

Guideline: ET/EAPAX 2

Experiential Training and Internship Programme— Guidelines for the implementation of the Young Professional Development Programme

2008

Directorate Education, Training and Extension Services

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1. INTRODUCTION

Shortage of skilled agricultural professionals and technical staff is one of the handicaps to agricultural development in South Africa. There is evidence that the majority of the senior researchers and technician cadre is approaching retirement. This is worsened by the majority of young graduates who are reluctant to further their studies at postgraduate level.

The Department of Agriculture's Young Professional Development Programme (PDP) is a capacity building programme contributing to a relevant and credible future agricultural scientific base for the agricultural sector.

Through the programme, a pool of young scientists, engineers, technologists, lecturers and technicians from the previously disadvantaged groups will be created. Young graduates will be attached to experienced senior researchers, technicians and professors for mentoring.

During their stay on the programme they will be exposed to various research and technological methodologies and they will be equipped with practical experience of the agricultural research and technological environment.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Young Professional Development Programme are:

- 2.1 To promote recruitment, development and retention of a sustainable cadre of scientists, technologists, technicians and other associated professionals and management support in the Department of Agriculture (DoA) and the sector.
- 2.2 To provide the Department of Agriculture with highly skilled people and to address the skill gaps within the agricultural sector.
- 2.3 To promote linkages with external bodies. This will strengthen the capabilities of the workforce to contribute to a prosperous agricultural sector.

3. SCOPE

- 3.1 The Young Professional Development Programme provides the framework to address scarce skills shortages, further education, and career pathing and provides a framework to recruit and retain the professionals.

4. PILLARS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE'S YOUNG PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

4.1 Research development

- This category targets young graduates in possession of the requisite Bachelor's degree such as B.Sc., B.Sc. Agric., B.Sc. Engineering, B.V.Sc. or postgraduate qualification in agriculture or natural science from the previously disadvantaged group who would like to further their studies at Honours, Masters and Ph.D. level in the area of research, leading to innovation in the critically scarce skills in agriculture.
- The current DoA bursary holders who are completing their Bachelor's degree and who would like to further their studies in the field of studies listed above will be given first preference.
- Successful candidates will be taken as Interns and be attached to an experienced Mentor/ Supervisor while furthering their studies on a part-time basis.
- Candidates at Masters and Ph.D. levels involved in research work may also be linked to various research laboratories and institutions.

4.2 Occupation Specific Dispensation

- This category will target employees of the DoA who are appointed in certain critical focus areas in scarce skills of the department but who need certain expertise to fulfil their duties.

Such employees might be taken through the PDP to enhance their skills for effective delivery of services. It may include registering for professional certificates, short courses, a diploma or degree.

- Extension officers who are employed by the DoA and who are underqualified will also be targeted to benefit from the PDP. The programme will also upgrade and capacitate them to be specialists in areas they have already been trained in.
- This category will also target funded vacant positions in specialised services such as animal/plant health specialists, scientists, veterinarians, auditors, etc. for which directorates/functionaries are struggling to find suitable candidates. Through consultation with directors, young people will be recruited through the PDP to fulfil such roles.
- Element of tenure tracking of employees who benefited from the programme will be included in the agreement between the participant and the DoA.

4.3 Technology and technical skills transfer

- This category is designed to support critical intensive services. Various directorates, functionaries of the DoA and agricultural training institutes will identify skills gaps in terms of technicians and specialists and young graduates will be recruited through the PDP to address the shortages.

4.4 Tutoring and lectureship

- This category aims to address the shortage of tutors, lecturers and instructors in specific agricultural fields within the agricultural training institutes.
- Once the shortages are identified, young people will be recruited and linked to those vacancies and taken through the PDP to institutions of higher learning to study within the identified field of studies.

5. TARGET GROUP

- Graduates from the previously disadvantage groups qualified and enrolled for the defined scarce skills in the agricultural public sector who would like to enrol either for a Honours, Master or Ph.D. degree in research.
- The current bursary holders who are completing their Bachelor's degrees.
- The current interns or trainees within the DoA with qualifications in critical intensive services and scarce skills in agricultural fields.
- Employees of the DoA in targeted occupations considered scarce and critical.
- Technologists and technicians in support of the capacity of the National Training Institute. This will also include other professionals such as tutors and lecturers attached to these institutions.

6. ALLOWANCE AND BENEFITS

The Directorate Education, Training and Extension Services shall carry the responsibility for the management of the entire budget of the programme. For the Young Professional Development, the budget shall cover the following:

6.1 Tuition/University study fees

- As prescribed by various institutions of higher learning for postgraduate studies.

6.2 Operational budget

- Includes stationery, textbooks, practical work, protective clothing, seminars, excursions and workshop costs incurred for research purposes.

6.3 Mentorship fees

- Each trainee will be allocated an experienced Mentor for guidance and skills transfer.
- Each Mentor will enter into a contractual obligation with the DoA and a mentorship fee will be paid.

6.4 Monthly allowance/stipend

- For accommodation, meals and transport.

6.5 Life skills training

- Includes coping skills and generic short course that might be recommended by the Mentor.

Proposed package for 2008 benchmarked against the existing PDPs from other Institutions and government departments

	Hons.	M.Sc.	Ph.D.
University study fees	20 000,00	20 000,00	20 000,00
Life skills, training	6 250,00	6 250,00	6 250,00
Operational budget	10 000,00	10 000,00	10 000,00
Living allowance	46 218,90	48 859,98	51 731,40
Mentorship fees	8 400,00	8 400,00	8 400,00
Total expenditure per annum	90 868,90	93 509,98	96 381,40

NB: A committee comprising one representative from each of the DoA programmes chaired by the Director: Education, Training and Extension Services will be constituted to determine the stipend of PDP participants and mentorship fees from time to time. This committee will seat once a year.

7. IMPLEMENTATION AND COORDINATION

- The Young Professional Development Programme will be implemented in terms of the Experiential Training, Internship and Professional Development Programme Policy of the DoA.
- The Directorate Education, Training and Extension Services will be responsible for coordination, management, monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the programme.
- A memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with participating institutions of higher learning and research bodies will be concluded with clear deliverables.
- People participating in the programme must enter into an agreement with the DoA and conditions will be communicated clearly.

8. CONCLUSION

The application of these guidelines, if applied correctly, will ensure commonality of understanding in the department and the sector and therefore effective coordination of the programme.