



LAC LA BICHE COUNTY PROCEDURE

TITLE: Professional Development Standard Operating
Procedure

PROCEDURE NO: CS-03-016-05

SPECIAL NOTES/CROSS REFERENCE: POLICY CS-03-016 AMENDMENT DATE: JULY 7, 2015

1.0 General Statement

This SOP and related policy has been adopted by Lac La Biche County to enhance professional development opportunities for staff by supporting participation in professional conferences and educational activities.

2.0 General Guidelines

Lac La Biche County shall create and maintain a budget for professional development costs.

Lac La Biche County will work to ensure that Professional Development objectives align with any Human Resources strategic plans for succession planning and career planning.

Lac La Biche County will offer funding for Professional Development in an effort to provide staff with career advancement and professional development opportunities.

Supervisors are responsible for identifying developmental requirements for and with employees and for noting these requirements in the County's Performance Management process and forms.

Probationary, Term, Casual and Seasonal employees will normally not be considered for training or development support by the County. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the General Manager, Manager or the Chief Administrative Officer.

Where it is either not possible or is not practical to arrange development programs during the employee's regularly scheduled hours of work, the time involved in attending the professional development opportunity is **NOT** considered to be work or overtime and the employee shall be provided with either equivalent time off with pay **OR** the employee shall be compensated, on an hour-for-hour basis, for the employee's personal time taken in attending the training program.

No compensation shall be paid by Lac La Biche County for the time for an employee to complete homework, assignments, exams or other such similar activity associated with an on-line or distance education course. Course work shall not be worked on by the employee while the employee is at work.

3.0 Mandatory and Optional Training

Mandatory training is training that is required in order to fulfill the duties of a position or that is mandated by legislation.

Optional/requested training is training that is not a requirement of a position.

An employee completing mandatory training shall not be required to sign a Return for Service Agreement. Only employees who have been approved for optional/requested training will be required to sign the agreement.

4.0 Training Schedules

Where the County requires a staff member to enrol in professional development activities, the training shall be scheduled as often as possible during regular working hours, on an agreed timetable that causes a minimal disturbance to the completion of their regular job-duties.

Where a staff member is required to enrol in professional development activities, the staff member, their supervisor and the Human Resources department shall work together in selecting an appropriate format of training that best suits the schedule and educational needs of the employee.

When an employee makes a request for professional development activities, as a personal development exercise, the training shall be completed outside of regular working hours.

5.0 Applying for Professional Development

Employees, who would like to enrol in professional development activities and are not required to complete the training as a condition of employment, will be required to submit a written request for training to their supervisor stating the desired form of training, dates and the rationale for requesting the training. The supervisor will review the request. Where the request is approved and fits within departmental training budgets, the employee will be notified in writing of the approval.

For all personal development requests above \$2,000, for which the professional development opportunities result in the employee obtaining academic credits, the requesting staff member shall be required to agree to and sign a Return Service Agreement.

6.0 Approval of Training, Training Leave and Associated Expenses

Authorities for approval of training, training leave and training related expenditures are as follows:

- For employees reporting directly to the Chief Administrative Officer - the Chief Administrative Officer.
- For all other employees - approval is made in accordance with the County's "**two-up**" recommendation and approval process.
- In all cases where the County is requested to support employee training or development, written approval must be obtained before the training or development commences.

7.0 Return for Service Agreement

Once a request for professional development has been approved, Lac La Biche County and the employee will sign a Return for Service Agreement. The agreement will outline subsequent employment commitments, amounts, and types of payments that will be made to the employee (or on behalf of the employee) and any default provisions and conditions of repayment.

If any financial assistance is provided, the employee will enter into a written agreement to reimburse Lac La Biche County for any financial assistance provided if the employee does not:

- Successfully complete the course; and/or
- Return to the employment of Lac La Biche County for a period of one (1) year for every \$2,000 received towards credit courses during the professional development year.
By way of example and for greater clarity, if the County pays \$4,000 or more, but less than \$6,000 during the PD year, the employment period shall be for two (2) years.

All apprentice employees shall enter into a written agreement to fulfill a one (1) year service commitment to Lac La Biche County immediately following the completion of educational leave for each level of apprenticeship completed, for which Lac La Biche County pays full salary. An apprentice who has earned Journeyman status shall commit to a minimum three (3) years' service commitment.

8.0 Reimbursement for training costs

Upon pre-approval of professional development related expenses, and presentation of receipts, the County shall reimburse a County employee for the costs associated with registration for courses, conferences and seminars, tuition fees, course materials, accommodations, travel and subsistence.

9.0 Travel to Courses and Seminars

Provided the County has requested and/or approved that the employee attend a course, seminar or developmental program, and provided that the course, seminar or developmental program takes place outside the Lac La Biche County area, an employee shall be compensated at straight time on an hour-for-hour basis, for the reasonable time required to travel to and from such conferences, seminars, courses and other developmental programs. The reasonableness of the time shall be determined by the authority approving the training.

In the event that a County vehicle is available for use, and the employee chooses to drive their own vehicle, the employee will only be compensated half of the current reimbursement rate.

10.0 Membership Fees for Professional Associations and Organizations

Upon approval under the provisions of the County's "**two-up**" recommendation and approval process, the County shall pay membership fees in any professional association or organization to which the employee must belong in order to satisfactorily perform her or his duties with the County.

11.0 First Aid Training

First Aid training shall be provided to permanent staff members, as identified by the responsible Manager or General Manager as appropriate, and the County shall ensure that such identified employees attend a refresher First Aid course at least every two years. In no instance, however, shall there be fewer than TWO such staff members in EACH Department.

12.0 Tracking

Human Resources can track the successful completion and/or attendance of professional development opportunities.

13.0 Workshop Requirement

An employee who is given the opportunity to pursue professional development may be required to offer workshops to co-workers and/or members of the community in order to share the knowledge acquired. The employee may be required to file a written report with the immediate supervisor upon his/her return.

“Original Signed”
Chief Administrative Officer

July 21, 2015
Date

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
RETURN FOR SERVICE AGREEMENT

Between

Lac La Biche County
(the "County")

And

Employee

I, _____, agree to enter into this Return for Service Agreement with Lac La Biche County on the following terms and conditions:

1. The County agrees to pay my costs in relation to the course(s) as set out in Schedule "A" attached.
2. I agree that I shall work for one (1) year (the "Employment Period") for every \$2,000 I receive towards credit courses during the professional development year (January 1- December 31) (the "PD Year"). By way of example and for greater certainty, if the County pays \$4,000 or more, but less than \$6,000, under this Agreement during the PD Year, the Employment Period shall be for two years.
3. The Employment Period commences on the actual completion date of the last completed course during the PD Year. In the event that the actual completion date is different than the estimated completion date set out in Schedule "A", I shall provide the County with sufficient evidence of the actual completion date.
4. In the event that my employment with the County terminates during the Employment Period, for any reason, I shall reimburse the County all costs paid by the County under this Agreement as follows:
 - a. Any monies owing in this respect shall be first deducted from any monies owed by the County to the employee for salary/wages. The employee hereby authorizes the County to deduct said monies owing at the time of termination without requirement from the employee for any further approval or authorization.
 - b. If the amount owed by the County is insufficient to reimburse all the monies owing to Lac La Biche County under this agreement, I assume liability for repayment of the remaining amount owing to the County and agree to pay all remaining monies owed up to the date of the retirement of this debt, within sixty (60) days of leaving the County.
 - c. If I fail to repay the funds pursuant to paragraphs (a) and (b), I agree that the County may commence legal proceedings against me to recover the funds payable under this Agreement, and is entitled to recover its legal fees on a full indemnity basis
5. This Agreement shall not be amended except by mutual agreement. Any such amendment shall be in writing and signed by the parties.
6. I agree that I have satisfied myself of the facts by my own knowledge and investigation and after taking as much time and independent advice as thought necessary after time to consider matters.

Employee

Date

Human Resources

Date

