



**WESTMINSTER**

International University in Tashkent

An Accredited Institution of  
the University of Westminster (UK)

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## **STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Westminster International University in Tashkent (*hereafter – WIUT*) is committed to the provision of learning and comprehensive professional development for all its staff members. This enables full time employees at all levels to fulfill their true potential and support WIUT in achieving its vision, values, and strategic priorities while effectively addressing the challenges and opportunities arising in a constantly changing higher education landscape.

### **2. PURPOSE**

The Staff Professional Development Policy (*hereafter – PDP*) is intended to be used as WIUT's guiding principle for the combined efforts of the Human Capital Management Department (*hereafter – HCMD*), the Centre for Professional and Lifelong Education (*hereafter – CPLE*), WIUT schools and relevant departments to attract the best talent, support and assist the professional development, engagement, and retention of individual members of staff and teams that consequently contribute towards the university's mission of providing international standards of education and research impact for the intellectual, social and economic development of the Central Asian and global communities as well as three strategic pillars: Student Experience, Staff Experience, and Society Engagement.

The PDP is designed to be utilized for activities that will effectively enhance WIUT employees' skills and professional qualifications needed for their current and prospective job responsibilities at the university. Professional development activities comprise both in-person, hybrid, as well as online learning activities. Some examples might include but not limited to: induction, exchange programs, language instruction, professional certification, shadowing, project work, seminars, workshops, massive open online courses (MOOCs), computer training, mentoring, topical conferences, seminars and exhibitions.

It is expected that the staff members (academic and non-academic) will come forward and willingly participate in available professional development opportunities that are identified and prioritized taking into account the following points:

- Needs assessed and derived from priorities as outlined in WIUT's strategy until 2030, and Annual Performance Development Reviews (APDRs);
- Current and/or prospective work assignments consistent with the goals and priorities of WIUT;
- Staff member's short and long-term professional development goals, past performance and growth potential at WIUT;
- Expected remaining time of service of the staff member;
- Possibility and availability of budget funding;

- Assessment of the learning impact opportunity and/or organization delivering a training program; and
- Expected learning opportunity return on investment (ROI).

This PDP is being revised to account for the gradual expansion of WIUT's academic and professional staff members since 2012. It is also being updated to meet the evolving needs and requirements of the university, as well as the rapidly changing educational and labor markets.

### 3. ORGANIZATIONAL SCOPE

This PDP is a university-wide policy, which applies to all permanent full-time staff members (academic and non-academic). Professional development is a shared commitment between WIUT and its staff members. WIUT assumes responsibility for the analysis, creation and distribution of professional development opportunities based on the principles of equity and transparency subject to availability of appropriate resources.

### 4. IDENTIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

Based on the institutional objectives, the CPLE along with the relevant university department endorses staff development needs and goals for a particular year. The Executive Team then reviews and approves proposals for the Staff Development program and the professional development budget as part of the annual planning process. The Executive Team shall give priority consideration to support activities that are both essential and recommended as part of the institutional staff development plan.

Staff development needs may also become apparent due to the Q&A feedback process, such as annual monitoring, student feedback, course committee meetings, reports by module leaders, liaison tutors, and external examiners. Such needs will be taken into account and incorporated into the yearly plan based on feasibility of the same. It is important for staff development planning to remain flexible so that additions and alterations can be incorporated by the CPLE as they become necessary.

Planning process will identify several possible staff development actions. The extent to which any staff development actions can be implemented will depend on (a) the importance that WIUT attaches, (b) the resources (e.g., time, expertise, and funds) required to implement that action and (c) ROI - return on investment made by WIUT and/or staff member's contribution to his/her professional growth and development.

**There are three categories of staff professional development activities:**

- Mandatory (mainly identified and organized by HCMD i.e., induction and mentoring for newly hired staff, terms of employment, fire safety and civil defense, trainings related to anti-corruption, sexual harassment, abuse of authority, cyber security and data protection, health safety, operating a motor vehicle, ethics, audit and finances, as well as specific compulsory certifications for technical/engineer staff members and etc.);
- Recommended (i.e., professional development activities identified and organized by CPLE and relevant departments that best benefit the university, addressing critical training concerns or significant gaps in skills or knowledge once a year and listed in the *Attachment 1 – List of certificates and courses subsidized through WIUT PDP, and/or staff section on the CPLE website*);
- External (i.e., professional development activities identified by staff members individually that may take place during or outside official office hours. Such needs may not always be provided

or fulfilled, and they are always subject to the availability of extrabudgetary funds in a given period of time).

Mandatory training contents are organized by HCMD in compliance with the demands of the current legislation of the Republic of Uzbekistan, determined, revised, and designed based on the governmental requirements. HCMD oversees conducting, monitoring, and establishing reporting mechanisms for all mandatory trainings. It is the responsibility of the HCMD and the unit managers to ensure that all mandatory trainings are completed successfully and in a timely manner.

Recommended and External professional development activities and requests are successfully collected before the twentieth day (20<sup>th</sup>) of each month and analyzed by CPLE with additional relevant data (i.e., APDRs) provided by HCMD. Based on the collected data and the needs analysis it is the CPLE's responsibility to properly plan, budget, develop, conduct, monitor, and evaluate the aforementioned trainings within reasonable timeframes. It should be noted that any External training requests require the approval of the direct supervisor and/or Head of Department/Dean/Director/Rector.

CPLE in close collaboration with the Director of Administration, and the appropriate Dean/Director serve as the PDP requests evaluation panel (*hereafter – the panel*), which normally gathers once per month and the meeting outcomes are logged by CPLE Manager on Training and Lifelong Learning. The panel is an advisory body responsible for formulating recommendations to senior management regarding a) learning priorities to be incorporated into the learning plan, b) skills gaps, priority group and individual trainings, and c) use of the learning budget. d) reporting and monitoring to the Executive Team.

## **5. RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

It is a collective effort and a joint responsibility of Senior Managers (Executive Team, Deans), Managers (Heads of Departments), the Director of Administration, CPLE, and individual staff members to create and maintain a culture of continuous professional development, identification of learning needs and their constant analysis for impact and potential long-term benefits, in particular:

**Individual staff members have a responsibility for:**

- Undertaking mandatory trainings as specified by WIUT;
- Identification of professional development opportunities that can assist them in undertaking their role more effectively or enabling them to expand it;
- Ensuring that they go through regular reviews of their performance and discuss their staff development needs with their managers and/or with their appraiser/mentor as appropriate;
- Actively applying newly acquired knowledge and skills into their work;
- Sharing acquired knowledge and best practices within the WIUT and wider community, as well as providing and receiving constructive and timely feedback from colleagues;
- Participating in the necessary pre and post monitoring and evaluation activities requested by the CPLE;
- Being committed towards exerting maximum effort towards completing the professional development opportunities provided by WIUT.

## **Managers and/or Staff with supervisory duty have responsibility for and commitment for:**

- Ensuring that new staff members receive appropriate induction and initial training, and complete all mandatory trainings;
- Supporting CPLE in identification of professional development gaps that need to be filled to meet individual, team, and organizational objectives;
- Ensuring that regular individual and team discussions take place to identify developmental needs;
- Assisting the CPLE in monitoring the progress of individual and team professional development;
- Encouraging staff members to actively participate in the recommended professional development opportunities, while seeking external ones considering budgetary constraints.

## **6. FUNDING OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

As mentioned earlier, professional development can take place in either formal or informal settings and can be delivered in-person, in a hybrid format, or online. Locally/WIUT organized and online learning opportunities are preferred over activities requiring additional funding and travel outside of Uzbekistan. It is expected that both managers and individual staff members will prioritize professional development that is relevant, cost-effective, and timely, and subject to preliminary review by CPLE and the HCMD when appropriate.

Funding for staff development activities will come mainly from WIUT's confirmed annual professional development budget. It is imperative to note that the budget for professional development activities is subject to approval based on WIUT's internal rules and regulations. External funding will be used whenever possible, appropriate, and approved.

### **Professional Development Subsidy Program (PDSP)**

All full-time WIUT employees are eligible for a PDSP while pursuing recommended and/or external professional development activities. PDPS requires a written justification and supporting documents (i.e., web link, schedule, syllabus, course leaflet and etc.) from the applying staff member (see *Attachment 2 – Application for Professional Development Subsidy*), approval of the direct supervisor and/or Head of Department/Dean/Director (see *Attachment 3 – Individual Recommendation for the Employee's Professional Development Subsidy*), and will be addressed on a case-by-case basis.

The subsidy/funding is not an entitlement and not everyone who applies will receive it. Preference will be given to employees who have not previously benefited from PDSP and/or other staff support benefits available at WIUT. Priority will also be allocated to activities related to the achievement of WIUT's strategic initiatives and the development of critical staff skills and qualifications.

Part-time staff members and those on temporary contracts with WIUT are not eligible for subsidized staff development opportunities. Nevertheless, such staff members remain qualified for mandatory professional development activities organized by HCMD.

**Please note**, to qualify for staff professional development opportunities involving financial costs:

- A WIUT staff member (academic and non-academic) must have worked for at least 12 months (consecutive) with WIUT, at the time of consideration for a paid professional development opportunity;
- Employees who receive funding are expected to remain employed with WIUT for at least 1 year after completing the activity. If an employee resigns within 6 months of receiving their subsidy, he/she is required to return WIUT 100% of the subsidy amount 2 weeks before their last day of work. If an employee resigns within 1 year of completing their subsidized activity, they must reimburse WIUT 50% of the subsidy cost 2 weeks prior to termination. Exceptions apply in cases of dismissal due to staff reduction or in the unfortunate event of a staff disability/severe health condition;
- Only employees receiving an “Excellent” evaluation on their APDR forms are eligible for long-term and costly professional development activities (exceeding 5.000.000 UZS);
- Employees who receive approval for funding of academic/professional development courses or certifications/tests that issue an actual grade must provide a proof of receiving at least grade “B - / 80%” or a certificate of successful completion/achievement to CPLE. Employees who fail to receive a satisfactory course result will not be reimbursed; he/she will be responsible to cover 100% of the costs involved. The redo of the professional development activity will not be covered financially.
- Employees can apply for funding of a maximum of two professional development activities per year with no exceptions.
- In case of confirmation, the funding must be used within the fiscal year for which it was approved. Even if approved, unused funds cannot be carried over to the following year. In such a case, the funding will be revoked.

Each professional development subsidy or funding request will be carefully reviewed by the CPLE, and must be approved by the Rector, Finance Director, Dean, and the employee’s Line manager.

### **Cost share/subsidy scheme**

To allow more eligible staff members at WIUT to benefit from the PDSP scheme, WIUT will partially cover or reimburse the costs of recommended or external professional development activities. All full-time WIUT employees may qualify for partial fee coverage/reimbursement by following the established mechanism:

- Employees with 1 year of WIUT service – up to 20%
- Employees with 2 to 3 years of WIUT service – up to 45%
- Employees with more than 3 years of WIUT service – up to 70%

The final contribution amount is subject to the recommendation of the panel and the availability of funds on a case-by-case basis. The list of recommended certificates and courses subsidized by WIUT can be found in *Attachment 1 – List of certificates and courses subsidized through the WIUT PDP, and/or staff section on the CPLE website.*

Additional professional development and support options can be found in a new edition of the “Staff Support Scheme for study at WIUT – Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses” available on the WIUT intranet, as well as the Learning Resource Centre (LRC) which has a wide selection of research

journals, academic subject textbooks, fiction books, newspapers, and an extensive collection of guides for academic English and professional teaching skills.

## **7. CORPORATE EDUCATION COURSE DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

Recognizing instruction of others as a valuable form of continuous professional self-development that not only reinforces employees own knowledge and skills, but also advances their ability to communicate and explain complex concepts. WIUT encourages the creation and delivery of modern and impactful corporate courses and provides an opportunity to all academic and professional staff members to develop such education programs that can be successfully marketed and offered to the wider audience outside of the WIUT community on a fee basis, serving as a source of additional income to the course developer(s) and the university. Employees interested in developing a corporate education course must submit a detailed proposal via official email to the CPLE. The proposal should include:

- Updated CV/Resume of the course developer(s).
- Course title and description (150 words).
- Target audience and prerequisites.
- Learning objectives and expected outcomes.
- Proposed curriculum outline and duration.
- Methodology of delivery (e.g., instructor-led, online, blended).
- Budget estimates (optional), including any required resources/equipment.

CPLE along with the Marketing and Communications Department will review the proposal for alignment with the university goals, feasibility, and potential impact within two weeks (*14 calendar days*) after receipt of the documents. Upon positive recommendation, the proposal will be forwarded to the Executive Office for final review and approval.

### **Course Development and Delivery**

Adequate resources, such as marketing funding, instructional materials, and technology, will be allocated to support the development of approved courses. Course developers are encouraged to seek support and collaboration from subject matter experts within or outside WIUT, as well as from the University of Westminster (London) to enhance the quality and relevance of course content.

To ensure the effectiveness of new corporate education programs, it is required that they be piloted within WIUT. This can be done by organizing trial open workshops and/or seminars for WIUT, and the wider community. The purpose of these pilot sessions is to gather structured feedback, assess the effectiveness of the programs, and make any necessary adjustments before full implementation.

Documentation pertaining to course development, implementation, and evaluation will be maintained for record-keeping and future reference.

## **8. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

The guiding principles are a set of beliefs and practices that help WIUT staff members improve their skills, knowledge, and performance in their chosen professional area. These principles also directly contribute to strengthening the talent pool of Uzbekistan and the Central Asian region as a whole.

Some of these guiding principles include, but are not limited to:

- Professional development should not be a one-time event, but rather a continuous process of growth and improvement. It should be designed to help employees develop new skills, expand their knowledge, and stay up-to-date with industry trends and best practices;
- Learning activities that support professional performance of individuals and teams that contribute to the realization of WIUT's organizational goals and aid students must have priority over activities that may support only individual professional development goals;
- While significantly contributing, WIUT does not fully cover or reimburse professional development activities. This approach allows more people to benefit from the cost share or subsidy scheme;
- Given that academic staff have a total of 36 hours allocated, they spend 40% (14 hours) on teaching and the same percentage on research. The remaining 20% (8 hours) is dedicated to contributing to WIUT. This contribution includes the professional development of the staff and teams they work with, as well as contributing to the university as a whole;
- Staff members that have undergone professional development activity must disseminate the acquired knowledge and skills within the university and a wider audience. This can be done through various means such as publications, presentations, workshops, or online platforms. A proven dissemination of knowledge and skills then can be considered as a part towards overall 20% contribution to the university;
- Professional development should be based on clear learning objectives that align with the employee's role and responsibilities. This can involve setting SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-bound) goals for learning and development;
- While taking decisions on external professional development opportunity funding, priority should be given to an activity that can bring maximum impact, and positively affect more people within and outside of WIUT;
- For both WIUT as an employer and an individual staff member to be transparent, providing clear and accurate information about the reasoning behind decisions made and the steps taken to arrive at a conclusion, especially while making decisions on professional development funding.

## 9. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Both individual staff member his/her supervisor and CPLE must clearly define the objectives and expected outcomes of the professional development activity proposed: It is important to have a clear understanding of what is intended to be achieved and what outcomes are expected from the learning opportunity.

CPLE and Heads/Directors/Deans are responsible for establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics to measure progress and success: Once the objectives and expected outcomes are defined, it is important to establish KPIs and metrics to measure progress towards achieving those outcomes. These metrics could be both quantitative (e.g., the number of trainees who complete the program) and qualitative (e.g., feedback from trainees and trainers on the quality of the training program).

While evaluating the effectiveness of a professional development activity a variety of methods should be involved, including surveys, interviews, focus groups, and observation. This will help to ensure that the evaluation is comprehensive and provides a full picture of the activities' effectiveness. Additionally, periodic evaluations to assess the long-term impact must be practiced.

Holistic reports on staff professional development must be compiled quarterly and then annually by CPLE and submitted to senior management before the start of each new professional development cycle which typically should be aligned with the budget discussions.

When collecting and storing data related to professional development activities, it is imperative to ensure that data privacy and security protocols are in place to protect sensitive information (names, addresses, government-issued IDs, test results, financial information, and etc.). This must be applied for both WIUT staff members, and any external trainers/organizations involved.

### 10. REVIEW OF STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

This PDD should be reviewed and updated periodically, if necessary, in consultation with select senior staff and CPLE. This review should occur at least once every two years, taking into account the challenges and opportunities presented by the ever-changing landscape of higher education. Concurrently, the list of certificates and courses subsidized through the WIUT PDP will be updated by CPLE annually, with the final version prepared ahead of the yearly WIUT budget discussions.

### 11. ATTACHMENTS

*Attachment 1 – List of certificates and courses subsidized through WIUT PDP*

*Attachment 2 – Application for Professional Development Subsidy Program*

*Attachment 3 – Individual Recommendation for the Employee’s Professional Development Subsidy*

#### APPROVED

by Rector’s order № OR-45

Dated: “4” April 2024

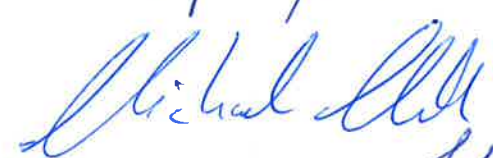
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