

## SECTION 24

### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

#### 24.01 Definitions

- (a) Professional Development shall be defined as an opportunity, with or without pay, for a staff member to maintain or develop knowledge, skills and competencies relative to the achievement of Institute objectives.
- (b) Long-term professional development shall be defined as a leave requiring a staff member to be absent from normal duties for a period of twenty one (21) or more full working days en bloc.
- (c) Learning Assignment shall be defined as a leave for a period of less than twenty one (21) working days to participate in:
  - (i) courses or programs offered by government agencies, educational institutions, private or public agencies, industry or business that may assist a staff member in the performance of the staff member's duties; and
  - (ii) conferences, seminars or workshops.
- (d) Educational Material shall be defined as subscriptions to professional journals, educational software, reference materials, or textbooks.

#### 24.02 Responsibility

- (a) Maintenance and development of job-related knowledge and skills is a responsibility shared by individual staff members and the Institute.
- (b) A staff member shall have an Employee Professional Development Account which at July 1<sup>st</sup> of each year the employer will contribute \$800.00 (prorated for part-time employees) to be used for Learning Assignments or Educational Material expenses. Utilization of these funds is dependent on prior discussion with and approval of the Work Unit Leader to ensure relevance to the needs of the staff member and NAIT.
  - i. Expenses for Learning Assignments may include tuition and instructional fees, registration fees, travel and subsistence costs.
  - ii. Expenses for Educational materials shall be as defined in 24.01(d).
  - iii. Funds unspent from annual Employee Professional Development Account contributions may be carried forward to the next year, but shall not exceed \$2,400.00 (or equivalent of three (3) years of contributions for part-time employees).
- (c) During the current academic year, the Institute shall make budgetary provision for expenditure in the next academic year; on the following:
  - i) experience leaves, secondments and exchanges;
  - ii) salary and benefits for staff members on professional development leave and learning assignments;
  - iii) salary and benefits for staff members participating as trainees in In-Service training;
  - iv) salary and benefits for staff members granted time off to permit attendance at courses.

#### 24.03 Educational Leave

The Institute is committed to supporting requests for professional development leaves as determined by Institute objectives.

- (a) Staff members granted educational leave shall enter into an individual written agreement with the Institute regarding salary and the maintenance of benefits during the period of leave.
- (b) Unless otherwise agreed between the applicant and NAIT, financial support for educational leave shall be:
  - 4 years NAIT service, 65% of salary
  - 5 years NAIT service, 70% of salary

6 years NAIT service, 75% of salary  
7 years NAIT service, 80% of salary  
8 or more years NAIT service, 85% of salary

If a staff member has less than four (4) years NAIT service, cost sharing of salary and benefits is negotiable.

- (c) Staff members granted educational leave in excess of twenty-one (21) working days shall serve the Institute for a period immediately following their return. Such return service commitment shall be calculated on the basis of two (2) times the length of leave multiplied by the percentage of salary maintained during such leave.
- (d) A staff member not returning to the Institute following educational leave must repay to the Institute all monies paid by the Institute in support of the leave. Repayment shall be made immediately upon the staff member's termination of employment.
- (e) Staff members shall submit their request for an educational leave, no later than December 31<sup>st</sup> of the preceding year of the requested leave. A shorter notice period or waiver may be agreed upon by the staff member and Dean.

#### 24.04 Learning Assignments

Any staff member is eligible for a learning assignment. Applications shall be forwarded through the staff member's work unit leader to the Dean. Approval of the Institute is required before a staff member may proceed on a learning assignment.

#### 24.05 Experience Leaves

- (a) An Experience Leave shall be for the purpose of gaining current technical or professional experience by means of employment or consulting activity.
- (b) An Experience Leave may be combined with an Educational Leave subject to the conditions of both Leaves.

#### 24.06 Applied Research Leaves

A staff member may apply for leave to undertake industry-sponsored applied research at the Institute, at another educational establishment, or with an industrial organization.

#### 24.07 Secondments

- (a) A Secondment Leave shall enable a staff member to teach or to provide services at another institution, Agency, or in industry.
- (b) A staff member on secondment shall normally be paid by the Institute. The staff member's salary and benefits shall be maintained.

#### 24.08 Exchange Leaves

An exchange leave shall enable a staff member to teach or to provide service to another institution, agency or industry while an employee of that institution, agency or industry assumes the staff member's responsibilities at the Institute. Each institution shall normally reimburse its own staff member, at the staff member's salary and continue all benefits while the staff member's terms of reference must be by mutual agreement with the exchange institution.

#### 24.09 Return From Leave

After any leave of absence, a staff member shall return to at least the same or equivalent assignment and shall be entitled to at least the salary schedule placement which the staff member held at the commencement of the leave.

#### 24.10 Staff members on financially assisted Professional Development shall receive:

- (a) full benefits according to this Agreement; and
- (b) all increases to normal salary and benefits on the same basis as other staff members not on leave.

#### 24.11 Staff members on leave without pay may continue their participation in benefit plans, subject to specific plan requirements, and shall prepay the full amount of any premiums required.

