



higher education & training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

STAFF RETENTION POLICY

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A. ACRONYMS

ACRONYM	DEFINITION
DG	Director-General
DHET	The Department of Higher Education and Training
HR	Human Resource
PMDS	Performance Management and Development System
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority

B. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERM	DEFINITION
ACCOUNTING OFFICER	The Director-General
COUNTER-OFFER	Offering a higher salary notch than that of the external offer to retain an employee.
CRITICAL SKILLS	Particular capabilities needed and critical for an occupation
DELEGATED AUTHORITY	Means any incumbent of a post to whom a power has been delegated or who has been authorised to perform a duty in terms of a formal delegation. This includes an official who lawfully acts in the capacity of the Delegated Official.
DEPARTMENT	Department of Higher Education and Training.
DESIGNATED GROUPS	Black people, women and people with disabilities who are citizens of the Republic of South Africa by birth or descent or became citizens of the Republic of South Africa by naturalisation, before 27 April 1994 or after 26 April 1994 and who would have been entitled to acquire citizenship by naturalisation prior to that date but who were precluded by apartheid policies.
EMPLOYEE	A person appointed in terms of the Public Service Act, 1994 as amended, excluding an Independent Contractor, who works for

	another person or for the State and receives, or is entitled to receive remuneration.
EMPLOYER	The Department of Higher Education and Training
INCENTIVES	Rewarding employees for good performance and valuable innovative suggestions.
LINE MANAGER	Direct supervisor to which an employee reports to.
RETENTION	Attracting and keeping employees with scarce skills in the organisation.
SCARCE SKILLS	Skills that are not readily available in the labour market and may include new or emerging occupations. Skills that are needed to realize the Department's goals and objectives but are difficult to recruit and costly to replace.

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

1.1 Policy Statement

It is the intention of the Department to attract and retain the suitable personnel with the required skills. In an endeavor to retain the required and insufficient skills, the Department commits itself to developing strategies which will assist it to retain skilled and experienced personnel. Retention of quality personnel is one of the single biggest factors that will ensure sustained success of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

The Retention Policy is an initiative and effort of making the Department attractive to current and potential employees as an employer of choice. It focuses on retaining employees whose competencies are critical to the Department's effective functioning.

1.2 Legislative Framework

The following pieces of legislations and guidelines are applicable to this policy:

- 1.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, as amended;
- 1.2.2 Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act 66 of 1995), as amended;
- 1.2.3 Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (Act 75 of 1997), as amended;
- 1.2.4 Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act 97 of 1998);
- 1.2.5 Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act 1 of 1999), as amended;
- 1.2.6 Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act 55 of 1998);
- 1.2.7 Public Service Regulations, 2016, as amended;
- 1.2.8 Public Service Act, 1994 (Proc. 103 of 1994), as amended;
- 1.2.9 The DPSA Staff Retention guide, 2006;
- 1.2.10 The Department's Recruitment and Selection policy; and
- 1.2.11 The Department's Bursary policy.

2. POLICY PURPOSE, OBJECTIVES AND PRINCIPLES

2.1 Purpose

- 2.1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework and mechanism for the retention of competent employees with identified critical, scarce or valued skills in the Department.
- 2.1.2 To enable the Department to manage productivity, avoid loss of institutional knowledge and decrease training costs.

2.2 Objectives

The objectives of this policy are:

- 2.2.1 To ensure continuity in key positions for future roles through deliberate and systematic interventions;
- 2.2.2 To develop a professional and leadership pipeline to ensure service continuity;
- 2.2.3 To build and retain capacity in the Department for critical roles;
- 2.2.4 To provide flexibility when critical staff members exit the system;
- 2.2.5 To identify gaps and develop staff members with capabilities to address these gaps;
- 2.2.6 To connect the mandate of the department to the long-term human capital needs of the economy;
- 2.2.7 To link the Department's needs with career aspirations of individuals; and
- 2.2.8 To link retention to other Human Resource processes such as:
 - (a) Performance management;
 - (b) Employment equity;
 - (c) Training and Development;
 - (d) Reward and Recognition;
 - (e) Recruitment and Selection; and
 - (f) Acting in higher roles.

2.3 Principles

The policy will be implemented guided by the following principles:

- 2.3.1 Fairness;
- 2.3.2 Service excellence;
- 2.3.3 Transparency;
- 2.3.4 Value for money;
- 2.3.5 Courtesy; and
- 2.3.6 Equity.

3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

This policy applies only to the permanent employees in the Department.

4. POLICY PROVISIONS

4.1 Employee Retention Techniques

The Department shall apply various methods and approaches to manage the scarcity of resources and to ensure that effective strategies are implemented to attract, develop and retain employees with critical/scarce skills. Within the scope of this policy and in terms of the applicable practices within the public service, the following techniques shall be considered:

4.1.1 Counter-offer

The Department may retain the services of an employee if it deems that there is a particular need based on the skill or experience to retain the services of such an employee through counter-offer as follows:

- (a) Adjust the salary package for such an employee in line with the dictates of the Public Service Regulations, 2016;
- (b) The employee has performed satisfactorily for three consecutive performance cycles; and
- (c) The availability of a vacant funded post.

4.1.2 Reward and Recognition

(a) The Department shall reward employees as guided by the Public Service Regulations, 2016 and the Departmental Policy on Performance Management and Development as follows:

- (i) receive cash bonus and pay progression if performance is highly effective;
 - (ii) receive pay progression if performance is fully effective;
 - (iii) non-monetary rewards; and
 - (iv) certificate of excellence.
- (b) The Department shall recognize employees who have improved their qualification in line with the PSCBC Resolution on Improved Qualification.

4.1.3 Training and Development

- (a) The department shall seek to retain employees through targeted training and development programs to up-skill the workforce.
- (b) Employees shall be allowed to enroll for at least one skills program of their choice not linked to the personal development plan.

4.1.4 Study Opportunities

- (a) The Department shall use the departmental bursary scheme to assist employees to improve their qualifications.
- (b) A certain percentage of employees at middle and senior management may be granted bursaries for postgraduate studies depending on the availability of funds.

4.1.5 Exit Interviews

Employees leaving the Department shall undergo an exit interview to elicit the reasons for leaving as well as what the Department should do to ensure staff retention and avoid turnover.

4.1.6 Career Progression

- (a) The Department shall as far as possible prioritize internal staff upwards mobility through the recruitment and selection policy and processes.
- (b) The Department shall as far as possible rotate employees within a directorate to allow employees to acquire necessary knowledge and experience.
- (c) The Department shall allow internal transfer in case there is a vacant position in the branch the employee would like to transfer to.

4.1.7 Better Working Environment

The Department should maintain a healthy work environment based on the balance between work and personal life. Each Branch, Chief Directorate and Directorate, college or office should pay attention to the quality of the workplace, including health and safety and understanding how to motivate employees.

4.1.8 Remote Work

Employees shall be allowed to work remotely following the use of the Departmental Remote Work Guideline.

4.1.9 Internal Secondment

- (a) Internal secondment shall be implemented as follows:
 - (i) Between branches, regional offices and colleges in case of a skills mismatch; and
 - (ii) Between chief directorates, directorates and units or sub-directorates to afford employees an opportunity to gain new skills or impart skills to others.
- (b) Employees shall be afforded an opportunity to apply for internal secondment through human resource management and administration offices.
- (c) The criteria for effecting internal secondment shall be as follows:
 - (i) In case an employee occupies a position that does not match his/her qualifications and skills;
 - (ii) The employee has requested internal secondment or transfer; and
 - (iii) Vacant funded positions exist in the branch, chief directorate, regional office or college they wish to be seconded to.

4.2 Retention Process

- 4.2.1 Employees shall submit a resignation letter to their supervisors informing them of their serving of the notice;
- 4.2.2 If a supervisor wishes to retain an employee, he/she must check on the organisational structure if a vacant and funded post to retain the employee exists;
- 4.2.3 In the case existence of a vacant and funded post, the supervisor shall request Human Resource Management and Administration to facilitate a retention process; and
- 4.2.4 In case a retention is approved, the line function and the employee shall be informed and retention shall be effected.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1 The Director-General

The Director-General shall be responsible for approving the awarding of a higher salary notch as regulated by the Public Service Regulations, 2016 within his/her delegation.

5.2 The Deputy Director-General: Corporate Services

The Deputy Director-General shall:

- 5.2.1 Strategically drive the implementation of the policy;
- 5.2.2 Approve the awarding of a higher salary notch as per the Public Service Regulations, 2016 within the Deputy Director-General's delegation.

5.3 Principals and Regional Managers

Principals and Regional Managers shall:

- 5.3.1 Strategically drive the implementation of the policy within their space of operation;
- 5.3.2 Approve the awarding of a higher salary notch as per the Public Service Regulations, 2016 within their delegation.

5.4 Senior Management

Line managers are responsible for ensuring that the Department does not lose competent, scarce and skilled employees by:

- 5.4.1 Creating a culture and work environment conducive for employees to stay long with the Department;
- 5.4.2 Providing opportunities for growth;
- 5.4.3 Applying the policies, procedures and systems for staff retention; and
- 5.4.4 Motivating employees.

5.5 Human Resource Management Administration and Development

Human Resources is responsible for the following:

- 5.5.1 Develop and monitor the implementation of policies, procedures and systems for retention;
- 5.5.2 Ensure staff retention is managed properly;
- 5.5.3 Conduct exit interviews;

- 5.5.4 Design interventions to retain staff;
- 5.5.5 Ensure that both the employer's and employee's needs are balanced and taken care of;
- 5.5.6 Serve as change agents;
- 5.5.7 Compile a database and analysis of resignation reasons and propose mitigation;
- 5.5.8 Consolidate and analyze the exit information extracted from the PERSAL system;
- 5.5.9 Co-ordinate the implementation of approved developmental interventions for staff retention; and
- 5.5.10 Empower line managers on the processes and implementation of retention interventions.

6. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Any dispute arising out of the interpretation and/or application of this Policy shall be dealt with in terms of the DHET grievance procedure.

7. POLICY REVIEW

This Policy shall be reviewed every three years, unless changes to Legislation and Ministerial Directives dictates otherwise.

8. POLICY APPROVAL SIGNATURE

Signed at Pretoria on this 25 day of February 2022


Dr Nkosinathi Sishi

Director-General: Department of Higher Education and Training