

AMAAQTAARNIQ EDUCATION PROGRAM POLICY

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 Agreement.

To help meet this goal, the GN may grant Amaaqtaarniq Education Leave to eligible Inuit employees for the purposes of acquiring the post-secondary credentials necessary to qualify for specialized or 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. Inuit employees are encouraged to apply for education leave sponsorship with Amaaqtaarniq Education Program first, before applying to their respective home departments.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Amaaqtaarniq policy is:

- (i) To provide education sponsorship for eligible Inuit employees who wish to qualify for GN employment.
- (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:

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

APPLICATION

This policy applies to all GN Inuit employees who are enrolled on the NTI's Inuit Enrolment List.

Inuit employees should have completed at least three years of satisfactory continuous service to be eligible for the Amaqtaarniq Education Program. The three-year requirement may be waived or modified by the Amaqtaarniq 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 Inuk employee of the Public Service.

Amaqtaarniq Education Leave refers to leave granted as part of the Amaqtaarniq 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 Amaqtaarniq 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.

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, such as positive reference letter from current or past supervisors; and
- iv. Wishes to pursue a professional degree or accreditation which is
 - Consistent with the GN's Master Inuit Employment Plan or Workforce Strategy; and
 - Is in demand within 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 demand trades and apprenticeship certification;
- 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, Human Resources 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 Process

An Amaaqaarniq Education Program application is required to be completed by the applicant, including:

- detailed financial assistance request (page 4 of application)
- Director support and approval (page 6 of application form)
- Supervisor and next level manager approval (page 7 of application)
- Up-to-date resume
- Program curriculum
- Career Achievement Record (CAR)
- Any other information for Amaaqaarniq Committee to review

Acceptance letter from a recognized education institute or professional association or a copy of proof of application.

Please refer to the Amaaqaarniq Education Program Guidelines for detailed information on the application process.

Application Review

Acceptance into the Amaaqaarniq 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 Inuk employee's career could be enhanced by completing the education.

Position Assignment

Inuit employees who are approved for the Amaaqaarniq Education Program will be placed into a position with Sivumuaqatigiit at Human Resources 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

The Department of Human Resources will ensure that Financial Assistance for Amaqtaarniq Education Leave is granted consistently and fairly using the following guidelines:

(1) **Basic Assistance**

Basic assistance is paid to all Inuit employees whose applications have been approved for Amaqtaarniq 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.

(3) **Benefits and Payments**

For the purposes of leave and attendance administration, employees on Amaqtaarniq Education leave will apply for “leave without pay”. Financial Assistance will be considered to be an allowance in lieu of present Base Salary, with the following provisions:

- Employees on Amaqtaarniq leave will receive salary increases brought about by collective bargaining.
- Leave greater than six (6) months postpones the employee’s next pay increment until the employee returns to work and completes twelve (12) months of paid, full-time employment from the effective date of the employee’s last increment. This includes all periods of employment before and after the absence(s) but since the last increment date.
- Leave credits are not earned while on Amaqtaarniq leave.

- Overtime provisions and duty travel allowances do not apply for employees on Amaqtaarniq leave.
- Nunavut Northern Allowance will not be paid to employees attending an educational institution outside of Nunavut. If attending an educational institution in Nunavut, the employee will receive the Nunavut Northern Allowance for the community in which he/she is residing during the Amaqtaarniq leave period.
- Allowances payable to employees due to the nature of the duties performed on-the-job will not be paid during the Amaqtaarniq leave period. These include bilingual bonus, trainer's allowance, responsibility and annual special allowances (nursing) and other allowances.
- The employee must prepay regular premiums for medical insurance. This will ensure that normal coverage is maintained.
- Superannuation, Supplementary Death Benefit and Disability Insurance contributions are normally recovered when the employee returns to full employment. Payments will be recovered over a period equal to that of the Amaqtaarniq leave.

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 HR 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 must remain in touch with the CPS throughout their leave and provide transcripts to the CPS within two weeks of receiving them from the educational institution.

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 HR and the Department may release the Employee from further obligations.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Amaqtaarniq Education Program Committee

The Deputy Head of HR 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 HR, 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 HR 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 Amaaqtaarniq Education Leave, as discussed 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.

TERM

The Program is contingent on receiving funding from the Settlement Agreement. Should for any reason the allocation from this fund not be sufficient or funding to support the Program is cancelled, the Program will need to be cancelled or re-evaluated.

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 Amaaqtaarniq Education Policy of the Government of Nunavut, outside the provisions of this directive.

AUTHORITIES AND REFERENCES

Public Service Regulations: Education Leave
Main Collective Agreement with the NEU: 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 2023 and will be evaluated at that time.

CONTACT

For clarification or more information please contact:

Director, Sivumuaqatigiit
Department of Human Resources
Government of Nunavut
975-6005