



Secretariat

10 January 2011

Original: English

Information circular

To: Members of the staff
From: The Secretary-General
Subject: **Education Assistance Programme for General Service Staff members**

1. The purpose of the present circular is to inform staff members of the criteria, eligibility requirements and procedures for the International Seabed Authority Education Assistance Programme for General Service Staff members (EAP).
2. The purpose of the EAP is to encourage learning and assist General Service staff members to pursue activities that lead to the acquisition of competencies. The programme has been developed on the basis of the existing programme provided by the United Nations Development Programme.

Eligibility

3. All General Service staff members are eligible to apply for the EAP providing they have held a fixed-term appointment under the Staff Rules for a period of at least six months immediately preceding the date of application and they have an expectation of remaining with the Authority for not less than twelve months immediately following completion of the learning activity.
4. Because funds are limited, once a staff member has received funding for a learning activity under the EAP, he or she will not be eligible to apply for the EAP for a period of five years following completion of the learning activity.

Criteria

5. In order to qualify for assistance under the EAP, the proposed learning activity must be endorsed by the staff member's head of office and meet at least one of the following requirements:

(a) Learning is related to the acquisition, enhancement or expansion of knowledge and skills in relevant ISA focus areas, including management practice, and leads to an academic qualification such as a Degree, Diploma or Certificate in that area;



(b) Learning is relevant to the anticipated future responsibilities of the staff member concerned;

(c) Learning is part of a short or long-term professional development plan for the staff member concerned that has been agreed with the head of the relevant office.

Application procedure

6. Applications for the EAP must be made on the application form set out in the annex prior to the beginning of the learning activity for which funding is sought. Applications submitted at the end of the learning activity will not be considered. Applicants are responsible for completing the form and explaining the relevance of the proposed learning activity based on the criteria set out above.

7. The application form must be submitted to the applicant's immediate supervisor for review and endorsement before the learning activity is undertaken. The immediate supervisor is to review the application and record such comments and recommendations as may be appropriate.

8. Once the application has been endorsed by the head of office, it must be forwarded to the Human Resources Officer for submission to the Secretary-General for final review and approval based on the criteria set out above and budget availability. The final decision on whether to award funding shall be at the discretion of the Secretary-General.

9. The decision to approve or reject the proposed learning activity for funding through the EAP will be communicated to both the staff member and head of office in writing, detailing the approved activities and costs to be reimbursed through the EAP.

Claims for reimbursement

10. Upon satisfactory completion of the learning activity, the staff member will be reimbursed a maximum of 50 per cent of the net admissible expenditure actually incurred for the purpose of undertaking the learning activity. Any form of financial assistance including grants, scholarships, etc., must be declared and will be taken into account in calculating the total net expenditure.

11. The maximum amount that may be reimbursed to a staff member under the EAP in a calendar year is US \$5,000 or its equivalent in accordance with the prevailing UN exchange rate applicable at the time of reimbursement.

12. No advance payment may be claimed under the EAP. It is the responsibility of the staff member to pay the full cost of the learning activity and seek reimbursement in line with the present circular.

13. Claims for payment under the EAP should be submitted on form F.10 (Voucher for Reimbursement of Expenses) within twelve months of completion of the learning activity. The claim must be accompanied by written evidence of the staff member's attendance or participation in the learning activity, satisfactory completion of the course of study and original invoices and receipts for the payment of admissible expenses, including registration fees, tuition and course materials.

14. The following expenses are not admissible for reimbursement under the EAP:

- (a) Social activity fees;
- (b) Technology fees;
- (c) Late registration fees and interest on late payments;
- (d) Medical examinations and medical insurance;
- (e) Photocopying and printing;
- (f) Travel-related expenses, including tickets and subsistence allowances;
- (g) Other expenses which are not, in the opinion of the Secretary-General, directly related to the learning activity.

15. If the staff member withdraws from the learning activity or fails to complete the programme, it is his or her responsibility to notify the Human Resources Officer in order to ensure reallocation of committed funds.

16. In the event that a staff member separates from service on his or her own initiative within twelve months of completing a learning activity supported under the EAP, he or she will be required to return to the Authority any funds reimbursed in the twelve-month period prior to the date of separation.

Final provisions

17. This circular shall enter into force on 10 January 2011 and shall remain in effect until further notice.

18. Information circular [ST/IC/2005/02](#) is hereby replaced.
