



EHLANZENI  
DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY

# **EHLANZENI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY**

## **BURSARY POLICY FOR INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL APPLICANTS**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	PREAMBLE	3
2	OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY	3
3	DEFINITIONS	3
4	BENEFICIARIES	4
5	CONDITIONS OF THE BURSARY FOR EMPLOYEES	4-5
6	PREPARATORY PHASE FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR EMPLOYEES	5
7	ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS OF EMPLOYEES	6
8	BUDGET ALLOCATION	6
9	CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT AND BREACH OF CONTRACT FOR EMPLOYEES	6-7
10	RELEASE FROM DUTY TO STUDY FULL-TIME: SERVING EMPLOYEES	7
11	CHANGE IN STUDY DIRECTION OR INSTITUTION	7
12	MAYORAL FUNDING: CONDITIONS OF THE FUNDS FOR EXTERNAL STUDENTS	7-8
13	PREPARATORY PHASE FOR MAYORAL FUNDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE	8
14	ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR EXTERNAL STUDENTS	9
15	CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT AND BREACH OF CONTRACT FOR EXTERNAL STUDENTS	9
16	BUDGET ALLOCATION	9
17	BURSARY AMOUNT	9
18	AUTHORISATION	9
19	GENERAL CONDITIONS (FOR EXTERNAL STUDENTS)	10
20	REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF THE POLICY	10
21	SHORT TITLE AND APPLICATION	10

## EHLANZENI DISTRICT MUNICIPALITY BURSARY POLICY

### 1. PREAMBLE

Ehlanzeni District Municipality recognises the need for its employees to improve their skills and knowledge in their field of work in order to execute their duties exceptionally. This need is in terms of the Skills Development Act which requires employers to regularly train their staff to better their capacity and productivity. The formulation of the bursary policy is in line with the foregoing principles.

Ehlanzeni District Municipality further recognises the need to allocate bursaries to external students who need to further the studies in Institutions of higher learning in particular to those who are in fields that are categorised as critical and scarce skills.

### 2. OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

The objective of the Bursary Assistance Scheme is to grant financial assistance to employees and external students who undertake studies in specifically identified areas, where there is a critical shortage of personnel with suitable qualifications within the Ehlanzeni District Municipality and where the posts cannot be readily filled through the recruitment of qualified people.

Further the purpose of the bursaries of Ehlanzeni District Municipality employees is to enable serving employees to obtain qualifications at recognized tertiary educational institutions of Higher learning accredited by the Council of Higher Education and registered with the Department of Higher Education (DHET), Universities and or Universities of Technology for a Junior Degree/National Diploma, Post graduate studies (Honours, Masters and Doctoral degrees) or a one year certificate.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

Unless stated otherwise in this policy document, the under-mentioned terms in alphabetical order are defined as follows:

**“Base Qualification”** refers to a minimum period of tertiary study necessary for the attainment of a qualification.

**“Bursaries”** refer to the payment by Ehlanzeni District Municipality on behalf of employees or external students to undertake studies. It includes all or some of the following: fees, registration, tuition, administration, examination and book allowance towards Certificates, Diplomas or Degrees offered by Universities of Technology, TVET Colleges and Universities which are relevant to the functions performed by the Ehlanzeni District Municipality.

**“Contractual Agreement”** refers to the legal document signed by the Bursar which states the terms and conditions of the financial assistance that are binding to both the Ehlanzeni District Municipality and the Bursar.

**“Financial Assistance”** refers to study bursaries.

**“Serving Employees”** refers to those employees who are currently employed in a permanent capacity or specific contracts of employment of not less than two years by Ehlanzeni District Municipality.

**“Study fees”** refers to registration, class and examination fees but will not include any penalties that are imposed by the educational institution or membership of any student body.

## 4. BENEFICIARIES

### 4.1 Serving Employees

Bursaries may be allocated to permanent employees and contract employees whose contract with the Municipality exceeds one (1) year only and NOT interns and volunteers in accordance with the empowering legislation of the Municipality. However, the duration of the bursary contract should not exceed the duration of the contract. The bursary period should equal at most half the duration of the contract.

### 4.2 External Students

For external students Bursaries may be allocated to needy students who wish to further their Undergraduate studies at a registered Institution of Higher Learning (University/University of Technology/TVET College and this will be categorised as the Mayoral Bursary.

## 5. CONDITIONS OF THE BURSARY FOR EMPLOYEES

- 5.1 The educational institutions where studies to be undertaken must be registered educational institutions of Higher learning.
- 5.2 Financial assistance given to employees in terms of the Bursary Policy will be for Undergraduate Degrees/National Diploma, Post Graduate Studies (Honours, Masters and Doctoral Degrees) or a one-year certificate.
- 5.3 The Bursary amount payable in terms of financial assistance shall be reviewed on an annual basis by Ehlanzeni District Municipality for undergraduate and post graduate studies and that the amount shall escalate by 10% annually per each academic year. The numbers of bursaries to be awarded will *BE DETERMINED* by the availability of funds each academic year.
- 5.5. The study field and courses to be followed must be applicable and related to the Local Government activities and/or job related activities of the studying employee and to address a skills gap in terms of management acumen which was identified in the needs analysis conducted between the employee and his/her line manager.
- 5.6. The normal duration of the course must be one academic year or longer and the benefiting employee will have to work back the number of years of sponsorship. The total period of study towards a qualification must not extend for more than the minimum prescribed / recommended duration as applicable to part-time study.
- 5.7. The municipality will **ONLY** cover tuition fees and prescribed books for employees wishing to enrol for undergraduate and post-graduate studies. The quotation for prescribed books should not exceed the maximum bursary required amount. No meals, accommodation and transport will be covered. The Municipality shall not be responsible for providing official transport in respect of registration, seminars, attendance of classes and or examination).
- 5.8 A bursary must be granted subject to the verification of results of studies for which a previous bursary was granted.
- 5.9 If an employee fails a subject/s in an academic year, such subject/s must be repeated at his/her own cost before another bursary can be granted.

- 5.10 The annual bursary will continue until completion of the qualification, subject to the condition that the employee passes all the subjects entered for the course and does not change his/her field of study.
- 5.11. The registration fee at a tertiary educational institution in respect of a bursary is payable directly to such tertiary educational institution, unless proof of payment of such registration fee is submitted by the relevant employee and they are eligible for a refund.
- 5.12. The employee receiving a bursary must submit proof to the Municipality annually that (s)he has completed that particular year successfully, where after (s)he will qualify for a bursary for the following year.
- 5.13. That bursary monies not be recovered from exiting employees provided that they did not fail or they did not work back the number of years equal to the years of the bursary/ sponsorship.
- 5.14. Should an employee withdraw from the course for any reason whatsoever the employee will be liable for the repayment of the course registration fee as paid by the Municipality.
- 5.15 All monies paid by the Municipality to any academic institution in terms of bursary related payments shall be for current accounts only, for the relevant bursary holder, and not for the payment of any arrears amounts due to the institution by the bursary holder.
- 5.16 If an employee is transferred to another Department within Ehlanzeni District Municipality such Department shall not compel an employee to change his/her study direction if the course is relevant and beneficial to the Municipality as a whole.

## **6. PREPARATORY PHASE FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR EMPLOYEES**

- 6.1 In the process of management the Human Resources Unit shall call for applications through internal methods of communication and invite interested employees to apply for each Academic year in the second quarter of each financial year. The applications for a bursary will close at the end of the second week of January of each academic year or at the date to be determined by the municipality in respect of semester courses.
- 6.2 After the closing date the Human Resources unit shall submit all applications to the Bursary Committee for recommendation based on applications received a meeting convened by an Internal Bursary Committee comprising of the following officials:
  - General Manager: Corporate Services (Chairperson)
  - All other Section 56 Managers
  - Manager: Human Resources
  - Head of Internal Audit
  - Skills Development Facilitator (Secretariat)
  - 2 x Union Representatives
- 6.3 After the selection process thereafter the applications with recommendations of the Committee shall be forwarded to the Municipal Manager for approval.
- 6.4 The Human Resource Unit shall compile a letter, within seven (7) working days after approval, confirming that a Bursary has been allocated to the bursary holder and forward it to the employee to notify the academic institution.

## **7. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS OF EMPLOYEES**

- 7.1 All applicants shall submit the relevant documents i.e Bursary application forms, quotations for registration /administration fees, examination fees, tuition fees and prescribed books on or before the stipulated closing date to allow for sufficient time for the administration processes to be completed before submission to the Bursary Committee.
- 7.2 If an application is received after the closing date or not submitting the relevant documentation timeously, the application will not be considered.
- 7.3 Employees granted bursaries shall enter into a contractual agreement with the Municipality. No money shall be paid on behalf of the student if the agreement is not completed and signed correctly and submitted to the Human Resources Department. The Signing of the contract on behalf of the Municipality shall rest with the Municipal Manager.
- 7.4 Granting of examination and study leave will be in accordance with the Municipality's Conditions of Service and Collective Agreements. Applications for leave for study purposes must be submitted on Council's official leave form accompanied by the official examination timetable of the educational institution and or official statement by the educational institution concerned that the attendance of classes is obligatory together with the times when such classes have to be attended. Attendance of any lectures/classes shall not adversely affect the function of the Department/Municipality where the official is placed.
- 7.5 Bursars must submit all correspondence relating to bursaries to the Human Resources Department.
- 7.6 Statement of results shall also be forwarded to the Human Resources Department at the end of each year / semester before payment can be made for the ensuing year.

## **8. BUDGET ALLOCATION**

- 8.1 The Municipality shall set aside and commits itself to make budgetary provision for each financial year for the implementation of the internal employees' bursary programme.
- 8.2 The granting of the funding amount per annum shall be determined by Council depending on the availability of funds for that Academic year.

## **9. CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT AND BREACH OF CONTRACT BY EMPLOYEES**

- 9.1 The parties in the Bursary scheme must contract to serve the Ehlanzeni District Municipality for one year for each year of study the employee enjoys the benefit of the Municipality's bursary.
- 9.2 In the event; the official's services with the Municipality is terminated for whatever reason e,g resignation, termination of contract or dismissal the official shall be compelled to repay the Municipality the bursary amount, calculated on the period of time he/she has failed to remain in Council's employment because of the benefit he/she enjoyed subject to the provisions of any legislation or conditions of service stating the contrary.
- 9.3 In the case of an employee who leaves the service, the amount owing will be re-claimed from his/her final leave pay-out, failing which an 'out-of-service' debt must be set up. In certain instances, which are covered in the bursary contract, apportion of the debt may be redeemed by service obligation.
- 9.4 If the obligations cannot be fulfilled owing to death or incapacity due to any mental or physical disability, any liability for the refund of any money which may be due in terms of the undertaking shall lapse.

- 9.5 If an employee leaves the service before completing his/her studies, does not make satisfactorily progress towards obtaining his/her qualification, and/or elects not to continue with his/her studies the employee shall be required to re-imburse the Municipality the full amount of bursary money (plus interest) granted to him/her.
- 9.6 In the event of a participant in the scheme wishing to temporarily suspend or discontinue his/her studies or having made unsatisfactory academic progress, it will be incumbent upon him/her to immediately request the Municipality for a deferment of contractual obligation and present the Municipality with a proposal to enable him/her to complete the relevant course / qualification at his/her own cost to avoid immediate steps being taken to institute a recovery of study fees. This deferment however shall not exceed a period of 1 year without the prior approval. In exceptional cases where this deferment exceeds a period of two years prior approval from the Accounting Officer is required.

## **10. RELEASE FROM DUTY TO STUDY FULL-TIME: SERVING EMPLOYEES**

- 10.1 Employees shall not be permitted to study at a tertiary institution on a fulltime basis with retention of salary, if they are granted financial assistance.

## **11. CHANGE IN STUDY DIRECTION OR INSTITUTION**

- 11.1 Should a serving or external bursary holder decide to change the field of study for example, Engineering to Public Administration, the contract between the bursary holder and the Municipality shall be considered to be breached, and will not be renewed, without prior approval by the Municipal Manager.
- 11.2 If an employee for whatever reason wishes to change the field of study or the courses for which (s)he originally enrolled, such changes will be made at his/her own cost.
- 11.3 The General Manager Corporate Services in consultation with the Municipal Manager shall grant authority to employees/bursary holders to change their direction of study or institution provided that:
- 11.3.1 The new field of study addresses the skills shortage being experienced in the Municipality;
  - 11.3.2 The new institution is a recognized and accredited institution.

## **12. MAYORAL FUNDING: CONDITIONS OF THE FUNDS FOR EXTERNAL STUDENTS**

- 12.1. Financial assistance given to students who possess minimum University or University of Technology admissions in terms of the Bursary Policy shall only be restricted to Undergraduate degrees/Diplomas.
- 12.2. Consideration shall be given to previous disadvantaged and persons with disabilities in the Ehlanzeni District Municipal area who have completed Grade 12 and possess a minimum University/ University of Technology or TVET admission and have secured provisional admission at a recognized South African Institution.
- 12.3 The following documents are required for the application to be considered:
- Mayoral Funding Application form (obtainable on Ehlanzeni District Municipality Website or by the Reception area)
  - Letter of motivation;
  - Grade 12 results or recent academic record if already a Tertiary student;
  - Certified copy of ID document;
  - Certified copy of parent/guardian ID document/death certificate of parents if deceased/ Doctors' certificate if permanently disabled;
  - Letter of admission or proof of admission from the institution of higher learning;
  - Proof of parents/guardian income (of total monthly not exceeding the Old age pension grant offered by government combined);
  - Copy of pension slip (for indigent applicants);

- Affidavit (if parent is unemployed);
- Proof of residence

- 12.4. The field of study for students shall be applicable to Engineering, Finance Information Technology, Environmental Health and any other field at the discretion of the Executive Mayor.
- 12.5. The normal duration of the course must be a minimum of 3 academic years but limited to Undergraduate degree. In the event of the Student completing his/her studies Council may consider appointing such a student through following the recruitment processes of Council, ***IF VACANCIES EXISTS***. If no vacancies exist the Student will have no further obligation towards Council.
- 12.6. Funding shall be granted subject to the verification of results.
- 12.7 If a student fails a subject/s in an academic year, such subject/s must be repeated at his/her own cost before another bursary can be granted.
- 12.8. If a student for whatever reason wishes to change the field of study or the courses for which (s)he originally enrolled, such changes will be made at his/her own cost.
- 12.9. The annual bursary will continue until completion of the qualification, subject to the condition that the student passes all the subjects entered for the course and does not change his/her field of study.
- 12.10 The funding approved at a tertiary educational institution in respect of a bursary recipient will be payable directly to such tertiary educational institution.

### **13. PREPARATORY PHASE FOR MAYORAL FUNDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

- 13.1 In the process of management the Human Resources Unit shall call for applications through external methods of communication (Municipal website, local newspaper, notice boards etc.) and invite interested disadvantaged students to apply for each Academic year in the second quarter of each financial year. The applications for a bursary will close at the end of the second week of January of each academic year.
- 13.2 After the closing date the Human Resources unit shall compile a list and submit all applications to the External Bursary Committee for recommendation based on applications received. A Bursary Committee for students shall be comprised as follows:
- MMC for Corporate Services (Chairperson)
  - MMC for Finance and SCM
  - MMC for Technical Services
  - General Manager: Finance
  - General Manager: Corporate Services
  - Manager: HR
  - Skills Development Facilitator (Secretariat)

#### **13.3 After the selection process thereafter the applications with recommendations of the Committee shall be forwarded to the Municipal Manager for approval.**

- 13.4 The Human Resource Unit shall compile a letter, within seven (7) working days after approval, confirming that a Bursary has been allocated to the bursary holder and forward it to the students to notify the academic institution.

### **14. ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS FOR EXTERNAL STUDENTS**



- 14.1 All applicants shall submit the relevant documents as per advertisement on or before the stipulated closing date to allow for sufficient time for the administration processes to be completed before submission to the Bursary Committee. If an application is received after the closing date or not submitting the relevant documentation timeously, the application will not be considered.
- 14.2 The student receiving a bursary must submit proof to the Municipality annually that (s)he has completed that particular year successfully, whereafter (s)he will qualify for a bursary for the following year.
- 14.3 It is the duty of the student to inform the Municipality of any other financial assistance received/approved to ensure there is no double funding. The municipality must be notified immediately of any change of address, or whatever changes in circumstances.

## **15. CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT AND BREACH OF CONTRACT**

- 15.1 External students granted bursaries shall enter into a contract agreement. The contract will set out the terms and conditions of the award. Signing of the contract on behalf of the Municipality shall rest with the Municipal Manager. Accepting the funding will not require the Student to pay back the funds in monetary terms. However, it does require that the beneficiary meets and maintains certain academic conditions for the duration of the study period.
- 15.2 The Municipality may terminate the Financial Assistance at any time should the bursary holder:
  - 15.2.1 Fail to observe any one or more of the terms and conditions of the Bursary Agreement.
  - 15.2.2 Be guilty of misconduct in terms of the rules of the institution or not obtain satisfactory progress in his/her studies
  - 15.2.3 Discontinue his/her study course or another course embarked on without the prior written consent of the Municipality
  - 15.2.4 Fail to fulfil any of the funding conditions or should it transpire that financial assistance was awarded on the basis of false information supplied to the Municipality, the Municipality would be entitled to forthwith cancel the agreement, in which event the Bursary holder will be liable to refund the Bursary plus interest at a rate determined by the Municipality from time to time.
  - 15.2.5 Receives funding through National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)

## **16. BUDGET ALLOCATION**

- 16.1 The Municipality shall set aside and commits itself to make budgetary provision for each financial year for the implementation of the Mayoral funding programme.
- 16.2 The granting of the funding amount per annum shall be determined by Council depending on the availability of funds for that Academic year.

## **17. BURSARY AMOUNT**

- 17.1 The amount of the bursary will be paid directly to the institution concerned.
- 17.2 Costs associated with supplementary exams will NOT be paid for by the Municipality, costs to be borne by the student.

## **18. AUTHORISATION**

- 18.1 In terms of the delegations, the authority to approve Bursary Assistance Scheme rests with the Municipal Manager.

**19. GENERAL CONDITIONS (FOR EXTERNAL STUDENTS)**

- 19.1 Bursaries are not awarded for correspondence courses. The bursary-holder must be registered as a full-time student during the tenure of the Bursary as stipulated in the letter of award.
- 19.2 Bursaries awarded have to be taken up in the relevant institution calendar year or they are forfeited.
- 19.3 The bursary holder may not change the course for which the bursary was awarded without the prior permission of the Municipality
- 19.4 Bursaries are awarded only to students who are South African citizens.
- 19.5 There are no contractual obligations attached to the bursar but upon graduation the bursars are encouraged to seek employment.
- 19.6 The Municipality at any time, and from time to time, may request and obtain any academic or financial information about the Student the Municipality may require, from the Higher Education Institution, bank or other financial institution, or from any other person, without the prior consent of the Student.

**20. REVIEW AND AMENDMENT OF THE POLICY**

- 20.1 This policy shall be reviewed annually or as and when there are changes in changes in the allocation of funds or legislation or whichever shall come first in consultation with Local Labour Forum (LLF), but can only be amended by Council.

**21. SHORT TITLE AND APPLICATION**

- 21.1 This policy shall be called the Bursary Policy for Ehlanzeni District Municipality and shall come in to effect after it has been approved by Council.