

7.3 Submission of Certificates

- 7.3.1 Upon completion of the training programme at the respective Institution, employees shall submit a certified copy of their Certificate to the Unit.

7.4 Training Resources

- 7.4.1 The Unit shall ensure that training activities are carried out within budgetary allocations and resources available to them.
- 7.4.2 Officers involved in training activities should be registered with the National Training and Productivity Centre ('NTPC') as either a Training Instructor or a Training Officer. The Department shall be responsible for meeting the relevant fees.
- 7.4.3 The training officers need to constantly up-skill themselves to meet the demand/changes taking place in the service in terms of human resources development. The Ministry shall be responsible for meeting the relevant fees.

7.5 Training Records

- 7.5.1 Full documentary evidence shall be made available to the NTPC upon request for inspection in accordance with the assessment criteria for "Method A Employers" under Grants Scheme 5. Further information on NTPC requirements and "Method A Employers" are attached as **Appendix V**.

7.6 National Training and Productivity Centre [NTPC]

7.6.1 The Unit shall submit to the Fiji National University accurate Personal Emolument figures in respect of all their levy positions.

7.6.2 It shall be the responsibility of the Unit to claim training grants annually from Fiji National University under Method A for all training conducted as stipulated in the Fiji National University (Amendment) Decree 2010.

7.7 General Guidelines:

7.7.1 The Policy, Planning and Research Unit shall be responsible for the review of this policy on a timely basis or as the need arises.

7.7.2 Non-compliance and abuse of any provisions set out in this Policy shall be grounds for redress and disciplinary action.

7.7.3 All staff shall have the responsibility of adhering to the official instructions stated in this Policy and other relevant legislations to avoid any unnecessary actions taken against them.

8.0 EFFECTIVE DATE.....22/02/2018

9.0 REVIEW DATE.....22/02/2020

10.0 KEY SEARCH WORDS

Overarching Policy, Guarantor, Bondee, Competent, Training Needs Analysis, Induction Training, Consecutive Bonding, Outsourcing, Mentoring.

11.0 APPROVED BY THE PERMANENT SECRETARY MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, MAJOR GENERAL (RET'D) IOANE NAIVALURUA


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Signature

22/02/2018

Date