

FORWARD

REVISED GUIDELINES ON STUDY LEAVE IN THE GHANA CIVIL SERVICE

Over the years, the management of the study leave facility in the Civil Service has been fraught with a number of challenges. Some of the challenges relate to the inadequacy of information provided on an applicant, ambiguity about determination of eligibility for accessing the facility, bonding of Officers, the pursuit of overseas courses, as well as the inability of Heads of Organisations to properly comment on the applications to facilitate decision making at the OHCS.

The guidelines on study leave in the Civil Service have consequently been reviewed to meet the exigencies of the Service and ensure that the facility is effectively managed.

The revised guidelines spell out in greater detail, the eligibility criteria and procedures for accessing the facility of study leave with or without pay.

Chief Directors and Heads of Department are respectfully requested to reproduce copies of the revised guidelines and the bond forms for distribution to staff in the Ministries and other Civil Service Departments in their respective sectors.

GUIDELINES ON STUDY LEAVE IN THE GHANA CIVIL SERVICE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

As with all other facilities and services in the Civil Service, guidelines have been developed to govern the management of the study leave facility. These guidelines, culled from various circulars have been revised to meet the exigencies of the service.

2.0 DEFINITION:

Study leave is a facility that is provided to a Civil Servant to undertake an approved course of study in a local or overseas training institution. This is to enable Civil Servants keep abreast of current trends and broaden the scope and experiences of the Civil Servant for the benefit of the organization. There are two types of Study leave: (a) Study leave with pay and (b) Study leave without pay

3.0 STUDY LEAVE

3.1 STUDY LEAVE WITH PAY

Study Leave with Pay is generally intended for Serving Officers who are sponsored under departmental training schemes by their organizations for courses usually at the post-graduate level in local or overseas educational institutions. Such an Officer is deemed to be on duty and is, therefore, entitled to the requisite benefits while on the course.

However, in view of the growing desire of Officers to add value to themselves to remain competitive in an environment of limited job opportunities, an increasing number of Officers, through their own individual efforts, gain admission into institutions of higher learning and take up the payment of tuition and other fees themselves. This category of Officers seeks to access the study leave with pay facility primarily for their own purposes. Consequently, the facility has been extended to cover such circumstances.

The training may be full time or part time. The part-time training may include distance learning and sandwich programmes which are relevant to the Civil Servant current job, duties and responsibilities as well as the future career development of the Civil Servant

3.2 STUDY LEAVE WITHOUT PAY

Study leave without pay is usually granted as an alternative to resignation in situations where study leave with pay cannot be granted. However, some Officers on their own apply for study leave without pay, even though they may have been eligible to access the study leave with pay facility. This may be attributed to their unwillingness to be bonded after their courses of study.

4.0 CONDITIONS FOR STUDY LEAVE FACILITY

4.1 Subject to the conditions prescribed in these guidelines, study leave may be granted to a Civil Servant with due regard to the exigencies of the service, to enable him/her undergo, in or out of Ghana to undertake a special course of study consisting of higher studies, Academic Training or specialized training in a professional or technical subject which is related to his/her duty.

4.2 Applicants must hold a permanent appointment in the Service. They must have been confirmed in their appointment and done not less than four (4) continuous years' service and also have undergone the required trainings as prescribed by the Scheme of Service of the Class of the applicant.

4.3 Must be nominated by the Ministry/Department for studies relevant to the officer's duties and in accordance with the Ministerial Annual Training Plan.

- 4.4 In the case of overseas study, the course must not be available in the country. However this condition may be waived if the course is a scholarship or donor funded. Applicants must in addition provide adequate evidence of full payment of tuition fees and of the ability or capability to adequately sustain him/her during the entire period of the programme
- 4.5 An Officer who seeks to pursue a second programme of study shall be deemed to be eligible for study leave only after the bond term for the first programme of study has been fully served. In instances where Officers seek to enjoy the facility for a second time, precedence shall be given to those Officers who are first time applicants and have satisfied all the conditions.
- 4.6 The applicant should not be due for retirement within three years from the date on which he/she is expected to resume duty after the expiry of the study leave.

5.0 APPROVING AUTHORITY

5.1 No Civil Servant shall undertake long-term training which requires absence of officer from work without being granted the authority for study leave. The authority for approving the grant of study leave with or without pay is the Head of the Civil Service. MDAs should encourage part-time and distance-learning from recognized institutions without Officers necessarily leaving the Service to pursue courses of study. However such category of officers must obtain permission from the Chief Director or Head of Department in writing.

6.0 PROCEDURE FOR STUDY LEAVE APPLICATION

6.1 An application for Study Leave by an Officer in a Department must be addressed in the first instance through his/her Head of Department to the Chief Director of the sector Ministry, while an Officer working in a Ministry must submit his/her application to his/her Chief Director.

The application for study leave by an Officer in a Ministry/Department must be submitted with the following supporting documents:

- i. Copy of admission letter for the course.
- ii. Copy of first appointment into the Civil Service.
- iii. Copy of last promotion letter, if any.
- iv. Copy of most recent Pay Slip.
- V Copy of Scholarship award letter where applicable
- Vi Copy of full payment of fees and capability to sustain him/herself if course is overseas and self- financing

6.2 The Head of the Department shall thoroughly examine the application in the first instance in line with the guidelines and forward it with his/her comments to the Chief Director of the sector Ministry. For an Officer working in a Ministry, the Chief Director shall examine the application and submit it with his/her comments to the OHCS.

6.3 The comments of the Head of Department or the Chief Director, as the case may be, shall cover the following:

- i. The applicant's current grade.
- ii. Number of years done in the Service and in the present grade.
- iii. Title, venue and duration of the course..
- viii. Details of applicant's outstanding financial or other obligations to Government, if applicable.
- ix. Whether there is any pending disciplinary case against applicant.

6.4 The application shall be forwarded to the OHCS for processing at least six clear weeks prior to the commencement date of the course.

7.0 OTHER CONDITIONS:

7.1 Relevance of Course

7.1.1 The course to be pursued must be relevant to the duties of the officer as well as in accordance with the needs of the Service.

MDAs shall undertake a training needs analysis and develop comprehensive training plans in line with the approved Scheme of Service for each Class.

7.1.2 In determining the relevance of the course, consideration shall be given to the following:

- i. Course as it relates to the core business of the applicant's parent organization.
- ii. The current and future (envisaged) work schedule and the inherent potential of the applicant.
- iii. The broader perspective or wider needs of the Civil Service.

The OHCS, by virtue of its strategic position, shall have the final say in the determination of the relevance of courses to the Service in general.

7.2 CHANGE OF COURSE AND ITS DURATION

7.2.1 The course shall not be changed without the written permission of the parent organization and the OHCS. Similarly, a beneficiary cannot pursue a higher version of the same course without the explicit approval from the OHCS.

7.2.2 The facility will be enjoyed for the normal duration of the courses. The continued enjoyment of the facility is dependent on the Officer's satisfactory performance while on the course. A half-yearly report on the performance of a beneficiary is required by the sponsoring organization.

7.2.3 A beneficiary shall not modify the duration of the course unless the written permission of the parent organization and the OHCS is given.

7.2.4 In the event of breach of the conditions spelt out in sections 7.2.1, 7.2.2 and 7.2.3, the promotion of the Officer shall be put on hold for the number of years that he/she was out of Office. Similarly, a certificate acquired by the Officer in the event of a change in course shall not be recognized in the Service.

7.2.5 The maximum duration (number of years) of study leave that can be granted at one time to an applicant shall not exceed four (4) years.

7.3 PROMOTIONS & ANNUAL LEAVE

7.3.1 An Officer granted study leave with pay will not be promoted while on the course. He/she will, however, earn annual increments, and be eligible for promotion upon return and after serving for at least one (1) year, even if he/she has already serviced the prescribed minimum number of years on the grade. However, in the case of an Officer who is sponsored by his/her organization, his/her eligibility for promotion shall be reckoned from his/her due date. To forestall any loss of seniority, such Officers shall be given notional and substantive effective dates.

7.3.2 The period of study leave with pay is leave-consuming and not leave earning.

8.0 RESPONSIBILITY OF MINISTRIES AND DEPARTMENTS

8.1 Ministries/Departments shall be responsible for the payment of the salaries of officers who are granted study-leave with pay and budgetary provisions should be made to cover such expenditure.

8.2 Officers on study leave facility are required to fill a bond form and submit a copy to OHCS before embarking on the course.

8.3 Officers who undertake academic programmes for a period of one (1) year or more are required to submit an inception report within 3 months of commencement of the programme.

8.4 It is also mandatory for every Officer to submit an evaluation report at the end of the programme..

8.5 Ministries/Departments are required to obtain from the training institutions, half - yearly and annual academic performance reports on staff who have been released on study leave with/without pay.

8.6 Heads of Ministries/Departments shall also ensure that such staff do not overstay the study leave period granted them.

8.7 Upon return from the course, officers are required to submit copies of their Project Work/Thesis, to his/her Ministry/Department and the OHCS

8.8 Heads of Department, Human Resource Directors and supervisors are required to hold conferences with personnel returning from training and development programmes at which the trainees shall brief the staff of the Ministry/Department on the training undergone.

9.0 GRANT OF STUDY AND OTHER ALLOWANCES

Top-up allowance shall be paid to a Civil Servant on a partly sponsored programme or programmes for which external sponsorship falls below government approved rates. Other allowances such as night, travel, per diem and warm clothings where applicable shall be paid to the staff at the approved rates. Warm clothing allowance is to be paid once every three (3) years to a Civil Servant whose training programme is organised in the country located in the temperate zone of the world.

Financial support for data collection for thesis and long essays, and purchase of books shall also be provided to Civil Servants on approved short and long courses by the nominating Ministry/Department, if these facilities are not provided as part of the scholarship.

10.0 SANCTIONS

Appropriate sanctions shall be applied to:

- i. Staff who do not obtain prior approval from the OHCS before embarking on programmes/courses that require Study leave
- ii. Staff on study leave with/without pay who perform poorly on the course
- iii. Staff who overstay the period granted them for their studies.
- iv. Staffs who fail to complete the course of study on schedule and submit copy of thesis and Certificate to OHCS as appropriate.
- v. Officers who fail to submit an inception report will lead to the facility being withdrawn.
- vi. Staffs who fail to submit evaluation reports as required will lead to delay in their promotion.
- vii. The Officer or their guarantors who do not fulfill the terms of their bonds shall be invited to redeem the bonds by paying the total amount expended on the officer such as salaries and allowances/per-diem plus

an interest of ten percent (10%) paid during the period of sponsorship. In addition, the defaulting officers shall not be re-engaged into the Service. In furtherance to this, legal action would be taken against an officer who breaches any of the conditions of the bond.

11.0 BONDING:

11.1 Every Civil Servant, with exception of officers serving on Contract Terms of appointment, who is sponsored by Government or under external Fellowship and Scholarship Scheme, must sign a bond agreement to work for the Service after completion of the course.

Prior to leaving for the course, a beneficiary must enter into a bond to complete the course satisfactorily, return to the Service and serve in any establishment to which he/she may be assigned for the period specified in the bond. The period of the bond will depend on the duration of the course as follows:

- a. for a course of less than one year duration - 2 years
- b. For a course of more than one year duration
but not more than 2 years duration - 4 years
- c. for a course of more than two years duration - 5 years

11.2 MDAs shall, prior to conveying OHCS' approval of the study leave facility to applicants, ensure the completion and signing of the bond forms by the Officers (applicants). Officers who fail to complete the bond forms before embarking on their courses should, when submitting applications for upgrading or conversion, enclose a completed bond form as part of the supporting documents.

12.0 STUDY LEAVE WITHOUT PAY:

12.1 In situations where it is not possible to grant leave with pay, consideration may be given to the grant of leave without pay as an alternative to resignation, subject to the application of paragraphs (4.1), (4.2), (4.3), (4.4),(4.5),(4.6), (5.0), and (6.0) above.

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RULES GOVERNING THE AWARD OF STUDY LEAVE
IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

Every Civil Servant seeking to pursue study leave with pay shall be guided by the understated conditions. Prior to leaving for the course, the beneficiary must enter into a bond to complete the course satisfactorily, return to the Service and serve in any establishment to which he/she may be assigned for the period specified in the bond.

1. The bond period will depend on the duration of the course as follows:

<u>DURATION OF COURSE</u>	<u>BOND PERIOD</u>
a. Course of less than one year duration	- 2 years
b. Course of more than one year duration But not more than 2 years duration	- 4 years
c. Course of more than 2 years duration	- 5 years

2. The course to be pursued must be relevant to the needs of the Service, and shall not be changed without the written permission of the parent organization and the OHCS.
3. A beneficiary shall not modify the duration of the course without the written permission of the parent organization and the OHCS. Similarly, a beneficiary *cannot* pursue a higher version of the same course without the *explicit* approval from the OHCS.
4. The maximum duration (number of years) of study leave than can be granted at one time to an applicant shall not exceed four (4) years.
5. The Officer shall devote his/her time to the course of instruction for which the study leave facility has been granted. The continued enjoyment of the facility is dependent on the Officer's satisfactory performance while on the course.

6. A half-yearly report on the performance of a beneficiary is required by the sponsoring organisation.
7. An Officer granted study leave with pay shall not be promoted while on courses. A beneficiary shall, however, be eligible for promotion upon return after having served for at least one (1) year.
8. The period of study leave with pay shall be leave-consuming and not leave-earning.

REDEMPTION OF BOND

A sponsored Civil Servant who defaults in serving the required bond period shall be made to pay the full bond sum for the number of years in default. This is by way of liquidating damages and not a penalty.

1. A beneficiary who, on his/her own volition, does not complete the period of study shall pay the full cost of training including any salaries and allowances received for the number of years spent on the course. The total amount shall be revised for inflation and currency fluctuations plus a compound interest at the prevailing interest rate.
2. The beneficiary who has completed the course of study and fails to return to work in the Civil Service shall be liable to redeem the bond. The value of the bond shall be equivalent to the full cost of training including salaries and allowances received during the period, revised for inflation and currency fluctuations plus a compound interest at the prevailing interest rate.

THE ABOVE STATED CONDITIONS FOR REDEEMING THE BOND SHALL BE VOID IF THE BENEFICIARY FULFILS ALL OBLIGATIONS. HOWEVER,

LEGAL ACTION WILL BE TAKEN AGAINST ANY OFFICER WHO SHALL BREACH ANY OF THE CONDITIONS.

Applicant's

Signature:

Date:

Witnessed by:

Date:

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