

## AMAAQTAARNIQ EDUCATION PROGRAM POLICY

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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

The Government of Nunavut (GN) is committed to developing a public service that is representative of the population of Nunavut, as stipulated in Article 23 of the Nunavut Land Claims Agreement (Nunavut Agreement).

To help meet this goal, the GN may grant Amaqtaarniq Education Leave to eligible Inuit employees for the purposes of acquiring the post-secondary credentials necessary to qualify for specialized and hard to fill positions.

In order to draw upon a broad pool of the GN's Inuit workforce, indeterminate, term, and casual employees may apply.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Amaqtaarniq policy is:

- (i) To provide education sponsorship for eligible Inuit employees who wish to qualify for a GN job or profession that is not found in their home department.
- (ii) To help GN Departments fill specialized positions for which there are no qualified Inuit employees yet, in order to fulfil the GN's obligations under Article 23 of the Nunavut Agreement.
- (iii) To remove barriers to post-secondary education for eligible Inuit employees, including those who are hired on casual and term basis.

### **PRINCIPLES**

This program is based on the following Inuit societal values:

- Inuuqatigiitsiarniq: Respecting others, relationships and caring for people.
- Tunnganarniq: Fostering good spirits by being open, welcoming and inclusive.
- Pijitsirniq: Serving and providing for family and/or community.
- Aajiiqatigiinni: Decision making through discussion and consensus.

## **APPLICATION**

This policy applies to all GN employees who are beneficiaries of the Nunavut Agreement, except members of the Nunavut Teachers Association and Nunavut Arctic College educators.

Inuit employees must have completed at least three years of satisfactory continuous service to be eligible for the Amaaqtaarniq Education Program. The three-year requirement may be waived or modified by the Amaaqtaarniq Education Leave Committee on a case by case basis.

## **DEFINITIONS**

**Academic Year** is equal to two consecutive terms or semesters, usually eight months, but no more than 12 months.

**Base Salary** refers to the employee's current rate of pay and does not include any additional compensation, benefits and allowances.

**Continuous Service** refers to:

- i. uninterrupted employment with the Public Service;
- ii. uninterrupted employment with the Government of the Northwest Territories provided that the employee was employed in the Public Service on April 1, 1999.
- iii. prior employment of an employee who was laid off and reappointed to a position in the Public Service;
- iv. cumulative employment of a casual beneficiary employee of the Public Service.

**Amaqtaarniq Education Leave** refers to leave granted as part of the Amaaqtaarniq Education Program to an employee to take post-secondary studies as established by the educational institution for a predetermined period of time (with the possibility of renewal by mutual agreement), leading to a degree or professional designation. The studies must be taken at a recognized university, college, or professional institute that is accredited by Universities Canada. Employee participation in short term professional development activities such as workshops, seminars and conferences is considered duty travel, and is not considered as Amaaqtaarniq Education Leave. Short-term education leave is supported under HRM Section 309.

**Financial Assistance** refers to money paid to or on behalf of an employee for the purpose of participating in an educational or training program. It may include all or some portion of the employee's salary and/or course related costs.

**Pathway** refers to the steps to be taken to gain the necessary work experience or education to enable an employee to compete for and succeed in a new position within the GN.

**Target Department** is the Department in which the employee hopes to work after completion of a degree program.

**Public Service** refers to the Public Service of the GN, as defined in the Nunavut Public Service Act.

## **PROVISIONS**

### **Eligibility**

An Inuk employee of the GN will be eligible for Amaqtaarniq Education Leave if she or he:

- i. Has completed 3 years of continuous service;
- ii. Has the necessary prerequisites to enter a post-secondary degree program;
- iii. Has positive performance evaluations or equivalents; and
- iv. Wishes to pursue a professional degree or accreditation which is
  - Not consistent with the employee's home Department's IEP or Workforce Strategy; and
  - Is in demand elsewhere in the GN, including public bodies.

Amaqtaarniq supports long term education leave to study at educational institutions in Nunavut and elsewhere in Canada. Education programs must lead to a degree or post-secondary accreditation for a job, profession or trade required by the GN in order to be eligible, and can include:

- online courses leading to college accreditation, undergraduate degrees and post-graduate degrees;
- in-person attendance and distance learning; and
- full-time and part-time study.

Prior to applying for the Amaqtaarniq Education Program:

- Eligible employees must meet with the Career Planning Specialist (CPS), Sivumuaqatigiit, Executive and Intergovernmental Affairs (EIA) and complete a Career Achievement Record (CAR).
- If the employee wishes to pursue education for a profession or role in

which she or he does not have direct experience, she or he will be assigned to a job shadowing opportunity in a Department or public body that normally requires the qualification.

### **Application Review**

Acceptance into the Amaaqtaarniq Education Program may be approved for one or more of the following reasons:

- The GN, through Building Capacity Committee, has forecasted need for a particular level of education or qualification related to hard to fill positions, and the individual has the interest and prerequisites to enter the required program;
- A high-potential beneficiary employee's career could be enhanced by completing the education.

### **Position Assignment**

Beneficiary employees who are approved for the Amaaqtaarniq Education Program will be placed into a position at EIA for the duration of their leave from the GN. Indeterminate employees will maintain job security. Casual and term employees will be provided with term employment for the anticipated length of their education.

### **Level of Financial Assistance**

EIA will ensure that Financial Assistance for Amaaqtaarniq Education Leave is granted consistently and fairly using the following guidelines:

#### **(1) *Basic Assistance***

Basic assistance is paid to all beneficiary employees whose applications have been approved for Amaaqtaarniq Education Leave that is directly related to present or future requirements of employment in the Public Service. Basic assistance will include, but is not limited to such costs as:

- tuition
- one-time return travel expenses from home community to location of educational institution
- Removal of personal effects from home community to location of educational institution (and back to home community) as per GN Relocation In Weight Entitlements
- books and other required materials
- laboratory fees
- registration fees

(2) ***Full Allowance in Lieu of Salary***

In addition to the basic assistance described above, the employee will receive an allowance equivalent to 100% of their Base Salary for the duration of the academic year, plus one month, during the Amaqtaarniq Education leave. Employees do not receive the allowance when working for the GN during breaks in the academic year.

**Return to GN Employment**

The Department where the acquired skills are normally employed will have the option to appoint the employee to a position as an indeterminate employee at an appropriate level upon the employee demonstrating that the requirements of the degree have been fulfilled.

Casual employees must compete for a new position or be appointed to a position prior to the expiration of their agreement.

Should a casual employee return from Amaqtaarniq Education Leave without securing an indeterminate position, the Deputy Head of EIA may agree to continue the individual's priority status for an additional six months to enable participation in competitions.

**Employee Agreement**

Before starting Amaqtaarniq Education Leave, employees must show proof of acceptance into a post-secondary program, leading to a degree or professional designation, at a recognized university, college, or professional institute that is accredited by Universities Canada.

Employees must sign an Amaqtaarniq Education Program Agreement which stipulates the terms and conditions of their participation in the program.

Employees who accept Amaqtaarniq Education leave support must return to employment with the Government for a period at least equal to the period of leave granted. GN employment during academic breaks is counted towards returned service.

If the employee on Amaqtaarniq Education Leave:

1. fails to complete the approved program of studies without justifiable reasons;
2. does not resume employment with the employer following completion of the program; or
3. terminates employment (or is terminated) prior to completing the return of service period;

the employee shall repay the employer all financial assistance paid to him/her during the education leave or a lesser sum on a pro-rated basis.

If the employee fails to complete this agreement through unforeseen circumstances, the employee may request a review of those circumstances by the Deputy Head of EIA and the Department may release the Employee from further obligations.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Amaqtaarniq Education Program Committee**

The Deputy Head of EIA will establish an Amaqtaarniq Education Program Committee that is responsible for reviewing all applications for the Amaqtaarniq Education Program. The composition of the committee will be at the discretion of the Deputy Head of EIA, and may include representatives from the Target Departments. The following should be considered when reviewing applications:

- GN Inuit Employment Plans and Business Plan objectives;
- Positions which have been identified as specialist or hard to fill;
- Relationship of proposed curriculum subjects to present or anticipated future duties;
- Length of service of applicant, length of time in their current position, and efforts they have made to develop their skills and knowledge;
- Employment status of applicant (priority will be given to eligible casual employees);
- Applicant's current knowledge, skills and abilities;
- Whether Applicant's training and development plan, annual performance appraisal and/or Career Achievement Record support attendance at an educational institution;
- Support of current department and target department; and
- Priority will be given to degree programs.

The Deputy Head of EIA will endeavor to advise the applicant in writing whether the application has been approved or denied within thirty (30) days after the application deadline.

### **Support from Sivumuaqatigiit**

Sivumuaqatigiit will provide the following support to employees on Amaqtaarniq Education Leave, as discussed and negotiated with the Career

Planning Specialist:

- (i) Course selection;
- (ii) Connection with the educational institution's Indigenous Student support centre;
- (iii) Learning and studying skills;
- (iv) Coaching on living in a southern community; and
- (v) Assistance finding appropriate work placement with a Target Department during summer sessions and on return to the GN.

Coaching may also be provided to the employee's family to ease the transition.

### **Support from Target Department**

A Target Department may foster a participant's development during the leave by:

- providing employment during summer breaks, work terms, or to satisfy professional designation requirements; and
- offering a position in order for the employee to have a home position in the target Department prior to graduation.

### **PREROGATIVE OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Nothing in this directive shall in any way be construed to limit the prerogative of Executive Council to make decisions or take action respecting the Amaaqaarniq Education Policy of the Government of Nunavut, outside the provisions of this directive.

### **AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES**

Public Service Regulations, Sections 33 and 34 Education Leave

Main Collective Agreement with the NEU, Article 43 Education Leave

Human Resources Manual, Section 309 Education Leave

Senior Managers' Handbook Education Leave

Excluded Employees' Handbook Education Leave

### **SUNSET**

This policy is in effect until 2022-2023 and will be evaluated at that time.

### **CONTACT**

For clarification or more information please contact:

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