EMployee Study Assistance Policy

1. Purpose
The Employee Study Assistance Policy is aligned to the Group Learning and Development Policy. The purpose of this policy is to:
- Provide enablers for employees to further their studies.
- Encourage employees to take responsibility for their own development.
- Invest in the development of our employees.

2. Principles
The proposed employee study areas must:
- Fall within the scarce and critical skills requirements of the business unit and the Group’s strategic objectives.
- Be relevant to the employee’s current or possible future role and development needs.
- Be reflected on the employee’s approved individual development plan.

3. Criteria for Receiving Study Assistance
- Employees must meet the following criteria in order to be considered for study assistance.
- Employees must have been in the employ of the Group for a period of more than one year (12 months)
- Employees must have a minimum performance rating of three (3) and a good attendance record
- Studies must be undertaken with a registered learning institution which includes:
  - General Education and Training (GET)
  - Further Education and Training (FET)
  - Higher Education and Training (HET)
- The learning method selected must be varied and supportive of the nature of learning, desired outcomes, target audience, content and context of learning.
- In case of re-application, employees must have a proven track record in terms of their previous studies and should not have failed
• Exceptions will be considered for ‘take-over’ of study debts where new hires can provide evidence of specific area of study when joining the Group. Such exceptions have to be approved by the Business Unit Head of HR prior to finalising the offer of employment.

4. Study Assistance Funding

The study assistance funding may cover the following costs:

- Registration fees
- Tuition fees
- Examination fees
- Membership fees of specific institutions where it is a prerequisite for enrolment on a course
- Compulsory prescribed textbooks

All other costs and expenses are for the employee’s own account, for example extra classes, supplementary examinations, accommodation and travel, etc. The approved study assistance shall be payable directly to the educational institution.

Employees will not be refunded any fees paid to the institution prior to the approval and awarding of study assistance.

5. Study Assistance Application Procedure

• An employee must complete and submit the application for Study Assistance form including supporting documents to the Line Manager. Applications must be completed in full and accompanied by the following supporting documentation:
  - Certified copy of identity document
  - Programme overview/Course outline for which the employee intends to enrol
  - The cost of the programme/course
  - Results of examinations written, in case of a re-application
  - List of compulsory prescribed text books, including a quotation and/or statement from book shops or institutions to verify the amount(s) requested
  - Membership fees of professional institutions that are a prerequisite for registration, where applicable

• The Line Manager to complete the initial motivation and recommendation of study assistance for the respective employee.

• The application form, together with all the supporting documents and Line Manager motivation to be forwarded to the Human Resource Manager for validation.

• The Human Resource Manager to check that the application is completed correctly, in full and that all supporting documentation is attached and then forward the application to the Study Assistance Committee.

• The Study Assistance Committee to review applications received in line with criteria and notify the relevant Human Resource Manager of the outcome.
The Human Resource Manager to notify the employee of the outcome from the Study Assistance Committee and forward the Work Back Agreement and Acknowledgement of Debt forms for completion.

All employees who have been granted study assistance must complete and return the Work Back Agreement and Acknowledgement of Debt forms to the Human Resource Manager within fourteen (14) days.

The Human Resource Manager to submit the following documents to the payroll department and retain all other documents in the employee file:
- Application for Study Assistance form
- Authorisation for Study Assistance form
- Acknowledgement of Debt form
- Work Back Agreement form

Payment will be made directly to the learning institution once all documentation has been received.

The study assistance information must be captured on the human resource system and included in the workplace skills plan and annual training report.

Two days’ study leave will be granted to employees for every examination which includes the day before the examination for study purposes and the day of the examination in line with the Time and Attendance Policy.

6. **Employee Study Assistance Committee**
Each business unit to establish a Study Assistance Committee which will comprise of the Head of Human Resources, Training Manager, Head of Finance and two other line executives. The committee will be responsible for:
- Compiling budget for study assistance for each financial year
- Reviewing applications for study assistance received to ensure compliance with criteria.
- Ensuring fairness and consistency in the application process
- Meeting bi-annually to consider study assistance applications
- Reporting on the number of employees who have been granted study assistance (by race, gender, study area and link to business requirements)

7. **Employee Obligations**
Employees who have been granted study assistance must:
- Complete the approved studies within the prescribed and agreed upon period.
- Notify the Human Resource Manager in writing of any extension of studies granted by the learning institution.
- Notify the Human Resource Manager, in case of withdrawal or non-registration of any module or subject, within fourteen (14) days.
- Submit transcripts or certified copies of examination results to the Human Resource Manager, for submission to the Payroll Department, within one month of receiving the results.
• Remain in the employ of the Group for the period reflected in the Work Back Agreement.
• Repay costs of studies which were not successfully completed or failed.
• Not change a study area or transfer registration to another learning institution for which study assistance has been granted without prior written consent from the business unit Head of Human Resources.
• Notify the Line Manager of the requirements by the institution to physically attend lectures or classes for certain number of days during the study period of which annual leave application must be submitted.
• Submit a copy of the examination timetable to the Line Manager and Human Resource Manager when applying for study leave

8. Employee Study Assistance Evaluation and Reporting
Evaluation of and reporting on study assistance will focus on:
• The number of applications received and study areas
• The number of successful applicants and approved study areas
• Re-application for study assistance
• Impact on BBBEE rating and talent pipeline

Study assistance information will be included in the monthly business unit scorecard, quarterly board report, BBBEE report and annual report.

9. Templates
• Employee Study Assistance Application Form
• Work Back Agreement Form
• Acknowledgement of Debt Form
• Study Assistance Authorisation Form

10. Scope
This practice guide applies to all permanent and fixed-term contract (full-time, part-time and flexi-time) employees of the Clicks Group (Pty) Limited, its subsidiaries, business units and service providers in South Africa only.

11. Responsibilities
Any changes, updates or revisions of the Employee Study Assistance Policy must be approved by the Group HR Director.

12. Revision History
The Group Employee Study Assistance Policy will be reviewed every 3 years from the date of creation.

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