

STUDY ASSISTANCE POLICY



Sundays River Valley
Municipality

042 230 7700

078 266 6230

srvm@srvm.gov.za

[@sundaysrivervalley](https://www.facebook.com/sundaysrivervalley)

www.srvm.gov.za

23 Middle Street, Kirkwood, 6120

P.O. Box 47, Kirkwood, 6120



TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
1. Preamble	3
2. Purpose of Policy	3
3. Terminology	3
4. Application & Scope of Policy	4
5. Legislative Framework	4
6. Problem Statement	4
7. Policy Principles	5
8. Content	5
9. Application procedure	8
10. Roles of Stakeholders	8
11. Consultation with Stakeholders	9
12. Education of Policy	9
13. Monitoring and evaluation	9
14. Dispute resolution mechanism	9
15. Approval of Policy	9
16. Review of Policy	10
17. Version Control	10



1. PREAMBLE

The Municipality strives to secure adequately qualified personnel for its services by providing financial assistance to employees to enable them to qualify themselves educationally and to enhance their levels of competence to perform the duties assigned to them.

2. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY

- To create an environment within which Council employees can realize their full potential to enable them to make a meaningful contribution towards achieving Council's vision.
- To provide financial assistance to employees who wish to improve their qualifications
- To develop skills and competencies in the workplace in so far as;
 - To improve the quality of life of workers and their prospects of advancement within the workplace;
- To ensure continuity of suitably trained staff in key posts for the future
- To ensure that someone is always available to fulfill any particular job in the municipal service, even in the event of illness, resignation or death. More than one staff member in a specific department should always be able to do any particular job.
- To comply with the legal requirements of the Employment Equity Act which requires the appointment of suitably qualified people from previously disadvantaged groups, to ensure proportional representation in all occupational categories and levels.
- To develop career paths for individual staff members to assist them in their careers, making them more enthusiastic about their jobs and therefore making them more productive. In this way, the individual skills may be utilized to achieve the goals of both the department as well as the organization; this can also assist to decrease staff turnover.

3. TERMINOLOGY

Competency

The ability to do something or a job properly.

NQF

National Qualifications Framework is a formal system describing qualifications. It records the credits assigned to each level of learning achieved in a formal way to ensure that the skills and knowledge learnt are recognized throughout the country.

SAQA

The South African Qualifications Authority is a body regulated in terms of the National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008. To oversee the development and implementation

of the NQF

Training and development

Training and development both refer to the gaining of skills. Both concepts are regarded as learning experiences. Training refers to a systematic and planned process to change the knowledge, skills and attitudes of employees in such a way that organizational objectives are achieved.

Employee development is directed mainly at creating learning opportunities and making learning possible within the organization.

Education

Education refers to the formal gaining of knowledge at a registered academic institution e.g. Formal schooling years, Grade 1 to 12 inclusive.

Career Pathing

Ensuring that each staff member's potential is developed to its fullest extent and that there is a career mapped out for him/her in the municipal service.

4. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This policy applies to all permanent/fixed term contract employees and Councillors of the Municipality. The study grant scheme does not apply to full time study or overseas study leave.

5. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996
- Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000
- Local Government: Municipal Staff Regulations, 2016 (issued in terms of Section 72, read with Section 120 of the Municipal Systems Act 32 of 2000)
- Municipal Finance Management Act 56 of 2003
- Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995
- Employment Equity Act 55 of 1998
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997
- Skills Development Act 97 of 1998
- Skills Development Levies Act, No. 9 of 1999
- National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008

6. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Sundays River Valley Municipality does not have a study grant policy, as a result, employees are not treated the same with regards to paying their study fees. Its at the discretion of the CFO to pay or not to pay the study fees.

This policy seeks to give equal opportunity for both employees and Councillors to apply and be considered fairly for study grant.

7. POLICY PRINCIPLES

The following Training and Development principles are identified and the policy is geared to ensure that these principles are provided for:

a) Needs Orientated.

It is important to align all training and development programs with needs based on post requirements, the tasks to be performed, and based on the performance gaps of the incumbent.

The primary objective is to improve skills, knowledge, attitudes and values. These are to be specific and must at all time indicate what the staff member should be able to demonstrate. At all times individual needs, departmental and Municipality's objectives must be aligned in order to achieve the maximum.

b) Career path training and development

The must be structured in such way that the need to train or develop is to fulfill time-framed objectives of the employee, officials and Municipality.

8. POLICY CONTENT

The Municipality will provide study assistance to an employee to enable such employee to obtain a formal qualification suitable for use in his or her scope of employment, subject to the following conditions:

- Funds for study assistance are provided on the budget of Council;
- The course in respect of which assistance is required is recommended by Supervisor and Head of Department and is accredited by SAQA and in line with the National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008.
- The aforesaid course being of a nature and having a content which will benefit the employee in his chosen career in the municipal service;
- The course in respect of which assistance is required is offered by a recognized or acceptable (legit) educational institution acceptable to Council;
- For fixed term employees, the study grant amount may not exceed the amount that the employee shall be able to work back during the term of the contract of employment
- The initial budget for Study Assistance will be R800 000 for employees and R500 000 for Councillors (municipal funding, The amounts will be reviewed annually.

9. PROCEDURE TO APPLY

All applications for study grant should reach the office of the Human Resources Practitioner: Skills Development by not later than end September the year preceding the commencement of studies in order to enable the Council to make funds available on its budget for such assistance in the following financial year;

An agreement shall be entered into between the Council and the relevant employee containing, inter alia, the following conditions:

- The Council undertaking to pay the reasonable cost of tuition fees direct to the educational institution providing the training course, subject to the applicant producing proof of registration and invoice with such institution.
- The applicant undertaking to pursue his/her studies diligently and completes the approved course within the specified study period or such other period as the Council may approve.
- The applicant submitting, at the end of each academic year, semester or whatever period is deemed to be an academic cycle, a report or results from the relevant educational institution on his/her performance and achievements during such academic year, semester or academic cycle.
- The applicant undertaking to serve the Council for a period equivalent to each year or part of a year in respect of which educational assistance by way of a study in terms of this policy has been granted to such applicant;
- The applicant undertaking to repay to Council the full amount advanced under the study grant or such amount as the Council may determine, in the event of him or her:
 - Resigning from or being dismissed from the service of the Council prior to him/her having served the Council for the period referred to in the above subparagraph
 - Not performing satisfactorily (fails) in terms of the academic report/results received by the Council; after exhausting all chances (afforded to them) of being found competent
 - Voluntarily ceasing to continue with the course of study in respect of which study assistance has been rendered to him or her in terms of this policy.
- The applicant granting authority to the Council, in the event of his/her resignation or termination of service to deduct any amounts still owing to Council in terms of this

agreement from his/her terminal salary and, in the event of such salary being insufficient, from any terminal and/or pension benefits that may be due to him or her under his/her employment contract with the Council.

The Human Resources Manager shall refer every application for a study assistance to the Management Team for consideration.

No amount in respect of study assistance shall be paid unless and until such time as the agreement referred to in the above subparagraph has been signed by the employee and Council.

- It shall be the sole prerogative of the Council to approve or reject an application by an employee for study loan assistance and the Council reserves the right to cancel the study assistance agreement and reclaim amounts paid on behalf of an employee in terms of this policy from the relevant employee in the event of such employee displaying disinterest in his or her course of study, achieving poor academic results or in any other way infringing the spirit of this policy, provided that the Council shall only take action in terms of this paragraph after the affected employee has been given the opportunity to comment on the proposed action by the Council.
- The employee shall bear all other costs associated with a course of study, including traveling and accommodation costs to at a study venue, as his/her contribution towards the cost of educating him/herself.
- First priority for financial assistance for study purposes will always be given to employees who wish to
 1. register for studies that are related to their job content rather than to employees who want to further other studies.
 2. Who do not possess any formal qualification after Grade 12 or NQF L4.

However, the nature of the job and operational requirements will take preference, taking into account the Employment Equity and Workplace Skills Plans as well as budget provision.

a. STUDY LEAVE

The Council shall grant employees pursuing an approved course of study, the following periods of study leave, which leave shall be regarded as special leave:

8.2.1. Employees who are studying towards a Grade 12 certificate, one days' study leave plus the day on which the

examination paper is written per subject, regardless of whether or not examination papers for that subject are written on the same day;

8.2.2 Employees who are studying towards an approved diploma or degree at a Technikon or University, two days study leave per subject or module inclusive of the day on which the subject or module is written.

8.2.3. Where employees are required to attend lectures during normal working hours (Block sessions) at an educational institution for the purpose of pursuing an approved course of study, the Council may grant them special study leave on a negotiated basis for such period of study provided that at least 50% of the period of absence from the workplace by the affected employee shall be deducted from such employee's annual or accrued leave subject further to such arrangement not conflicting with the Basic Conditions of Employment Act 1997 insofar as it applies to the of annual leave.

Notwithstanding the provisions of the above paragraphs, study leave for all purposes, shall not exceed 12 working days per annum.

Prior to proceeding on study leave, the applicant shall complete the prescribed leave form, provide proof to the satisfaction of the Human Resources Manager that he/she is required to write an examination and obtain the required permission to proceed on study leave.

Should the applicant, for any reason, not write an examination, then the study leave given to him/her shall be converted into annual leave and be deducted from the annual leave entitlement of the employee concerned.

10. ROLE OF DIFFERENT STAKEHOLDERS

Supervisor

Make recommendations to the Head of Department with regard to which employee should be granted financial assistance.

Make recommendations to the HOD with regard to the effective utilization of employees that have completed their studies.

Provide support in cases where students encounter problems

Employee

Apply for financial assistance each year.

Get motivation letter from the Supervisor

Furnish the office of the SDF with qualifications that will be verified (misrepresentation of qualifications /certificates will be a punishable)

Employees granted Financial Assistance

Provide periodic reports (results) on his / her development and / or studies.

Management Team

Consider applications for financial assistance by employees and their supervisors.

Recommend financial assistance

Ensure that recommendations for financial assistance by Supervisors are in line with the objectives and priorities and contents of this policy.

Ensure the effectiveness utilization of staff in accordance with their studies, where applicable.

11. CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The policy will be workshopped to all councillors, Unions, supervisor/managers and be approved by Council

12. EDUCATION OF POLICY

The policy will be displayed in SRVM intranet where all employees will have access to all the institution's policies.

13. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This policy shall be implemented and effective once recommended by the Equity and Training Committee Forum and approved by Council.

Non-compliance to the stipulations contained in this policy shall be regarded as misconduct, which shall be dealt with in terms of the Code of Conduct.

Head of Corporate Services shall carry out the monitoring and evaluation of the policy's implementation.

14. DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISM

When an employee's application has been rejected, there must be a written reason given by employer, and an applicant be afforded an opportunity to respond before a grievance is submitted to Municipal Manager (for employees) and office of the Speaker (for Councillors)

15. APPROVAL OF POLICY

The Management Team shall consider the application, taking into account the following:

- Relevance of the course to the service of the Municipality.
- Eligibility of the official to be granted study assistance

- Availability of funds, considering the cost of the course over the intended study period.

When funds are limited, consider:

- Needs of the Municipality
- An employee shall be granted only one active study assistance at a time

Upon approval of the study assistance, the employee shall enter into a written agreement with the Municipality.


16. REVIEW OF POLICY

The policy will be reviewed every three years

17. VERSION CONTROL

Only the latest version (as approved in 2022) of this policy shall be used.

APPROVED BY COUNCIL ON 08 JULY 2022



.....
S H RINE
MAYOR

08 JULY 2022