

CHAPTER 5: EXPERIENTIAL TRAINING AND INTERNSHIP POLICY

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In terms of existing qualification requirements at certain tertiary educational institutions (especially Universities of Technology and Further Education and Training Colleges), students in specific disciplines have to complete practical work in order to obtain a qualification.

On the other hand, many of the learners whose qualifications did not require any practical work module and have already qualified are unable to secure employment because of lack of the necessary experience required by the highly competitive job market. This has contributed to a greater number of unemployed graduates. Other than this, there is a wide spectrum of post-matric learners some of whom are interested in serving as voluntary workers for the purposes of gaining experience before they can proceed with their studies.

Part of the mandate of the Department of Economic Development & Tourism (DEDaT) is to contribute towards the development of human resources. The current spate of unemployment amongst the youth and the difficulties faced by graduates to enter the labour market has spurred government to undertake a number of policies and strategic initiatives to improve the situation. One of these initiatives is an effective and efficient internship programme aimed at students by offering them an opportunity to acquire skills and work experience. The internship programme will also provide unemployed youth with valuable work experience and skills to enhance their employability.

The competition for skilled professionals has become very tough resulting in the public serviced loosing many of its highly skilled professionals to the private sector, severely constraining the capacity for improved quality service-delivery. The experiential training and internship programme will also help to create a sufficient pool of potential employees with relevant work related skills to sustain future staffing needs.

5.2 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the implementation and management of an Experiential Training and Internship Programme in the department in terms of the Department's responsibility for the development of human resources. The policy is also intended to give effect to the broad national strategies, namely the Internship Framework for the Public Service led by the Department of Public Service and Administration, the National Human Resources Development Strategy, the National Skills Development Strategy and DEDaT's Workplace Skills Plan.

5.3 SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This policy applies to the following categories of external trainees on experiential learning, learner ship and internship programmes within the department:

- (i) The Northern Cape Provincial Administration bursars not in the employ of department requiring experiential training as part of their qualification conditions.
- (ii) Other students in the fields of Finance or Economic and Management study disciplines requiring Experiential training as part of their qualification conditions.
- (iii) Unemployed graduates with appropriate qualifications required by the department who require some working experience to improve their chances of employability; and
- (iv) Volunteers with the appropriate skills needed by the department who because of being unemployed would like to serve the Department on a voluntary basis hoping for employment once opportunities arise.

5.4 OBJECTIVES

The experiential training and internship programme is aimed at addressing the following objectives:

- (i) Shortage of skilled, qualified and committed professional candidates for positions in the public service.
- (ii) Low level of practical work experience, discipline and understanding of the needs and realities of the public service workplace among graduates.

- (iii) Low awareness among students of the job and career opportunities in the public service.
- (iv) Poor access to work experience for students and the unemployed youth.

5.5 IMPLEMENTATION

The experiential training and internship programme will be implemented in a manner that ensures a learner gains exposure and experience and will include:

- (i) **“Traditional” internships** (students with compulsory internships towards their studies).
- (ii) **“Voluntary” internships** (students without compulsory internships towards their studies).
- (iii) **Internship for unemployed graduates**
- (iv) **Learner ships**

The experiential training and internship programme will cover a structured programme with exposure to the basic, core and specialist competence building. The experiential training / internship programme will be established on the basis of learning arrangements and a performance management system. Alignment with SAQA requirements will be essential.

5.6 POLICY CONTEXT AND LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

The internship programme is established within the framework of the National Skills Development Strategy and the National Human Resource Development Strategy and will complement other initiatives like the learnership programme.

5.7 POLICY STATEMENT

- (i) The department will provide experiential training and learnership opportunities primarily for the youth/students in relevant study disciplines requiring experiential training as part of their qualification conditions.
- (ii) Experiential training and learner ship opportunities may be accessible to other categories of trainees provided that:
 - a) Adequate financial resources are available to accommodate such trainees;

- b) Adequate infrastructure resources are available to accommodate such trainees;
 - c) Appropriate and qualified mentor (s) are available to supervise trainees;
 - d) Specific or particular duties that can be executed by trainees are available.
- (iii) Department may accept sponsorship or partnerships with other stakeholders such as Sector Education and Training Authorities to engage in experiential learning, learner ship or internship programmes fully or partially funded by such stakeholders.

5.8 CONDITIONS

- (i) Experiential training or learner ship opportunities will only be provided to youth/students who have otherwise satisfied the academic requirements for their respective fields of study and the privilege may be withdrawn from any trainee where applicable.
- (ii) The condition pertaining to this policy relates to experiential training and internship only and should not be construed to include vacation to students. The Human Resource Development is responsible for the coordination, implementation and management of the Experiential Training and Internship Programme.
- (iii) Prior to the implementation of the Experiential Training and Internship Programme, respective managers within department will:
 - a) Determine experiential training requirements for their respective divisions in collaboration with the HRD.
 - b) Apply effective experiential training and internship management tools developed by the Human Resources Development, for example trainee logbooks.
 - c) Ensure that all functions performed by the trainees are clearly articulated, understood and agreed by all parties.
 - d) Ensure that the necessary infrastructure (physical, human and financial resources) is in place to accommodate trainees.
 - e) Ensure that appointments will be made with due consideration to applicable Labour Legislation. Trainees will not be appointed on the departmental establishment but additional thereto.
 - f) Ensure that appointments are made in accordance with the Employment Equity directives.
 - g) All appointments will be made in terms of contracts with no guarantee of permanent employment.

- (iv) Included in the contract will be the following:
 - a) Trainees will not be allowed to use department's facilities without proper authorization.
 - b) Trainees will subject themselves to department's organizational discipline and protocol.
- (v) In the event of conflicts / disputes, normal tenets in the contract shall apply.
- (vi) The HRD section will maintain liaison and communication with host functions / mentors and ensure that experiential training and internship take place in terms of academic requirements and that trainee logbooks are kept up to date. The HRD section will provide regular reports to the committee regarding the experiential training and internship programme and the utilization of department's resources.
- (vii) The HRD section will maintain ongoing communication and liaison with different academic institutions regarding the progress of trainees.
- (viii) Upon resignation / termination of contract, the interns / trainees should submit a written letter to the mentor / supervisor, who should then forward it to the coordinator of the experiential training and internship programme. The resignation letter should show the date of resignation. The interns / trainees are required to serve one week notice period (five working days).

5.9 KEY ROLE PLAYERS

5.9.1. Head of Department

The Head of Department, or his delegate, is the driver of the programme. He / she is responsible and accountable for the following:

- (i) Approve the experiential training / internship contracts.
- (ii) Create a working environment that will allow interns / trainees to help the department meet its operational objectives while developing and enhancing their skills and employability.
- (iii) Ensure that the departmental experiential training and internship programme, which is in line with the National Internship Framework in the Public Service, is implemented throughout the department.
- (iv) Ensure that the departmental compensation framework is in line with National Internship Framework, or obtain prior approval for differentiation from the Minister of Public Service and Administration.

- (v) Monitor and evaluate progress of internship programmes.

5.9.2. Senior Managers

Senior Managers shall:

- (i) Determine which skills and how many trainees they require in their divisions.
- (ii) Control and manage budgets on experiential training and internship programmes in their divisions.
- (iii) Responsible for developing a structured development plan for each assignment.
- (iv) Enter into a formal agreement (contract) with institutions and trainees in terms of the obligations for each party.
- (v) Provide a relevant and responsible mentor.
- (vi) Provide office space and related facilities.
- (vii) Provide feedback to the Human Resources Development section.
- (viii) Provide required information on the progress of the trainee / intern.
- (ix) Complete the Experiential Training / Internship Questionnaire.

5.9.3. Division: Human Resources Development

- (i) Coordinate the entire experiential training and internship programme within the Department.
- (ii) Ensure that a structured developmental plan for interns / trainees is in place.
- (iii) Continuously monitor the exposure and development of interns / trainees according to the development plan.
- (iv) Compensate the interns / learners in accordance with the department's / provincial compensation arrangement.
- (v) Ensure compliance with the experiential training and internship policy.
- (vi) Liaise constantly with institutions in terms of the trainee's progress.
- (vii) Provide the necessary forms and documentation to be completed during the period of training.
- (viii) Assist unit managers with the selection of mentors.
- (ix) Compile a written report to the HOD on progress and challenges of the Internship programme / experiential training.

- (x) Gather data regularly on intake of interns / trainees, their needs, priorities and perceptions about experiential training / internship programme in the department in order to monitor and evaluate its effectiveness and to recommend improvements.

5.9.4. Role of Mentors

- (i) Enter into performance agreement with intern / trainee.
- (ii) Oversee the training and mentoring of the intern / trainee.
- (iii) Mentor and provide a supportive environment around the intern / trainee by playing a facilitative and mediating role to ensure the intern's / trainee's development.
- (iv) Conducting ongoing monitoring and assessment of the intern / trainee and submit performance reports to HRD section.

5.9.5. Role of Learner / Intern

- (i) Every intern / learner is responsible for determining (with his / her supervisor) training and development needs and developing a development programme.
- (ii) Planning and managing (with his / her supervisor) learning and development in a way that is consistent with the needs of the department and the public service and the student's development plan.
- (iii) Execute all tasks / duties allocated and agreed to.
- (iv) Demonstrate a willingness to learn and grow through work experience.
- (v) Forge conceptual links between theoretical knowledge acquired at the tertiary institution and practical work.
- (vi) Supply mentor with feedback on the effectiveness of the experiential training / internship programme and the mentoring arrangements.
- (vii) Enter into performance agreement with mentor, and comply with all terms of the contract.
- (viii) Abide by the rules, regulations and protocol of the department and host unit.

5.10 FINANCING AND COMPENSATION

- (i) The financing of the learner ship and internship programmes will come from the departmental training budget and stipends will be paid in accordance with the guidelines set in the National Framework on the Internship Programme in the Public Service.
- (ii) The budget will be centralized and administered by the Human Resources Development section.
- (iii) Interns / trainees are not to be regarded as lower cost alternatives to permanent or regular employees. Instead the department must ensure that, as we 'employ' interns and trainees to get work done, we must also improve the intern's / trainee's potential for future employability. This is the trade-off they are asked to assume in meeting operational needs at a lower rate of compensation than that of the regular employees. Student's rates are not directly related to the work performed.
- (iv) In the event that a stipend is paid by a different sponsor, no further payment will be made by the Department.

5.11 PROCEDURES

- (i) The Human Resources Development section will conduct regular capacity assessment with the different directorates.
- (ii) Following budget approval, applications from suitable candidates will be considered.
- (iii) Concomitant herewith:
 - a) A mentorship system will be established.
 - b) A logbook system will be developed in collaboration with different academic institution.
- (iv) Trainees will be selected and placed in collaboration with the relevant Senior Managers.
- (v) Training will be managed by the respective sectional managers in collaboration with the HRD section.

5.12 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The HRD section will monitor the implementation of the Experiential Training and Internship Programme through the following mechanisms:

- (i) Determining the total number of trainees who successfully complete the programme in the Department and obtain a qualification and secure employment after the completion of the training programme.

- (ii) The degree to which directorates are satisfied with the value and contribution made by the trainees.
- (iii) Prepare an annual report on the Experiential Training and Internship Programme.
- (iv) Review the overall programme for purposes of improvements and alignments to departmental strategic goals.
- (v) Monitoring sector education and training trends and patterns for forecasting and planning purposes.
- (vi) Ensure alignment of this policy with the National Framework on the Internship Programme in the Public Service.



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