

STAFF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT



1. POLICY STATEMENT

The Electoral Office for Northern Ireland (EONI):

- believes that people are one of the keys to organisational success;
- recognises the value of its entire staff and is fully committed to the development of staff and maximising each individual's potential;
- is committed to providing all staff with the training and development they need to contribute to the achievement of EONI's aims and objectives.

2. SCOPE OF THE POLICY

This policy applies to all permanent and fixed term employees. However, EONI is committed to providing specific training aimed at short-term casual staff, where appropriate and in accordance with organisational requirements.

3. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

- 3.1 In line with its Equal Opportunities Policy, EONI will ensure that each employee has equal opportunity in terms of access to training and development opportunities. To ensure staff with disabilities are given the same equality of opportunity as non-disabled staff, relevant forms and materials will be available in a range of alternative accessible formats and reasonable adjustments will be made, where required.

4. DEFINITION

- 4.1 Within EONI 'training and development' are regarded as a means of helping staff throughout the organisation acquire and improve the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours needed to achieve their objectives and so contribute to the overall success of the organisation. Learning can take place through a variety of training methods, for example, coaching, attending a course, using a computer based training package, watching a video, reading a book, rotating jobs, membership of a project team and delegation of specific duties.

- 4.2 All training and development should be job-related and/or personal or career related. In either case there should be a link with the organisation's Business Plan
- 4.3 Training is normally associated with off-the-job, structured learning activities at an organised event such as a course, conference or workshop where information, skills practice etc. is delivered by a trainer/speaker.
- 4.4 Development is normally associated with on-the-job learning. Learning can happen naturally by simply doing one's job, having a career move or secondment as well as through activities set up specifically for development purposes. Development activities can be structured (e.g. coaching sessions) and/or informal (e.g. observing a more experienced colleague) where information or skills are transferred from either the line manager or a more experienced colleague to the job holder who has the opportunity to apply the learning to the task in hand and learn as they go.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- 5.1 The Chief Electoral Officer has the responsibility for ensuring that mechanisms and resources are in place to facilitate the learning and development of staff.

Individuals

- 5.2 Individual staff have a responsibility for their own personal and professional development and are encouraged to identify appropriate needs with their line manager which will predominately form part of the personal development plan. Individuals are encouraged to assess and suggest appropriate learning opportunities to their line manager both within the context of current jobs and career aspirations.

Line Managers

- 5.3 Line managers, in partnership with new and existing staff, are responsible for agreeing training and development needs. Line Managers should provide the necessary support to staff, monitor the progress of their staff at regular intervals and ensure that staff gain the maximum benefits from their course of study eg applying skills gained through specific work assignments. Line Managers are responsible for ensuring the proper use of the Performance Management System including personal development plans so that their staff can achieve their objectives and contribute to the overall aims and objectives of the organisation. Detailed guidance on the staff appraisal process is provided to all staff.

6. PROCEDURES

- 6.1 The primary method of identifying training and development needs will be from the performance management system through the appraisal process. Learning and development requirements should be recorded onto the Personal Development Plan *[see Annex A]*. A variety of approaches to training and development should be considered by line managers and individuals such as coaching, mentoring, job shadowing, job rotation, in-house workshops, seminars, conferences, distance learning or adult further education courses.

Human Resources Section

- 6.2 The HR Section has an important role to play by providing information, advice and guidance to all staff on arrangements for learning and development. The HR Section will draw up an analysis of PDPs to facilitate a framework of training needs identified and to organise corporate development activities. The arrangements for learning activities will normally be organised by the HR Section and involve attendance at workshops run by the NIO Business Improvement Team (BIT). Mandatory core training for all staff includes induction, health and safety, staff appraisal, recruitment and selection, fire safety and first aid. The Head of Corporate Services is responsible for the overall training budget.

Training by External Bodies

- 6.3 Seminars, conferences or workshops run by other external bodies other than BIT may be approved for staff to attend to meet a development need. A training authorisation form *[Annex B]* should be completed by individuals, signed by their line manager and authorised by the Head of Corporate Services for payment. Once authorised, staff are responsible for registering their place on the training and arranging accommodation and travel using the most economical means available.
- 6.4 It may be necessary for staff to participate in courses leading to qualifications or learning activities which are a requirement of the post. Such training and development, initiated by EONI, will be fully funded and is outside the Adult Further Education provisions.

Adult Further Education (AFE)

- 6.5 EONI recognises that adult further education has an important part to play in developing the knowledge and skills of staff. EONI will, subject to resources, and in accordance with the selection criteria detailed below, assist staff who wish, in their own time, to undertake formal courses of academic/vocational study related to their work and leading to recognised academic /vocational qualifications. Annex C should be completed by staff who wish to apply to undertake adult further education studies. In particular circumstances, staff may be eligible for day release or half day release which leads to the acquisition of a recognised qualification which is regarded as essential for the post [*Chapter 17 NICS Staff Handbook –Assistance to Study: Essential Qualifications refers*]. Full details of the essential qualification policy which relates to formal education activities are available from the HR Officer.

Selection Criteria for AFE Assistance

- 6.6 Subject to resources being available in EONI's training and development budget, AFE assistance may be awarded for new applications in accordance with the following criteria being applied in order of priority:

Criteria 1: The course of study will make a contribution to the individual's performance as outlined in the objectives in their Performance Agreement;

Criteria 2: The course of study will make a contribution to the achievement of EONI's business objectives;

Criteria 3: The course of study will contribute to the personal development of the individual and have some potential relevance to performance.

Applying to undertake Adult Further Education

- 6.7 Staff wishing to apply for AFE assistance should complete an application form. It is the responsibility of the applicant to demonstrate how he/she meets the criteria. The completed form should be passed to the line manager for recommendation and the application should be endorsed by the Head of Corporate Services. The HR Section will invite staff to submit applications for funding each June and applications should be returned to the HR Section by 31 July. Applications will be processed in line with the criteria priority order as follows:

- Applications made under Criteria 1 will receive first consideration, followed by those made under Criteria 2
- Applications made under Criteria 3 will only be considered if sufficient funds remain available. In the case of demand exceeding available funding, the date of receipt of the application will be taken into account on a first come first served basis within the criterion and the applicants
- In the event of funding remaining available after initial allocation, this will be allocated after the closing date on a first come first served basis.

- 6.8 Applicants will be informed in writing by the HR Section of the decision within 10 working days of endorsement by the Management Board (normally considered at the August meeting). Assistance applicable for approved AFE studies is detailed in *Annex D*. If the applicant is dissatisfied with a decision not to approve a course, he/she must put the reason in writing to the HR Officer, within 10 working days of the notification date and a face-to-face meeting will be arranged with the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer to discuss the issues raised. The applicant has the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a colleague or trade union official. The applicant will be informed within 10 working days of the meeting of the decision.
- 6.9 An applicant wishing to appeal must inform the HR Officer in writing, within 10 working days of the date of response to the face-to-face meeting with the Assistant Chief Electoral Officer, detailing reasons on which the appeal is being made. The applicant will be invited to a second meeting to discuss the appeal with the Chief Electoral Officer. The applicant has the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a colleague or trade union official. The applicant will be informed of the decision of their appeal in writing within two weeks after the meeting.
- 6.10 These procedures are designed to ensure that appeals by individuals who are unsuccessful in their application are handled fairly and effectively and without unreasonable delay. They have been drawn up in line with the Employment (Northern Ireland) Order 2003 (Dispute Resolution) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004.
- 6.11 Staff with an unsatisfactory attendance record at the date of the Line Manager's recommendation (i.e. those who are in receipt of a current written warning and serving a trial period or in receipt of a current final written warning) will not normally be considered for support under the assistance to study scheme.

- 6.12 Applications must normally be received by 31 July each year. Late applications will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances, subject to available funding.
- 6.13 At the end of the course of study applicants must provide the HR Officer with evidence of successful completion. This will be used in assessing the benefits of the scheme.
- 6.14 Failure to complete a course of study or termination of employment by the applicant will result in EONI recouping fees on a pro rata basis, except in exceptional circumstances. Each case will be considered on its merits.
- 6.15 Approval for AFE courses will cover one academic year. Whilst every effort will be made to ensure that financial provision is available to enable the applicant to complete the approved course of study, this cannot be guaranteed and will be subject to availability of funding. Staff already undertaking approved courses, will be given precedence over new applications.

7. MONITORING

- 7.1 Individuals are responsible for reviewing their learning activities with their Line Manager.
- 7.2 Line Managers should monitor the learning activities of their staff and record the progress on PDPs which should be forwarded to the HR Section.
- 7.3 The HR Section will maintain a record of training and development activities for each member of staff.
- 7.4 Participation and access to such activities will be monitored and reviewed to ensure compliance with EONI's equal opportunities policy.

8. EVALUATION

- 8.1 Evaluation will be carried out to assess the following:
- The effectiveness of the training and development in meeting the individual's development objectives in terms of changed knowledge, skill, attitudes and/or behaviours;

- The degree to which the new knowledge, skills and attitudes/behaviours are applied in the workplace resulting in improved individual performance;
- The contribution of training and development to achievement of objectives at an organisational level.

Process of Evaluation

- 8.2 The line manager must conduct a meeting with individuals within 10 working days of the completion of a training course. Annex E should be completed which evaluates an immediate reaction to the training activity e.g. the quality of the activity, how appropriate it was to the individual's needs and learning style, whether or not the activity met the pre-agreed learning objectives, how the new knowledge/skills are to be used, how the line manager can help in the application of the new knowledge or skills, and whether or not any further development activity is required. The completed evaluation form must be sent immediately to the HR Officer who will monitor the evaluation procedure and take action as appropriate where it is not being complied with or the process identifies a failing in the event.
- 8.3 Three months after the training course the individual and their line manager must conduct a more detailed meeting covering the effect on how the individual performs his/her work including any improvements there have been in the individual's output or quality of work as a result of the training or development activity (see Annex F). The completed follow-up evaluation form must be sent immediately to the HR Officer who will monitor the evaluation procedure and take action as appropriate where it is not being complied with or the process identifies a failing in the event.
- 8.4 A copy of the evaluation forms made in accordance with paragraphs 8.2 and 8.3 above must also be attached to the individuals PDP.

Signed: Douglas Bain CBE TD Advocate
Chief Electoral Officer for NI

Signed: Paddy Mackel
on behalf of NIPSA

Dated: 29 January 2007

Dated: 22 January 2007

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

NAME:

PERIOD FROM:

TO:

Development Need/ Training Course	How can the development need be met?	Training Provider (if sourced)	Priority (high, medium or low)	Progress against meeting need?	Evaluation(s) completed/ forwarded to HR Section*.

*** Evaluation (Annex E) and follow-up 3 month review (Annex F) should be completed and forwarded to HR Officer for all training undertaken.**

Signature of Job Holder:

Date:

Signature of Line Manager:

Date:

**Copies of PDPs should be sent to the HR Section by 31 May.
AFE applications should be completed separately and forwarded to HR Section without delay**

TRAINING AUTHORISATION FORM

This form should be used for short courses, conferences or seminars run by external bodies.
It should **not** be completed to undertake an AFE course of study.
Where practicable at least two quotations/providers should be sourced and attached to this form.

NAME: _____ DEPARTMENT/AEO: _____

TRAINING COURSE: _____

REASON FOR ATTENDING THIS TRAINING:

DATES & DURATION OF TRAINING: _____

TRAINING PROVIDER: _____

LOCATION OF TRAINING: _____

COST (INCLUDING ACCOMMODATION/TRAVEL): _____

APPROVED BY LINE MANAGER: _____ Date: _____

AUTHORISED/HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES: _____ Date: _____

(Please note that the EONI should be invoiced for all approved courses to be attended and employees are responsible for making booking, accommodation and travel arrangements).

***COPY TO BE RETAINED BY EMPLOYEE
PLEASE FORWARD TO HR SECTION***

To be completed by HR:

TRAINING RECORD UPDATE/DATA INPUT

TRAINING REF NO: _____ **UNIPIMS ACTIONED**

COPY TO FINANCE: _____ *(Insert Date)*

Signed: _____ **(HR Section)** **Dated:** _____

APPLICATION FORM FOR AFE ASSISTANCE TO STUDY

Applications must be submitted by 31 July. Late applications will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances, subject to available funding.

Where information is not available by the closing date, please submit your application and provide outstanding information **as soon as possible**.

PART 1 – PERSONAL DETAILS

Full Name	Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms
Home Address	
Postcode	

Dept/Area Office		
Office Address		
Postcode		
Office Telephone No.		Ext:
Grade		
Employment Status	Permanent/Temporary/Full Time/Part Time.	
If Part-time please state	Total no.of Hours Worked - (Working Pattern e.g. 9am – 2pm.):	

PART 2 – DETAILS OF PREVIOUS ASSISTANCE

Have you applied for any assistance with a course(s) of study within the last 5 years?

Yes

No

Title of course(s)	
Date course(s) completed	
Result(s)	

This application cannot be finally approved until exam results from your previous course of study are received. We will request these if not already held on your personal file.

PART 3 – DETAILS OF PROPOSED COURSE OF STUDY

Only formal courses of academic/vocational study leading to recognised academic/vocational qualifications, linked to appropriate external standards will be considered.

**1. Under which of the following criterion (1, 2 or 3) are you making your application?
(Please tick)**

Criterion 1

The course of study will make a contribution to my performance as outlined in the objectives in my Personal Performance Agreement.

Criterion 2

The course of study will make a contribution to EONI's business objectives.

Criterion 3

The course of study will contribute to my personal development and have some potential relevance to my performance.

Please provide full details of why you consider your application meets your selected criterion?

Your application will not be considered unless this section below is fully completed

2. What course do you intend to study? (Please state the title of the course as specified in the college prospectus)	
3. What is the qualification at the end of the course?	
4. Full name and address of school, college or university.	

5. Date on which course begins. (approx)	___ / ___ / ___
6. Date on which course ends. (approx)	___ / ___ / ___
7. Duration of complete course	___ Years
8. Current year of study	___ (e.g. 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc)

9. Days and hours of attendance each week.

e.g. MON From 17:30 Hrs To 21:30 Hrs

___ From ___ Hrs To ___ Hrs
 ___ From ___ Hrs To ___ Hrs
 ___ From ___ Hrs To ___ Hrs

Note: There is no provision for day release under the Assistance to Study Scheme*. Any courses which impact on working hours will require the agreement of Line Managers e.g. Use of Annual Leave/Flexi Leave/Special Unpaid Leave.

10. Approximate date of examination	___ Month ___ Year
11. Where applicable, does your project contribute to Final Assessment?	Yes <input type="radio"/> No <input type="radio"/>

* Unless in exceptional circumstances.

PART 3 – DETAILS OF PROPOSED COURSE OF STUDY (contd)

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure all relevant costs are identified. All costs for the **current** academic year must be detailed on this application form. Additional claims will not be accepted.

12. Expected costs of the course for **THIS academic year**.
(Only costs identified below will be considered)

COSTS	£
Course / Tuition Fees	
Registration / Membership Fees	
Essential Textbooks* (Please note that staff are expected to use most economical means e.g. Resource Libraries)	
Essential IT Requirements*	
Exam Fees	
Workshops / Residential* / Summer School	
Others (Please specify)*	
Travel and Subsistence (to be met from EONI budget subject to available resources)	
Details of assistance from any other source	
TOTAL	

*Evidence from Educational Establishments may be required i.e. a signed letter from course tutor.

13. How do you propose to study?

Open Learning Correspondence Course

Evening Class

Other, (please specify)

14. Expected cost of **COMPLETE** course (**including year 1**)

COSTS	£
Course / Tuition Fees	
Registration / Membership Fees	
Essential Textbooks *	
Essential IT Requirements *	
Exam Fees	
Workshops / Residential / Summer School	
Others (Please specify) *	
Travel and Subsistence (to be met from EONI budget subject to available resources)	
Details of assistance from any other source	
TOTAL	

* Evidence from Educational Establishments may be required i.e. a signed letter from course tutor.

DECLARATION

I am making this application with full intention of completing the course of study.

If I should fail to complete any part of it, withdraw completely from the course I shall inform the HR Officer in writing **immediately** stating the reasons.

I am not in receipt of funding from any other source.

I believe the details I have given are true and correct.

Signature

Date:

If this application is approved you will be sent further details on entitlements and the necessary forms on which to claim reimbursement of course costs (the full fee should be paid directly by you and 80% will be refunded within 5 working days or your receipt being submitted).

If this application is not approved you will be provided with an explanation.

Late applications will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances, subject to available funding.

If you terminate your employment with EONI during your assisted course of study EONI will recoup costs from you, except in exceptional circumstances.

Have you answered all relevant questions fully?

Have you enclosed all supporting documents ?

If Yes, pass this form to your line manager for completion of Part 4.

Part 4 – LINE MANAGER/HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES ENDORSEMENT

1. Do you endorse the Criterion of Assistance under which this application is being made?

Yes No

If No, please indicate the Criterion you consider appropriate, and give reasons

Criterion: Reasons:

2. In order to maximise the investment of resources, where a project forms part of the course, have you considered a potential work-related project?

Yes No

Please provide details

--

3. Are you satisfied that the applicant can complete the course of study without detriment to job performance?

Yes No

If No, please provide details

--

4. Do you agree to grant time off under the Assistance to Study guidelines :

Yes No

Part 4 – LINE MANAGER/HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES ENDORSEMENT
(contd)

In recommending/endorsing this application I can confirm that the details contained in the application are correct, and that the officer is not in receipt of a current written warning and serving a trial period or in receipt of a current final written warning.

Recommended By: (Line Manager)	Date:
Endorsed By: Head of Corporate Services	Date

**Please return completed form
by 31 JULY to:**

**HR Section
Corporate Services
St Anne's House
13 Church Street
Belfast
BT1 1ER**

ADULT FURTHER EDUCATION PACKAGE OF ASSISTANCE

Fees (including examination fees)

80% of fees will be paid (including examination fees) for the most economical method for the course of study up to a maximum of £1,000 per academic year. The maximum limit will be subject to annual review, taking account of increases in courses fees. EONI may identify an alternative viable option to meet the identified need.

Text Books

EONI will pay 50% of the cost of essential textbooks, up to a maximum of £50 per academic year on provision of evidence from educational establishments eg, signed letter from course tutor. Applicants must source the most economical means eg, library.

Travelling Expenses

- (i) EONI will pay travel to an approved AFE course of study and any compulsory residentials at public transport rate. Reimbursement will only be considered for those costs identified on the application form.
- (ii) Staff who receive travel expenses or other assistance from another source will have the amount paid from EONI funds reduced accordingly.

Study Leave & Exams

Course of study awarded by examination only

Exams lasting up to and including 1.5 hours - a half day's study leave will be awarded for each exam plus time off to sit the exam. For exams lasting over 1.5 hours, one day's study leave will be awarded for each exam plus time off to sit the exam.

Exams and Project Work

If a course of study requires students to sit exams and submit assignments, you will receive study leave according to the level of the course and assessment plus time off to sit exams:

Up to and including A Level and BTEC National qualifications (NVQ level 3):

- project assessment accounts for up to 39% of total course mark: 2 days study leave per year
- project assessment accounts for 40% upwards of total course mark : 3 days study leave per year.

Higher National Qualifications and equivalent (NVQ level 4):

- project assessment accounts for up to 39% of total course mark: 3 days study leave per year
- project assessment accounts for 40% upwards of total course mark: 4 days study leave per year.

Degree qualifications & above (NVQ Level 5):

- project assessment accounts for up to 39% of total course mark: 4 days study leave per year

- project assessment accounts for 40% upwards of total course mark: 5 days study leave per year.

Course of Study awarded by assessment of projects* only:

One day's special leave should be given for each project/assignment up to the following maximum:

Up to and including A Level and BTEC National qualifications (NVQ level 3):

- up to a maximum of 3 days study leave per year

Higher National Qualifications and equivalent (NVQ level 4):

- up to a maximum of 4 days study leave per year

Degree qualifications & above (NVQ Level 5):

- up to a maximum of 5 days per year.

* Depending on length of words per assignment (5,000 words per project).

Part-time and Job-Sharing

Part-time and job-sharing staff will be awarded special leave on a pro-rata basis but at least one half-day special leave with pay should be given for study for each examination.

Timing

Days taken as special leave and time off for study should be selected to cause the minimum possible interference to work in consultation with the applicant's line manager.

Equipment

EONI will pay 50% of the cost of necessary equipment, on provision of evidence from Educational Establishment (eg a signed letter from course tutor), subject to a max. of £100.

Computers

Where EONI has spare computers available, they may provide temporary use of basic computer/word processing facilities, or suggest another viable alternative.

Examination Results

First Resit no study leave entitlement. Payment of resit fees plus time off to sit examination.

Subsequent Attempts no assistance

Graduation

Up to a maximum of ½ day special leave. All costs associated with graduation are the responsibility of applicants.

Residentials eg Summer Schools

Assistance will be given to staff for fees (80%) and time off to attend residentials that are a compulsory course requirement on provision of evidence from Educational Establishment (eg a signed letter from course tutor),. A maximum of three days per academic year will be approved for this purpose, in addition to study leave. Additional time off to attend for example residentials lasting 5 days may be approved at the discretion of the Head of Department.

TRAINING EVALUATION FORM



TRAINING EVENT:

DATE:

PROVIDER:

NAME:

Your response will assist us with planning further staff training. The aim is to evaluate content and quality, and to ensure training is providing value for money. Please rate the following aspects of the training and answer the questions below.

	<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Not Good</u>	<u>Poor</u>
The venue used for the training event	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The content of the training covered	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The materials used/supplied at the event	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your opinion of the trainer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What changes would you make to the course (timings, venue, materials, etc)?
How is the new knowledge/skills to be used?
Do you require any further development in this area?

Did the course meet its objectives: **Y/N***

Would you recommend the course to other staff: **Y/N***

Additional Comments:

Signature of Job Holder:

Date:

Signature of Line Manager:

Date:

Please forward to the HR Officer.

****Delete as appropriate***

FOLLOW UP TRAINING EVALUATION FORM



NAME:

TRAINING ATTENDED:

DATE OF FOLLOW-UP REVIEW EVALUATION:

SECTION A

What have been the main benefits to you and EONI in participating in the training:
To what extent has this training met your developmental need:
What elements of the training have you been able to apply to your job:
What elements have you been unable to apply:

Please add any other comments :

Signature of Job Holder:

Date:

Signature of Line Manager:

Date:

The following Section B, to be completed by Line Manager:

SECTION B

Have you noticed a difference in the knowledge, skills or attitude of the individual following participation in the training? For example in quality of work, morale, etc.

To what extent has he/she applied his/her new learning to the job?

What opportunities has he/she had to put this new learning into practice?

Does the employee require further development?

Please add any other comments:

Signature of Line Manager:

Date:

Please forward Sections A and B to the HR Officer.