

APPENDIX 21 – EXTERNAL COURSES FOR NICVA STAFF

(1) General

- 1.1 NICVA will pay all or some of the costs and will allow time off for certain approved external courses undertaken by NICVA staff.

(2) Criteria

- 2.1 The course will directly contribute to improved performance in the employee's job.
- 2.2 The course will primarily enhance the employee's future career prospects and additionally will enhance job performance.
- 2.3 The employee's absence during working hours will not adversely affect his/her function's activities and responsibilities.

(3) Course Selection

Choice of a suitable course may result from the identification of training needs by:

- (i) The Management Group.
- (ii) Line managers.
- (iii) Supervision.
- (iv) Staff appraisal.
- (v) Individual members of staff or groups of staff.
- (vi) The recognised union.

(4) Courses Undertaken at NICVA's Request

- 4.1 Where a line manager believes a particular course will enhance job performance and the employee in that Unit agrees, NICVA will pay the entire costs of the course, and will allow the necessary time off with pay if the course is held during working hours.
- 4.2 Where an employee disagrees with the line manager's request to undertake a particular course, the matter will be referred to and processed through existing NICVA/UNISON negotiation machinery.

(5) Courses Undertaken at an Employee's Request

- 5.1 An employee wishing to undertake a course in a particular area of study should first consult the Human Resources Officer about all other types of courses.
- 5.2 When an employee has identified a suitable course after receiving advice, they should complete the application form which is available from

the Human Resources Officer and take it to the Director/line manager of their function.

- 5.3 The final decision on approving an employee's participation in an external course and whether it is to be wholly or partly funded rests with the Director subject to the qualification set out in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.2 and funding available.
- 5.4 The grant payable from NICVA will be paid from the appropriate budget.

(6) Assistance Towards Staff Participation in External Courses

- 6.1 Course and examination fees for approved courses:

Where the cost is up to £50	100% assistance
Where the cost is over £50	£50 plus half the balance

Costs of books and travel:

No NICVA assistance.

- 6.2 Time off

- (i) Approved courses held during working hours – paid time off of not more than one day per week per employee.
- (ii) Courses attended outside working hours – no time off.
- (iii) Total time off per week not to exceed 10% of the total working hours of all function staff.
- (iv) Total time off per week within the Management Group as at (iii).
- (i) Paid time off on the actual day of an examination plus a day before the examination for preparation.
- (ii) Other courses which are part or fully subsidised by NICVA may be eligible for paid time off at the discretion of the Chief Executive.
- (vi) The Chief Executive will have discretion to allow unpaid leave not exceeding three and a half hours per week (eg for Open Learning) in addition to the paid time off specified above.

- 6.3 When a Director has given approval by ensuring the completion of the application form, they should copy the approved application to the Human Resources Officer, who requires to keep a training record in each employee's personnel file.

(7) Paying for Approved Courses

- 7.1 In the case of a course undertaken at NICVA's request, the account from the course provider will be settled by NICVA directly.
- 7.2 In the case of a course undertaken at the personal choice of an employee, the employee will normally pay any tuition fees required by

the course provider and will present the receipt to the Human Resources Officer for claiming NICVA's grant.

- 7.3 NICVA will consider sympathetically any requests from employees wishing to vary the procedure above. For example, where an employee would find it difficult to pay the account directly and then claim the grant from NICVA, NICVA will settle the account and retrieve the employee's share by deductions from salary. Application in such cases should be made to the Director of Corporate Services.
- 7.4 It is a condition of NICVA's financial assistance that where a course is abandoned before it is completed, the employee will repay NICVA's grant (unless where extenuating circumstances can be shown).