

THE CITY OF CORK VEC



PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY For Administrative & Support Staff

Contents

PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY	3
1. Introduction	3
2. Definition of Personal and Professional Development	3
3. Aims of Personal and Professional Development	4
4. Commitment to Staff	4
5. Expectations of Staff	4
6. Planning for Personal and Professional Development	5
7. Delivery of Personal and Professional Development	6
8. Individual Support for Personal and Professional Development	6
9. Monitoring and Evaluation	6
APPENDIX 1	8
ARRANGEMENTS FOR FUNDING	8

PERSONAL & PROFESSIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. Introduction

The ability of the City of Cork VEC to deliver a quality education service to all the partners it engages with is dependent on the abilities and performance of its individual staff and on the manner in which they interact and support each other. In a constantly changing environment it is not enough just to recruit excellent staff, they need to develop, to train and re-train in order to keep pace with technological, academic, social, economic and strategic change. It is essential that the VEC make available to staff a variety of training and development programs, and that it encourages and supports them in their participation on such programs. Developmental programs serve the needs of the VEC through the enhancement of the individual to enable the person to deliver a more comprehensive service within their role in the VEC. Such programs contribute to a shared vision and demonstrate the VEC's commitment to staff learning and development.

This Personal and Professional Staff Development Policy is central to the purpose of the VEC, is guided by its vision, supports the Human Resources strategy and contributes to the effectiveness of its delivered services.

2. Definition of Personal and Professional Development

Personal and Professional development is defined as those processes through which individual staff members and the organization as a whole engage in ongoing learning to meet and address challenges and opportunities within agreed and identifiable boundaries that respect and balance the needs of the VEC, its organizational units and institutions. It is focused on developing the capacities and abilities of the individual, and staff groups within the organisation in order to realize the VEC's strategic aims and vision.

Staff development is considered in the broadest possible sense, and refers not only to task specific training activities but also to attendance at external development events, study for further and higher qualifications, group development and other training opportunities.

Access to internal staff development opportunities as organised by CCVEC Head Office is not dependent on grade or job function. External staff development opportunities, which include courses provided by CCVEC Colleges will be supported where it is identified that the course programme is relevant to their grade and / or function.

The City of Cork VEC is committed in all reasonable circumstances to providing appropriate resources in terms of budgets, staffing and organization to support appropriate personal and professional development.

3. Aims of Personal and Professional Development

Personal and Professional development has two principal aims that balance the need for individuals to maximize their potential, and for the organizations requirement to obtain the maximum benefit from the staff employed.

Personal and Professional development seeks to:

- enhance an individual's performance in his or her current job
- support all staff in the acquisition and development of knowledge, skills and expertise
- encourage and foster innovation and creativity and support individuals, groups and the organization in engaging positively and productively with the impact of ongoing change and development
- support organizational development and be informed by, engage with and support the realization of the VEC's mission and vision
- enhance interpersonal relationships in the VEC and support the commitment to being a learning organization
- inform strategies and plans for, departments and support services

4. Commitment to Staff

Each member of staff should have access to personal and professional development within the available resources which provides opportunities to:

- receive an appropriate induction to the VEC including an induction pack of relevant materials
- experience and participate in a supportive and effective system of mentoring as appropriate
- be supported in making full and effective use of communication skills and information technologies appropriate to their job role
- Be supported in dedicating a negotiated number of days per annum to development activities. Line managers will seek to provide such opportunities for all their staff and should take this into account when planning staff workloads
- participate in a personal review process which covers developmental options and opportunities

5. Expectations of Staff

Each member of staff is expected to:

- reflect on the evolving character and nature of their work
 - identify and prioritize their own development needs in conjunction with their line manager through the use of the PMDS system.
-

- seek out and participate actively in development activities that will address those identified needs
- apply newly developed knowledge and skills as appropriate
- disseminate newly developed knowledge and expertise as appropriate
- Maintain a record of his or her development activity.

6. Planning for Personal and Professional Development

Effective personal and professional development is the result of co-operative and coordinated work processes at all levels in the VEC. This is dependent on good working relationships and support between individual members of staff. At the Senior Management level the personal and professional development implications of strategy must be recognised and resourced. Overall responsibility for the development and delivery of Personal and Professional Development policy and strategy rests with the Chief Executive Officer and the Principal Officer.

A Professional Development Advisory Group, comprising the Human Resource Officer, Principal Officer, Assistant Principal Officers and Education Officers, will have overall responsibility for the co-ordination, planning and provision of a range of training and learning activities. The Advisory Group will consider appropriate ways in which development needs can be met, including delivery at department/section/unit level, or through central delivery.

Heads of department/section/unit should ensure that:

- All staff in their area receive appropriate advice in identifying their developmental needs
- Adequate time is made available within workloads to allow staff to engage in identified and agreed development activities

The management of organization-wide generic personal and professional development and training is the responsibility of the Professional Development Advisory Group. Generic personal and professional development and training comprises those activities which serve a widespread need in the organization such that is efficient and effective to provide them centrally. Such activities may be delivered either in-house, bought-in, or provided externally.

Activities which are narrowly applicable to only one specialist function within a department are best defined, sourced and delivered by that department.

Day-to-day management of generic IT training is the responsibility of IT Services.

The mix of training and development opportunities will be continually evolving as a result of feedback from all sections within the organisation, so that they support the VEC's purpose and the requirements of individuals and departments. Direct feedback from staff and a formal review process informs the range of opportunities available.

7. Delivery of Personal and Professional Development

The Professional Development Advisory Group will develop and publish, on a yearly basis, a plan of personal and professional development opportunities for staff members. This plan will include:

- Details of generic training and development activities to be delivered in-house
- Department specific training and development to be delivered in-house
- Generic IT training activities
- Details of a range of courses and programmes offered by other agencies that would be of benefit to individual members of staff for personal and professional development

A timetable setting out dates and times of in-house training will be agreed by the Professional Development Advisory Group and updated on a quarterly basis.

8. Individual Support for Personal and Professional Development

It is recognized that generic in-house training may not meet the professional development requirements of all staff. There are many courses and programs available through outside agencies and institutions that may benefit individuals or groups of individuals within the VEC and assist them in the delivery of improved levels of service to the organization. Staff are encouraged and supported to pursue suitable development programs provided by CCVEC Colleges, outside agencies and institutions.

Individuals should approach their Department Head in the first instance to support development needs which cannot be met by the generic in-house provisions outlined in the training plan. Department Heads recommend to the Professional Development Advisory Group through the HR Department the specific course and support arrangements for staff members wishing to participate in personal and professional development opportunities provided by outside agencies.


Sanction for participation on the course will be dependent on the relevance of the course to the individuals role within the organisation and available funding.

9. Monitoring and Evaluation

The overall personal and professional development policy, its delivery and effectiveness are reviewed at a variety of levels:

- participant feedback on development activities is collected and evaluated as part of the ongoing process of review and enhancement
 - individual members of staff maintain a record of their personal development activity which is reviewed and evaluated in conjunction with their line manager as part of the personal review process
-

- Heads of Department oversee and evaluate development activities carried out within their specific areas
- Heads of Department through the Professional Development Advisory Group review and evaluate the effectiveness centrally delivered development activities and development and training activities delivered by outside agencies
- Heads of Department oversee the planning, promotion, coordination and review of personal and professional development policy and activities in their areas.

Signed: 
Mr. T. Owens
Chief Executive Officer

Date: 6/4/09

APPENDIX 1

ARRANGEMENTS FOR FUNDING

1. A defined budget for staff training and development should be agreed on an annual basis, as a percentage of overall staff costs.
2. Staff members participating on a voluntary basis in professional training and development programs provided by outside agencies which are defined by Circular F.45/82, where there is a real and demonstrable benefit accruing to the VEC from their participation, may be funded up to a maximum amount of 90% for:
 - Tuition fees
 - Examination fees

No payment to be made for travel or subsistence in such an instance.

All funding is subject to the approved budget allowable on an annual basis where such a budget is identified. Funding is only available for courses that are provided by State funded Colleges/Institutions.

All applications, for courses must be made by 30th April preceding the relevant academic session for any courses that are identified as being relevant for the development of the individual within their role in the VEC. This application must be made for courses that are to be delivered either by a VEC institution or an external provider. Applications made after this date will not be accepted for inclusion into the scheme for the relevant academic year. All applications must be made on the appropriate form and returned to the Human Resources Department.

On receipt of the form a recommendation will be sought from the Principal / Head of Dept as to whether the course is relevant to the individual in respect of their role within the VEC. Final decisions on whether a course is relevant to the individual's role will rest with the Education Officer, Principal Officer and Human Resource Manager.

Confirmation of inclusion in the scheme will be given by 30th June at the latest. Fees will be refunded to the individual at the end of the relevant academic year, or corresponding course period, where it has been established that the individual has successfully completed the academic session.

In the case of courses leading to a Degree qualification refund of fees will be made for a period not exceeding 4 academic sessions.

All applicants to the scheme should familiarise themselves with the Revenue Guidelines in respect of relief for tuition fees particularly where fees / portion of fees are paid by the employer. It is the responsibility of each individual to ensure that they are compliant with Revenue requirements.

3. Staff members who receive support under this mechanism will be required to commit to three years service post qualification to the VEC. If they leave the Public Service in the interim, a sliding scale of fees to be recouped as follows:
 - Within one year – 75% of all costs
 - Within two years – 50% of all costs
 - Within three years – 25% of all costs

4. Staff members participating on a voluntary basis in professional training and development programs provided by outside agencies which necessitate time off from work (outside of Study Leave) should use a mix of holidays/flexi leave and make arrangements with their Head of Department as appropriate.

5. Study Leave is available as per Circular F.45/82
 - Staff pursuing primary degree courses to which the Circular applies may be allowed 10 days paid study leave for the entire period of the course, with the ability to spread the days over the various course examinations, with a maximum limit of 5 days in each academic year. This arrangement also applies to other third level courses which last for 3 years or longer.
 - For shorter third level courses 3 days paid study leave may be allowed for each year of the course.

Full Circular is available from the Human Resources Department.
