

PSC CIRCULAR

Public Service Commission, Berkley Crescent, P. O. Box 2211
Government Buildings, Suva. Telephone 3-314-588

PSC Circular No: 33/2007

TO: Permanent Secretaries and
Heads of Departments

Date: 23/10/2007

Subject: Application For The Fiji Government In-Service
Training Sponsorships – First Semester Studies
at USP & FIT For the Year 2008

File: PSC5/55

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 One of the core responsibilities of the Public Service Commission is to provide training and career development opportunities as a means of building capacity and promoting productivity in the public service. Training provision is aligned to the assessed workforce training needs of the public service and the nation also takes into account Government's EEO policy.
- 1.2 Applications are therefore invited from serving officers for sponsorship to pursue studies commencing **Semester 1 2008** at the University of the South Pacific and the Fiji Institute of Technology. Applicants should meet the requirements as at 1.0 at Appendix 1.

2.0 INSTITUTIONS FOR SPONSORSHIP

- 2.1 **University of the South Pacific** – Sponsorship is provided for studies in the following categories:
- (i) Full time
 - (ii) Part-time
 - (iii) Distance & Flexibility Learning (DFL)
- 2.2 **Fiji Institute of Technology** – Full time studies. Sponsorship will only cover tuition fees. All other cost to be borne by the officer.

3.0 REQUIREMENT GUIDELINES

A guideline outlining the requirements for the In- service Training (IST) sponsorship for USP and FIT is attached as Appendix 1.

4.0 CLOSING DATE FOR APPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Duly completed attached application forms with relevant documents under covering memorandum should reach the Centre for Training & Development on or before **19th November, 2007**. **Late applications will not be considered**

4.2 Application forms are attached as **Appendix 2**. Please ensure that all information and documents required are submitted. **Applications that fail to comply will not be considered.** Notification will be issued to successful candidates only.

5.0 **CLARIFICATION**

5.1 For any further clarification, please contact Mrs. Manjula Sologar, msologar@psc.gov.fj or Ms. Roslyn Narayan, roslynnarayan@psc.gov.fj at the Public Service Commission, Center for Training and Development, Nasese, Suva on telephone number 3315688.



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[Taina Tagicakibau]

Permanent Secretary for the Public Service, Public Enterprise and Public Sector Reform

Appendix 1

1.0 **AGENCY REQUIREMENTS & ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

1.1 The following requirements must be complied by the Ministries/Departments:

- To enable the effective short listing of officers for consideration, it is important **for Ministries to submit their Human Resource Training and Development Plan** The Plan should be aligned to their agencies Strategic and Corporate Plans reflecting priority programmes of study required to meet occupational & organizational needs.
- Ministries are requested to submit in writing the names of **recommended candidates in priority order with reference to 2.1 and 2.2.**
- Training Needs Analysis and Training Nomination Selection forms (TNA/TNS) must be submitted in respect of the recommended officer(s).
- Certified copies of Birth Certificates must be provided. Officers for new awards must be under 45 years of age by 30/11/07.
- Letter of confirmation of appointment. Officers must be confirmed and have served at least three years in the service after the date of confirmation.
- Attach certified copies of transcripts for all units completed to-date
- Attach a copy of the letter of acceptance from the institution, confirming admission to the course programme & units pursued.
- Officers must make their own arrangements for registration.
- Officers who are required by the institution to be attached to an organization as a pre-requisite to the course programme must attach a copy of the letter from the institution whilst seeking approval from the Commission.
- Officers pursuing studies as full time students will be bonded prior to being released for studies.
- The application form must be endorsed by the Permanent Secretaries/Head of Departments.

1.2 In respect of officers being recommended for full time studies, Permanent Secretaries must inform the Commission in writing whether their release is under:

(1) **GO 717(b) (iii) – Leave without Salary**

(2) **GO 900(b) (i) – Leave with Salary**

2.0 **FULL-TIME NEW AWARDS**

- 2.1 There will be a limited number of new awards for Full Time studies and consideration will only be given to the priority areas as reflected in the agencies Human Resource Training and Development Plans, which should be aligned to Government's priority training needs.
- i) Sponsorship for a maximum of three (3) units will be considered provided an officer has successfully passed at least ten course units towards the degree or five course units towards diploma programmes at USP. **Preference will be given to those who are left with only one or two semesters to complete their studies.**
 - ii) Sponsorship will cover tuition fees. All other cost to be borne by the officer.
 - iii) Officers are required to make their own arrangements for registration with the institution.
 - iv) Officers are reminded that their release for full-time studies will not be accepted as a ground for refusing a posting or transfer to another station or institution.
 - v) Officers will be bonded prior to being released for studies

3.0 **PART-TIME AWARDS**

- 3.1 Sponsorship for Part-time studies will be considered if an officer has successfully attained more than one unit on their own.
- 3.2 Continuation of sponsorship will depend on the successful completion of the sponsored unit and subject to availability of funds. Sponsorship will be for **one course per semester** in exceptional cases officers may be allowed to take two units (e.g. Where only two courses are required for an officer to complete his/her programme of studies and both these courses are available in one semester only. A confirmation letter from the institution to this effect must be attached.
- 3.3 Government will only be responsible for payment of tuition fees, all other fees to be borne by the officers.
- 3.4 Officers are advised to enroll for courses for which tuition is held outside normal working hours. Where this is not practical, officers may be given time –off to attend lectures **provided** they make up for the official time (hours) lost through special arrangement with their Agency Head. School teachers should enroll for units offered outside normal school hours.
- 3.5 Officers should be released only for a maximum of four (4) hrs in a week and an additional one (1) hr if it requires lab attendance.
- 3.6 Absence from work during normal working hours to undertake lectures, tutorials, field visits or lab attendance should be appropriately recorded and monitored by the supervising managers.

3.7 Agencies must ensure that the work flow of the organization is not significantly affected by the absence of officers pursuing part –time studies. Supervising officers **should not** release or recommend an officer for Part /Full –time studies if the officer’s absence from work would be disruptive or detrimental in the achievement of work outputs or the delivery of services to the public.

3.8 Officers are reminded that their release for part –time studies will not be accepted as a ground for refusing a posting or transfer to another station or institution.

4.0 **DISTANCE AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING (DFL)**

4.1 Programmes of study offered through the former Extension mode by the USP has now been renamed as the “**Distance and Flexible Learning Support**” and is responsible for all professional aspects of distance learning and teaching.

4.2 The purpose of DFL is to enable serving officers, particularly those stationed outside the Central Division to successfully complete the entire academic programme without having to attend on campus lectures.

4.3 To facilitate such request, the Commission will be considering **sponsorship for DFL studies only from Officers who are stationed outside the Central Division and have successfully attain more than one unit on their own**. Sponsored officers will be exempted from paying tuition fees but all other expenses are to be met by the officer.

4.4 Sponsorship for DFL studies from officers in the Central Division will only be considered if the unit(s) is not offered on- campus and is compulsory for the officer to complete his/her programme. To facilitate this, a confirmation letter from the institution must be attached.

4.5 Continuation of sponsorship will depend on the successful completion of the sponsored unit and subject to availability of funds. Sponsorship will be for **one course per semester** in exceptional cases officers may be allowed to take two units (e.g. Where only two courses are required for an officer to complete his/her programme of studies and both these courses are available in one semester only. A confirmation letter from the institution to this effect must be attached.

5.0 **CONTINUING AWARDS**

5.1 Officers already sponsored for Full-Time, Part-Time and Distance and Flexible Learning will only be considered for a continuing award; if the officer(s) academic performance and results for the previous semester have been satisfactory, with a pass rate of 50% and above. Achievement below 50% will result in the termination of the award.

5.2 In addition to the above *officers sponsored for three units on a full time, having failed two units will result in the termination of the award.*

5.3 Sponsorship for continuing award will be subject to availability of funds.

6.0 GENERAL NOTIFICATION

- (i) **Non-deferment of awards.** If an officer is not able to utilize their sponsorship for the given semester, the sponsorship cannot be deferred to the next semester. Officers will need to re-apply when the relevant circular is issued.
- (ii) **Non- PSC awards.** Officers applying for sponsorship from other scholarship agencies are required to liaise with their Agency Heads first regarding their release on study leave with or without salary.
- (iii) **Self – funded study.** Officer (s) wishing to pursue studies at their own expense will be granted study leave with or without salary subject to the recommendation of their respective agency Heads and the study programme to be aligned to the agencies Human Resource & Training Development Plan. It should also be directly relevant to the officer (s) work output. Circular Memorandum reference PSC5/112-4 of 6th August, 2007 requiring prior approval for self funded study programmed should be adhered to.
- (iv) **Payment of salaries.** Agencies must ensure that there is budgetary provision to meet the Personal Emoluments of the officer (s) recommended for study leave with salary.

7.0 BONDING REQUIREMENTS AT GOVERNMENT EXPENSE

- i) Officers studying as full time students on government expenses must be bonded before they proceed on training.
- ii) If the officer is unable to complete his/her training through no fault of his/her, then the bond obligations shall be deemed to have been cancelled. However, if he/she fails to complete the course due to his own negligence or misconduct the bond obligation shall continue to apply.
- iii) Officers currently serving bond will not be granted another study leave with or without salary until the current Bond period has been served in full.
- iv) If the bondee default the guarantor(s) will be required to 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 such shorter period as the Head of Agency may determine. The execution of the bond will commence immediately upon completion of the undertaking by the bondee/guarantor(s).
- v) The guarantor's income should be greater than fifteen thousand dollars [\$15,000.00] per annum. The guarantor should not be a close relative [i.e. husband/wife, brother/sister, siblings and parents] of the bondee and must be a Fiji Citizen.
- vi) A bondee who wishes to leave the country must notify the Permanent Secretary, PSC in writing through the respective Agency Head at least six (6) weeks in advance. Approval will only be given subject to the full payment of the bond amount to the Fiji Government.
- vii) Serving officers who are bonded and wish to transfer their bond to a statutory body or government owned organization or institution must submit in writing through the agency Heads for consideration and decision of the Public service Commission regarding the transfer of their bond.
- viii) In the event of a transfer of bond to other private sectors, a supplementary bond must be entered into between the bondee, the government and the recipient organization

on the tenure of service at that institution outlining the guidelines that are to be invoked should the bondee decide to leave before the bond period expires.

8.0 **VACATION WORK DURING SEMESTER BREAKS**

8.1 The policy on vacation work by officers other than teachers attending local institutions in reference to the PSC circular No. 10/95 should be applied as follows:

- During mid-semester breaks, officers will not be required to report to duty.
- Where the break between semesters is three (3) weeks, officers will be allowed to enjoy two (2) weeks leave (the first & the third week). **However, officers are required to report to duty in the second week.**
- Officers are allowed to take **two (2) weeks leave** immediately after the end of second semester of the institutional calendar year before resumption of duties in their respective agencies.
- Release from duty in respect of continuing officers to the respective institution will be **one week** prior to the commencement of the institution's new calendar year.

9.0 **SUBMISSION OF CERTIFICATES**

9.1 Officers on completion of their study programme at the USP and FIT must ensure to submit a certified copy of their certificate to the Centre for Training Division of the PSC.