

Pacific Immigration Development Community

Draft Proposed Scholarship Policies and Procedures

An introduction and background

The Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC) is the premier regional Immigration body in the Pacific designed to improve collaboration, information and resource sharing amongst its members.

PIDC have identified that technical and theoretical training is required to ensure future Immigration Officers develop skill sets that would assist Member countries to develop internal systems and staff capabilities. As such most students would normally be employees selected by the PIDC Members. (It should be noted that PIDC staff also undertake such training and consideration should be made as to whether these proposed policies would cover PIDC Staff or fall within current employment contracts / employment policies.)

Currently training is required and provided as follows (but future needs may require different solutions): -

- A) Short intensive workshops on specific Immigration or Border Security issues are conducted at a convenient location / or remotely via electronic means such as Zoom due to current border closures due to COVID-19
- B) Scholarships to a specific Immigration and Border Safety Program that was developed with the University of the South Pacific (USP). Immigration Officers who successfully complete this course would graduate with a Post Graduate Certificate or diploma but it is envisaged that in future this be converted to a Masters level program
- C) Due to the complexities of the subject matter and technologies, PIDC may wish to grant scholarship for one off training to address the specific requirements for PIDC Members or a PIDC Staff Member (for example a computerised Immigration border training or developing a threat matrix or develop a research paper etc.) Therefore it would be prudent to develop a Policy that would cover all sponsorships or scholarships. (Better define the scope of this provision to clarify objectives, links to PIDC objectives and roles and outcomes)

The Scope and Intent of this proposed Policy is to ensure that students who are provided with scholarship funding successfully complete their training so that scarce resources are not wasted. Apart from PIDC Staff, all scholarship holders are employed by PIDC Members and therefore the “normal performance bond” usually found in Pacific Island Countries and Territories would not apply between PIDC and the sponsored student where a student is normally bonded / contracted by the Public Service Commission after successfully completing a course to remain and work in

country for a specific period or face a financial penalty. (It would be assumed that successful graduates would be incentivised by their employers via promotions or pay increases).

As USP is a regional University with campuses at most member states. It is assumed that there is reasonable physical access to campuses although some remote access may be required via distance learning as some Member States may have challenges with either access or affordability.

The PIDC scholarship covers ONLY tuition and no extra costs such as transport, meals, text books, data connectivity etc.

With this background, the below contain possible draft text for discussion to form a proposed policy.

Proposed Scholarship Policies and Procedures

Introduction: Scope and Intent of the Policy

1. It is the intent of this policy that PIDC will provide training / sponsor training or provide research scholarships that will improve immigration and border security skills and knowledge within its membership and develop better liaison within the Community.
2. Funding for such scholarships are scarce and PIDC Members need to maximize its economic return so that scarce resources are not wasted.
3. It would be the responsibility of PIDC to continue to seek better training methods and funding.
4. It would be the responsibility of Member States to ensure that students are selected on merit and are academically capable to complete such training.
5. It would be the responsibility of the Member State to ensure their nominees have the support systems such as electronic equipment, reasonable data connectivity etc. to successfully complete training.
6. Where appropriate, at the national level the Public Service Commission (PSC) or similar body would need to institute a system of bonds to ensure the student would contribute to the PIDC Member State. This would ensure a successful graduate would not leave employment to live overseas without a financial penalty or without contributing to the member.
7. Currently unsuccessful students are not penalised for not completing the course. Conversely the problem may lie within the selection committee or criteria used. PIDC should work with the Member and the education provider to better understand why a student has failed and what can be improved to ensure better results.
8. Each Member State nominates its students to PIDC.

9. PIDC should work with the education provider to set out clear academic criteria / minimum work experience for each sponsorship or scholarship.
10. PIDC will collect the results for each student for analysis and forwarding to the relevant members.

The Policy

1. PIDC Secretariat will inform Members in good time of training opportunities and availability of sponsorship.
2. Members will select the nominated officer.
3. PIDC is not responsible for ensuring that the nominated officer receives a placement in the training programme. This is left to the institution that runs the programmes. For example, the USP Post Graduate Certificate in Immigration requires applicants to have a minimum of a Diploma / Form 6 education with 5 years relevant work experience OR Degree with 2 years relevant work experience OR Form 4 education plus 8 years relevant work experience with at least 2 years as supervisor or senior experience.
4. Members shall submit to the Secretariat their nominations who have been accepted to the training programmes for training sponsorship. Once approved by the Board, the Member would be advised that a "Bond" should be drawn up between the Member and the student requiring repayment of the value of the scholarship to PIDC should the officer leave the employment of the PIDC Member within a certain timeframe.
5. Sponsorship currently covers tuition for in-country online training only. In the event that the sponsorship requires additional support, this would need to be approved in advance by the Board and: (a) additional issues such as possible issues regarding insurance will need to be considered; and (b) the cost be reflected in the Bond arrangements.
6. Bond arrangements should reflect the cost of training and time period for training on a month to month basis.
7. Any funded officer will remain under the rules and regulations of the Member State but PIDC may remove funding for any character issues that may arise.
8. PIDC personnel including Directors involved with the selection of students must declare any conflict of Interest and such conflict must be recorded appropriately in Minutes.
9. PIDC retains the right to publicise successful students' performance to better showcase its work in the Immigration Community. (Liaise with member countries and with the permission of the students)

Board Chair

Date

Head of Secretariat

Date