

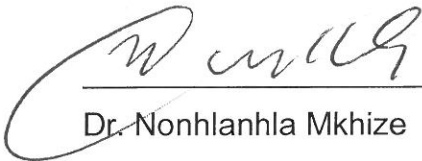
# **Provincial Bursary Policy for External Clients**

Mpumalanga Provincial Government  
Provincial External Bursary Policy as amended

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**MPUMALANGA PROVINCE**

Provincial Bursary Policy for External Clients is approved.



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Dr. Nonhlanhla Mkhize  
Director- General  
Office of the Premier  
Mpumalanga Province

Date 5/11/2014

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## DEFINITION OF TERMS

Scarce skills refer to “those occupations in which there is a scarcity of qualifications and experienced people, currently or anticipated in future, either (a) because such skilled people are not available, or (b) because they are available but do not meet employment criteria” (Department of Labour, Clause 5.9: *Draft Human Resource Development Strategy*).

According to the Department of Labour, scarcity can either be absolute, as in (a) above or relative as in (b) above.

- a) **Absolute skills** – There are no skills available.
- b) **Relative scarcity** – Suitably skilled personnel are available, but they do not meet other employment criteria, such as the remuneration level on offer and conditions of employment that are provided.
- c) **Critical skills** – These are skills referred to as “specific, key or generic and top up skills within an occupation” (*Draft Human Resource Development Strategy* in John Erasmus and Mignonne Breier, 2009)

## RELEVANT ACTS AND LEGISLATION

This Provincial Bursary Policy is subject to the following regulatory framework. This includes most legal sources that underpin skills development mandates in the Republic of South Africa and in the Mpumalanga Province:

- a) *Constitution, 1996;*
- b) *Public Service Act , 1994;*
- c) *Public Service Regulations, 2001;*
- d) *White Paper on Public Service Training and Regulations,1997;*
- e) *White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service,1995;*
- f) *White Paper on Human Resource Management,1997;*
- g) *Skills Development Act, 1998;*
- h) *Skills Development Levies Act,1999;*
- i) *South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (including National Qualifications Framework, 2008);*
- j) *Employment Equity Act,1998;*
- k) *Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997;*
- l) *Labour Relations Act, 1995;*
- m) *Further Education and Training Act, 1998;*
- n) *Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa 2010 - 2030;*
- o) *The Provincial Human Resource Development Strategy;*
- p) *The National Skills Development Strategy III;*
- q) *The National Growth Path; and*
- r) *The Mpumalanga Economic and Development Growth Path*

# MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT PROVINCIAL BURSARY POLICY FOR EXTERNAL CLIENTS

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government has an obligation to develop the Human Resource capacity of the Province. To discharge this obligation, the Provincial Government provides financial assistance in the form of bursaries to qualifying residents of Mpumalanga to further their studies. This is supported by the relevant legislation indicated in this policy document.

On 10 March 2010, the Mpumalanga Provincial Executive Council resolved to (EXCO Resolution Number 14/2010) centralise all Bursary Schemes into a centralized unit located in the Department of Education.

Prior to this resolution, the administration of the financial study assistance provided by the Provincial Government to Provincial residents was decentralised. Each Department within the Provincial Government had its own bursary scheme that catered for Provincial students studying towards qualifications that are aligned to the Departmental mandates. Each had its own policy and budget to fund its Bursary scheme. This policy replaces all individual Departmental policies pertaining to bursaries within the Mpumalanga Provincial Government.

With effect from the 2014/2015 financial year (2014 academic year) this policy shall govern the disbursement of all bursary schemes administered by all the Departments taking into consideration the proportional distribution according to district, gender and disability. The allocation shall be pro-poor and biased towards rural communities with potential to

succeed in higher education and training and artisan training offered by accredited Higher Education Institutions in the country.

## **2. POLICY STATEMENT**

The Mpumalanga Provincial Government reaffirms its commitment to increasing its current skills base, within the Province and within the Provincial Government, by providing the residents of Mpumalanga with opportunities to further their education and development. This is done in a manner that seeks to maximise the Provincial socio-economic capacity and service delivery by improving the supply of required and critical skills.

The core challenges that this policy seeks to address comprise of the following elements:

- a) Incompatibility of studies for which bursaries are awarded and funded between the Provincial scarce skills base and scarce skills bases of individual Departments within the Provincial Government.
- b) Lack of systems, outcomes and competency-based approach to Education, Training and Development initiatives directly linked to the requirements and needs of the Provincial Government and its Departments as outlined in the following policies and legislation:
  - aa) National Skills Development Strategy III;
  - bb) National Growth Path;
  - cc) Skills Development Act, 1998;
  - dd) Further Education and Training Act, 1998;
  - ee) The Provincial Human Resource Development Strategy; and
  - ff) The Mpumalanga Economic Development and Growth Path.
- c) Inconsistencies in the application of individual Departmental bursary policies; and
- d) Lack of financial support for students from poor communities who have done well at school but do not have the means to pursue further study.

### **3. OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY**

The Provincial Bursary Policy seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- a) To address the required, scarce and critical skills deficit in the Province and the Provincial Government in order to maximise the Provincial socio-economic capacity and service delivery throughput, respectively;
- b) To assist students and/ or residents of the Mpumalanga Province who lack financial resources but are currently furthering or intend furthering their studies in fields and priority areas that would add value to the Province and the Provincial Government.
- c) To encourage and promote needs based education;
- d) To encourage the Grade 12 learners of each academic year to excel in their studies (the Top Ten learners shall be annually offered bursaries in accordance with the critical and scarce skills list).

### **4. PRINCIPLES**

Bursaries shall be awarded in accordance with the following principles:

- a) Required, scarce, and critical skills as indicated in the Mpumalanga Economic Development and Growth Path and the Human Resource Development Strategy;
- b) Priority shall be given to residents of the Mpumalanga Province who come from rural communities (in the case of foreign nationals from the continent who reside in the Province the Head of the Education Department may use her/ his discretion guided by National policies and prescripts as well as the relevant SADC Protocols);
- c) Due consideration shall be given to Departmental skills development plans and Employment equity plans;
- d) All districts shall as far as possible, be given proportional allocation of bursaries; subject to applicants meeting all other requirements as stipulated in this policy;



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- e) Particular focus shall be put on the municipalities identified for the Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP);
- f) Consideration shall be given to issues pertaining to Provincial Succession plans and skills training indicated in the Retention Strategy for the Province.

## **5. SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

The Provincial Bursary Policy has the following applicability:

- a) Current bursary holders and/or those who have bursary contracts with any Department within the Mpumalanga Provincial Government;
- b) All bursary holders granted such bursaries in line with this policy;
- c) Those pursuing studies or intend to pursue studies in the following categories:
  - aa) Trade and Occupational Qualifications;
  - bb) National Diplomas;
  - cc) Initial Undergraduate Bachelor's Degrees;
  - dd) Initial Professional Undergraduate Degrees;
  - ee) Post Graduate Professional Bachelor's Degree e.g. B. Tech;
  - ff) Postgraduate Degrees at Honours level (for exceptional studies where an honours degree is required to complete a qualification, such as Psychology and Economics);
  - gg) Post Graduate Degrees at Masters Level by thesis, dissertation and/ or course work;
  - hh) Post Graduate Degree at Doctoral Level (depending on availability of funding)
- d) The above stated studies should be aligned to:
  - aa) Provincial required, scarce and critical skills, as outlined in the Provincial Human Resource Development Strategy and the Mpumalanga Economic Growth and Development Path;
  - bb) Research topics that are relevant to the needs of the Provincial Government;

- cc) Provincial Government Retention Strategy and Provincial Government succession plans.

## **6. POLICY PROVISION**

**6.1** The Provincial Government is required to do the following:

- a) Award the bursaries, as mentioned under the scope of this policy;
- b) Pay the bursary money directly to the service provider, where the service provider is a Higher Education Institution, bookstore, residence or accommodation service provider. If the bursary money is paid to the Higher Education Institution in respect of fees due to bookstores or accommodation service providers, direct transfers shall be effected by the Higher Education Institutions at the instruction of the Head of Department of Education or delegate thereof.

**6.2** The bursary shall cover the following:

- a) Registration fees
- b) Tuition fees
- c) Prescribed text books fee and/ or prescribed student learning support material as prescribed by the relevant higher education institution. The latter shall be subject to the availability of funds. Payment shall only be effected upon receipt of requirements submitted by the institution as a written request. Recommended text books and/ or recommended student learning support material shall not be considered.

With regard to specialized fields of study such as Engineering and Medicine the Head of Department of Education shall determine the maximum amount, as per the availability of funds, for prescribed requirements in each academic year.

- d) Accommodation and meals fees. For students lodging outside of the university residence, an amount not exceeding the amount charged by that institution for students residing on campus in official University Hostels/ Accommodations shall be paid.

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- e) A fixed monthly amount as determined by the Head of Department of Education, payable over eleven months, may be allocated to students lodging in institutional residences as well as outside institutional residences for miscellaneous expenses subject to the availability of funds and may be reviewed annually to cater for inflation. This shall only be made available to students at the discretion of the Head of the Department of Education, guided by the availability of budget in respect of each academic year.

## **7. CONDITIONS**

- a) Bursaries shall be granted to study full-time at a registered higher education institution for the prescribed duration of the bursary holder's studies;
- b) The Provincial Government shall not pay fees or related expenses for a course that is being repeated, or for which it has already paid in the past. Should a bursary holder fail subject(s)/ module(s) in any year of study, he/ she must repeat the subject(s)/ module(s) or year failed at his/ her own expense, within the next semester/ study year. Proof of registration for the failed subjects must be submitted to the Central Bursary office in the Department of Education within fourteen (14) days of registration at the Higher Education Institution. The bursary shall be paid only for new subjects registered;
- c) The Provincial Government shall immediately discontinue payment of the bursary if the student fails the academic year for which the bursary has been granted. However, should the bursary holder repeat the year at his/ her own expense and subsequently proceed to the next year of study, the bursary for the subsequent academic year may be reinstated, provided all requirements are fulfilled;
- d) If the bursary holder discontinues his/ her studies or fails to repeat the relevant subject(s)/ module(s) or year of study, he/ she shall be liable to repay all fees that have been paid on his/ her behalf to the Department

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- of Education, plus interest at a rate determined by the Minister of Finance in terms of section 80 (1) (b) of the Public Finance Management Act, within a period of twelve months;
- e) Applicants granted bursaries shall enter into a contractual agreement with the Mpumalanga Department of Education;
  - f) The bursary holder shall be expected to comply with the learning programme's requirements, as stipulated by the Higher Education Institution (such as compulsory attendance of classes);
  - g) The bursary award is renewable subject to good performance and progress being made towards achieving a full qualification;
  - h) In the event of a bursary holder wishing to temporarily suspend or discontinue his/ her studies, it shall be his/ her responsibility to immediately provide a written request to the Department of Education for a deferment of contractual obligation and present the department with a written proposal to enable him/ her to complete the relevant course/ qualification at his/ her own cost to avoid immediate steps being taken to recover all the expenses paid on his/ her behalf by the Department of Education, plus interest at a rate determined by the Minister of Finance in terms of section 80 (1) (b) of the Public Finance Management Act, within a period of 12 months. This deferment however shall not exceed two years and must be approved by the Head of Department of Education, or delegate;
  - i) The duration of the bursary may not exceed the number of years as prescribed by the Higher Education Institution for the qualification plus an additional two years and excludes the two year deferment as indicated in paragraph 7 (h). Approval for extension may be granted by the Head of Department of Education upon the receipt of a written motivation by the bursary holder;
  - j) Payment shall be made on receipt of an invoice or account statement by the Central Bursary Office in the Department of Education from the Higher Education Institution where the bursary holder is registered. It shall remain the individual bursary holder's responsibility to ensure that the Mpumalanga Provincial Government receives the invoice/ account

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- statement in time for payment to be effected. Should delays occur due to the bursary holder's conduct, or lack thereof, interest accrued shall be borne by the bursary holder and proof of payment must be submitted to the Central Bursary Office in the Mpumalanga Department of Education within fourteen (14) days of payment being made;
- k) Registration fees and tuition fees shall not be paid in the new academic year unless examination results have been submitted for the previous academic year;
  - l) The Mpumalanga Department of Education shall provide guidance to new applicants on the costing of programmes of Higher Education Institutions. If it is discovered that quotations for certain Higher Education Institutions are not cost effective, then the Mpumalanga Department of Education has the right to advise accordingly;
  - m) If a bursary applicant fails to make use of the bursary within a period of six months of being granted a bursary, then the bursary shall be withdrawn, forthwith.
  - n) The MEC for Education shall have the right to award bursaries to any other persons subject to all other requirements stipulated in this policy.

## **8. COMPOSITION, ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMMITTEE**

The following sections indicate the composition, roles and responsibilities of the Provincial Bursary Committee and the Department of Education

### **8.1 PROVINCIAL BURSARY COMMITTEE**

A Provincial Bursary Committee shall be appointed to serve for a three year period by the Heads of respective departments. All members shall sign confidentiality and disclosure forms at the beginning of each meeting.

#### **8.1.1 COMPOSITION OF PROVINCIAL BURSARY COMMITTEE**

The committee shall comprise of nineteen (19) members and it shall be constituted as follows:

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- a) Each Provincial Department shall be represented by one Senior Manager (in Corporate Services, Human Resources (HR), or Human Resource Development (HRD); depending on the reporting lines of each Department) and an alternate member (a Middle or Junior Manager in HRD);
- b) Two members shall be officials in the Mpumalanga Department of Education's Central Bursary Office. This includes the General Manager: Provincial Bursary Scheme Administration and the Middle or Junior Manager: Provincial Bursary Scheme Administration;
- c) Three employees shall be from organized labour;
- d) One representative shall be from the gender and disability desk.
- e) The Committee shall be chaired by the General Manager: Provincial Bursary Scheme Administration who is the head of the Central Bursary Office located in the Mpumalanga Department of Education;
- f) The Committee shall have as the secretariat the Senior Manager assisted by a Middle Manager: Provincial Bursary Scheme Administration who is an official in the Central Bursary Office located in the Department of Education.

### **8.1.2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PROVINCIAL BURSARY COMMITTEE**

The Provincial Bursary Committee's roles and responsibilities shall be as follows:

- a) To adjudicate and make recommendations to the Head of Department of Education on all bursary applications that the Provincial Bursary Scheme funds, or plans to fund each academic year;
- b) To align the intended fields of study with the Provincial Bursary Policy, Provincial Human Resource Development Strategy, Provincial and Departmental needs, as well as the required scarce and critical skills that are highlighted in the Provincial Economic Growth and Development Path;

- c) To submit a report of its activities to the Head of Department of Education annually, after awarding bursaries for a particular academic year;
- d) To report any abnormalities and non-functionality within the Provincial Bursary Committee to the Head of Department of Education.

## **8.2 CENTRALIZED BURSARY OFFICE IN THE MPUMALANGA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

The Department of Education's Centralised Bursary Office is responsible for the general management, administration and the day-to-day operations of the centralised bursary scheme. It is also responsible for the following:

- a) Coordinating Provincial Bursary Committee meetings. Furthermore, it should chair and offer secretarial services to the Committee;
- b) Liaising with and ensuring regular communication with all the Provincial departments and beneficiaries of the centralised bursary scheme;
- c) Ensuring that there is a budget for this function each financial year;
- d) Keeping records of all Provincial Bursary Committee activities;
- e) Keeping learner records and ensuring that a database system is kept for reporting and tracking purposes;
- f) Reporting to the Head of the Education Department and ensuring that the Provincial Management Committee is informed about Provincial Bursary Committee activities;
- g) Submitting recommendations made by the Provincial Bursary Committee to the Head of the Department of Education;
- h) Ensuring that the bursary holders' invoices are settled in accordance with this policy and relevant prescripts;
- i) Where necessary, conducting verification and a cost benefit analysis in conjunction with the Provincial Bursary Committee;
- j) Ensuring that this policy is implemented;
- k) Ensuring that the Provincial bursary scheme is constantly monitored in line with this policy and other prescripts.

## **9. PROCEDURE**

The following steps should be followed when advertising, applying, adjudicating, selecting and administering Provincial bursaries:

### **9.1 Advertisement and application process**

The following procedure must be followed with regards to advertising and the application process:

- a) The Provincial Bursary Policy and the bursary application forms shall be made accessible to all Provincial Departments and Public Service points/centres throughout Mpumalanga Province;
- b) The Central Bursary Office, guided by the Provincial Bursary Committee and stipulations of the Provincial Human Resource Development Strategy, shall advertise annually on all Provincial and Departmental critical fields;
- c) The Central Bursary Office shall ensure that bursary application forms are available from 30 July to 30 September each year. Application forms should be made available to all the Provincial Departments, as well as be posted on the Provincial Government website. In extraordinary circumstances, the Head of the Department of Education may extend the closing date for certain categories;
- d) The candidates should submit their complete application packages (application forms with copies of required additional documents) by not later than 30 September each year to Mpumalanga Department of Education's Central Bursary Office at the Provincial Government Complex in Nelspruit or mail them to an address indicated in the bursary application form.



## **9.2 Adjudication and selection process**

The following procedure shall be followed with regard to the adjudication and selection process:

- a) The Provincial Bursary Committee shall make recommendations on bursary applications and selection of bursary holders, as per the requirements stated in this policy. The recommendations shall be considered by the Head of Department of Education for approval, subject to the availability of funds;
- b) The process of adjudicating bursary applications and selection of bursary holders shall commence in November each year and be completed by January the following year;
- c) Successful candidates shall be informed telephonically and in writing through the issuing of promissory letters.

## **10. GENERAL CRITERIA AND REQUIREMENTS**

The following are the general criteria and requirements for awarding Provincial bursaries:

### **10.1 General Criteria**

The general criteria for awarding bursaries is to needy, unemployed youth residing in the Mpumalanga Province who have the identified potential to pursue fields of study that:

- a) The Provincial Government regards as scarce and critical to ensure Provincial socio-economic development;
- b) The Province and/or Department regard as required scarce and critical to fulfil its purposes.

## 10.2 General Requirements

Over and above the criteria stated above, in order to be considered for a provincial bursary, candidates should submit an application package that includes all the following documents:

- a) a fully completed application form in the prescribed format;
- b) a certified copy of his/her identity document;
- c) a certified copy of the salary statement/ affidavit of income of parents/ guardians;
- d) Certified copies of Grade 12 certificate/ National Certificate Vocational (NCV) or Grade 12/ NCV June examination results for those applicants currently in Grade 12/ final year NCV;
- e) a certified copy of a results transcript of the current or previous academic year of study and latest examination results from higher education institution;
- f) Certified copies of previous formal qualifications, if any;
- g) Proof of disability from a registered medical doctor or clinic/ hospital, if applicable;
- h) Proof of indigent status, if applicable;
- i) a certified copy of proof of residence in case of Provincial residents; and
- j) proof of admission/ proof of registration or acceptance letter and fees required from the Higher Education Institution.

## 11. TERMINATION/ WITHDRAWAL OF BURSARY

The bursary may be withdrawn if the bursary holder:

- a) Fails to attain a pass mark in all the registered courses, or if he/ she withdraws or cancels studies with the Higher Education Institution. In these cases the bursary shall be withdrawn and the bursary holder shall be required to repay all the expenses paid on his/ her behalf by the Department of Education, plus interest at a rate determined by the

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Minister of Finance in terms of section 80 (1) (b) of the Public Finance Management Act, within a period of 12 months;

- b) Is found to have breached the provision(s), terms and conditions of the bursary contract that was entered into with the Mpumalanga Provincial Government;
- c) Ceases to be resident in Mpumalanga Province;
- d) Has not submitted an annual declaration on their Provincial residency status, by submitting proof of residence no later than January each year to the Central Bursary office in Mpumalanga Department of Education;
- e) Is expelled by the Higher Education Institution concerned;
- f) Has failed to perform at the expected academic standard, as determined by the institution concerned;
- g) Is in breach of the terms and conditions of this policy.

## **12. BREACH OF CONTRACT**

Breach of contract implies that the bursary holder fails to comply with any of the material terms and conditions stipulated in the contract agreement that he/ she entered into with the Mpumalanga Department of Education.

This includes the following:

- a) Deviating from the field of study that was agreed upon without prior written approval from the Head of Department of Education;
- b) Not reporting to the Central Bursary Office in Mpumalanga Department of Education after completing the course;
- c) Changing the institution without prior written approval by the Mpumalanga Department of Education;
- d) Cancelling or withdrawing his/her studies before completion without prior written approval from Mpumalanga Department of Education;
- e) Failing to submit the required examination results when required.

### **13. COMPULSORY SERVICE TO THE MPUMALANGA PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT/ DEPARTMENTS/ MUNICIPALITIES**

Bursary holders shall, after completion of their studies, serve the Mpumalanga Provincial Government for a period not less than the number of years which the Mpumalanga Provincial Government offered the said bursary. Failure to do so shall result in the bursary holder being required to repay all the expenses paid on his/ her behalf by the Department of Education, plus interest at a rate determined by the Minister of Finance in terms of section 80 (1) (b) of the Public Finance Management Act, within a period of 12 months. This is applicable if the Mpumalanga Provincial Government is able to employ the bursary holder on completion of his/ her studies.

Alternatively the bursary holder may be included in internship programmes. If, however, the bursary holder is not offered employment or an opportunity to participate in an internship programme, he/ she may be released from the compulsory service obligation by the Head of Department of Education.

### **14. DEVIATION FROM POLICY**

Any deviation from this policy should be approved by the Head of Department of Education in consultation with the MEC for Education. The deviation enables the Accounting Officer to deviate from the policy in the following exceptional circumstance viz. dire financial, socio-economic and related circumstances, subject to the applicant meeting all other requirements stipulated in this policy.

**15. POLICY REVIEW**

The policy shall be implemented with effect from the date of approval and shall be reviewed annually or as and when a need arises or when there are changes to the legislation.

*None*

*None*