



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

The Government of the Northwest Territories values lifelong learning for its employees, supports a competent and well trained public service, and strives to provide employees with access to learning and development opportunities that support their ability to effectively and efficiently deliver department and agency ("department") mandates to serve the residents of the Northwest Territories.

The following will guide the application of this Policy:

- a. Learning and development opportunities are diverse and can include a wide range of activities including workshops, courses, professional and/or association certification, seminars, conferences, distance education, education leave, on the job learning opportunities such as transfer assignments, etc.
- b. Learning and development opportunities should align with employees' job functions, with the requirements of the positions, and with learning and development plans that are undertaken as part of the ongoing competency-based performance development process.
- c. The provision of learning and development opportunities are at the discretion of individual departments consistent with this Policy.
- d. The Government of the Northwest Territories may, from time to time, determine that specific learning and/or development are mandatory for some or all employees. Mandatory learning and/or development may be required in areas that reduce the government's legal or financial risk, reflect government priorities and objectives or in other areas where it is determined that there is a need.

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1. PRINCIPLES

The GNWT adheres to the following principles when applying this Policy:

- a. It is in the best interest of the Government of the Northwest Territories to ensure employees have opportunities for learning and development to assist with their professional development, performance of their job functions, and to provide program and service delivery to the residents of the Northwest Territories consistent with the government's priorities and objectives.
- b. All employees will have learning and development plans as part of the ongoing competency-based performance development process.
- c. The provision of learning and development opportunities and any associated financial and/or other support from departments to employees should be transparent, understood by all employees, and available to all employees consistent with their job functions, career aspirations and/or with a learning and/or development plan undertaken as part of the competency-based performance development process.
- d. Learning, training and/or development opportunities are subject to pre-approval by supervisors considering budgets, operational requirements and/or department priorities.
- e. Learning is a shared and mutual responsibility between departments and employees.

2. SCOPE

This Policy, and any guidelines or processes developed to support it, apply to all territorial public service employees, except teachers, college educators, casuals and employees of the Northwest Territories' Power Corporation.

3. DEFINITIONS

- a. **Deputy Head** - means the deputy minister of a department; superintendent of a divisional education council; chief executive officer or president of a board authority, agency or any such person as may be appointed as deputy head.

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4. AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

a. General

This Policy is issued under the authority of the Financial Management Board. The authority to make exceptions and approve revisions to this Policy and to establish mandatory training rests with the Financial Management Board. Authority and accountability is further defined as follows:

i. Minister

The Minister of Finance is accountable to the Financial Management Board for the implementation of this Policy.

ii. Deputy Minister

The Deputy Minister of Finance is accountable to the Minister of Finance for the administration of this Policy.

b. Specific

i. Ministers

Ministers or their delegates are accountable for the implementation of this Policy in their departments.

ii. Minister of Finance

(1) The Minister may establish ministerial policies necessary to the implementation of this Policy.

(2) The Minister may recommend to the Financial Management Board areas of training and/or development that should be mandatory for some or all GNWT employees to which this Policy applies and ensures that a listing of mandatory training is maintained and made available to employees.

iii. Deputy Minister of Finance

The Deputy Minister provides support, direction and assistance on the application of this Policy and associated procedural issues to deputy heads.

iv. Deputy Heads

Deputy Heads are responsible to:

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- (1) Establish a process within their department that outlines the provision of learning, training and development support to employees consistent with individual mandates, governing legislation, and/or GNWT policy and guidelines, and with this Policy.
 - (2) Delegate approval of specific funding and/or length of learning, training and/or development limits to senior managers and/or supervisors.
 - (3) Provide for costs related to employees learning and development opportunities.
 - (4) Ensure employees are provided learning, development and training in the areas required in the performance of their duties.
- v. Department of Finance
- (1) Provides assistance and advice to departments and agencies on the application of this policy.
 - (2) Provides support and advice to departments on current programs and tools to help support learning and development needs to employees.
- vi. Managers/Supervisors
- (1) Work with employees, through the competency-based performance management process to develop learning and development plans.
 - (2) Approve learning and developmental opportunities for employees based on available budget, operational requirements and/or department priorities.
 - (3) Encourage and support continuous learning for employees.
 - (4) Ensure employees are provided learning, development and training in the areas required in the performance of their duties.
- vii. Employees
- (1) Work in collaboration with manager/supervisor, through the competency-based performance management process, to develop individual learning and development plans that support performance excellence.
 - (2) Share knowledge gained through learning and development activities with other team members, where possible.

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5. PROVISIONS

a. Identification of Need

The supervisor and the employee identify the need for learning, training and/or development during the competency-based performance management process and include this information on the employee's learning and development plan. Learning, training and/or development opportunities can arise outside the competency-based performance management process and should be identified on the learning and development plan by the manager/supervisor and the employee at the earliest opportunity.

All learning, training and/or development opportunities (either as part of the competency-based performance management process or outside it) should be tied to the employee's past performance objectives and results, the planned objectives for the upcoming period, the employee's job functions, and/or the employee's career development within the Territorial public service.

b. Consideration of Learning, Training and/or Development Requests

Each request for learning, training and/or development should be considered using the following:

- Consistency with learning, training and/or development required by the employee to achieve the competency level established by the GNWT for the employees' position and role;
- Operational priorities of the department;
- Previous learning, training and/or development opportunities provided to the employee;
- Requirements of the job function and/or learning and development plan;
- Requirement to maintain professional or association credentials;
- The impact on operational workload;
- The impact on financial resources;
- Frequency of requests; and
- Availability of cost share arrangements.

c. Documentation

Requests for learning, training and/or development opportunities may be made by employees to their supervisors verbally or in writing. Documentation, including manager/supervisor approval, is provided to the employee and to the Client Service Manager (Department of Finance) who places it on the employee's personnel file.

In the event an electronic process is implemented in the GNWT for learning, training

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and/or development purposes, electronic documentation replaces the process outlined in this Policy.

d. Processes and Guidelines

Employees are encouraged to refer to collective agreements, employee handbooks, the Human Resources Manual and/or the Department of Finance website to find detailed processes and guidelines on how to access various types of learning, training and/or development opportunities including:

- short term leave for training purposes;
- education leave;
- support for tuition/course fees;
- job training;
- maintaining certification;
- support career development;
- access to training offered to Government of the Northwest Territories employees and/or;
- professional designations, etc.

e. Policy Review

This Policy is reviewed by the Department of Finance every three years.

7. PREROGATIVE OF THE FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

Nothing in this Policy shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of the Financial Management Board to make decisions or take action with respect to learning, training and/or development for employees outside the provisions of this Policy.



Chair of the Financial Management Board

Date