

To: All staff

Hospital Authority Head Office
Human Resources Circular No. 05/2010
Revised Procedures for Processing Training Assistance

Purpose

This circular aims to inform concerned colleagues of the changes in the internal procedures of processing training assistance with effect from 1 February 2010.

Background

2. It is the objective of HA to provide training assistances (be they in the form of financial sponsorship and/or study leave) to staff members, where appropriate, for attending training and development activities that are in line with the training and development objectives. This is to ensure that there are continuous improvement to service quality and safety for the benefit of the community.
3. The prevailing policies on granting training assistance to staff are set out in the HRPM Chapter L1 and L2.

Revised Procedures

4. In order to clarify HA's stand that training assistances granted to employees for courses approved by HA (excluding those granted under self development programs) are HA's core business and strategic priorities, the workflow in relation to processing these training assistance and subsequent payment methods will be revised with effect from 1 February 2010.

A. Training Nomination Form

5. For HA sponsored training programs, supervisors and concerned employees should duly communicate with one another about the relevancy and appropriateness of the staff attending these courses and then nominate the appropriate staff to attend

by completing training nomination form. HRD will issue notification memo to the staff concerned afterward. The revised training workflow is at Appendix 1.

6. For self initiated development training programs of staff, the prevailing training application procedure can continue to be used (i.e. staff have to submit training application form to their supervisor for consideration / approval). If financial assistance is involved, the sponsored amount will be reported in the staff's tax returns.

B. Payment Method

7. All training expenses e.g. course fees, airfare / accommodation (for overseas training) etc granted under HA sponsored training programs will be paid as far as possible by HA direct to the supplier similar to other business related expenses. Reimbursement should be avoided unless direct payment is not feasible, e.g. supplier does not accept direct payment, overseas transportation fee, overseas meal expenses etc. Such reimbursement could be arranged with production of original receipt and certificate of completion of the training.

HRAM Amendments

8. HRAM Chapter L2 will be amended in due course.

HRPS

9. New taxable reimbursement code will be set up in HRPS to facilitate cluster input. Details of the new code will be promulgated separately in the HRPS Bulletin.

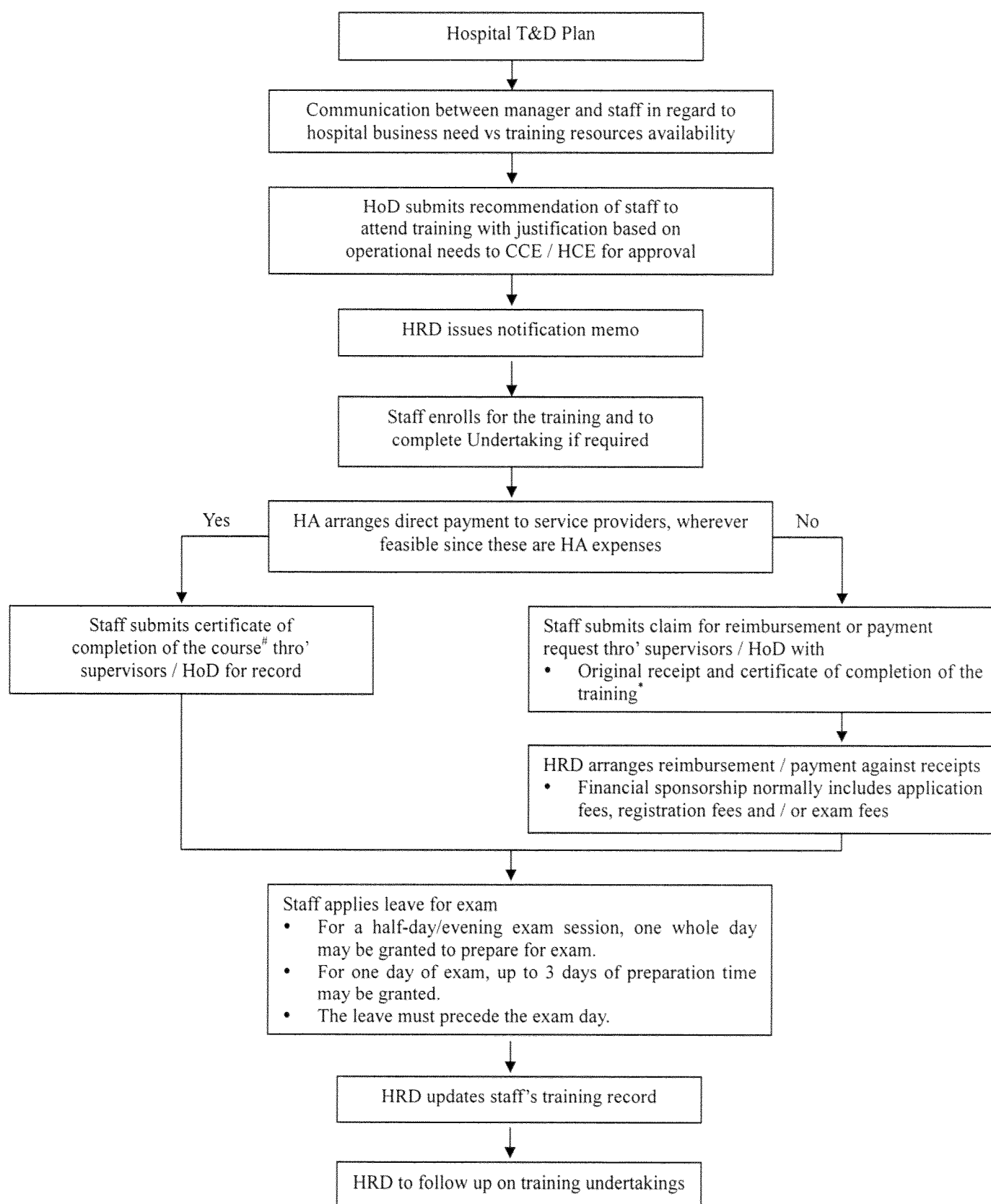
Enquiries

10. A set of FAQs are enclosed for reference. Enquiries to this circular should be addressed to the HRD of your hospital / cluster.



(David ROSSITER)
for Chief Executive
Hospital Authority

Procedural Guide on Local Training

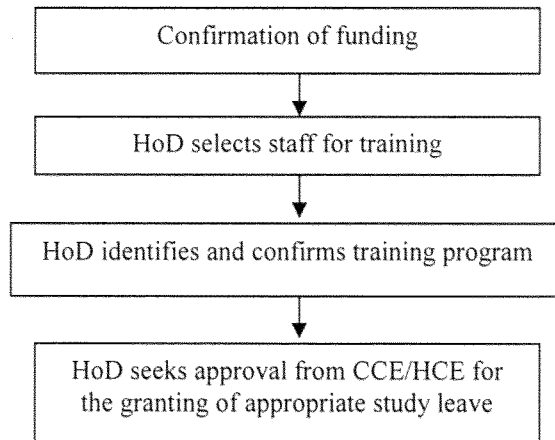


[#] If the staff fail to complete the training (including fail in the requisite exam (if any)), hospital has the right to reclaim the training expenses.

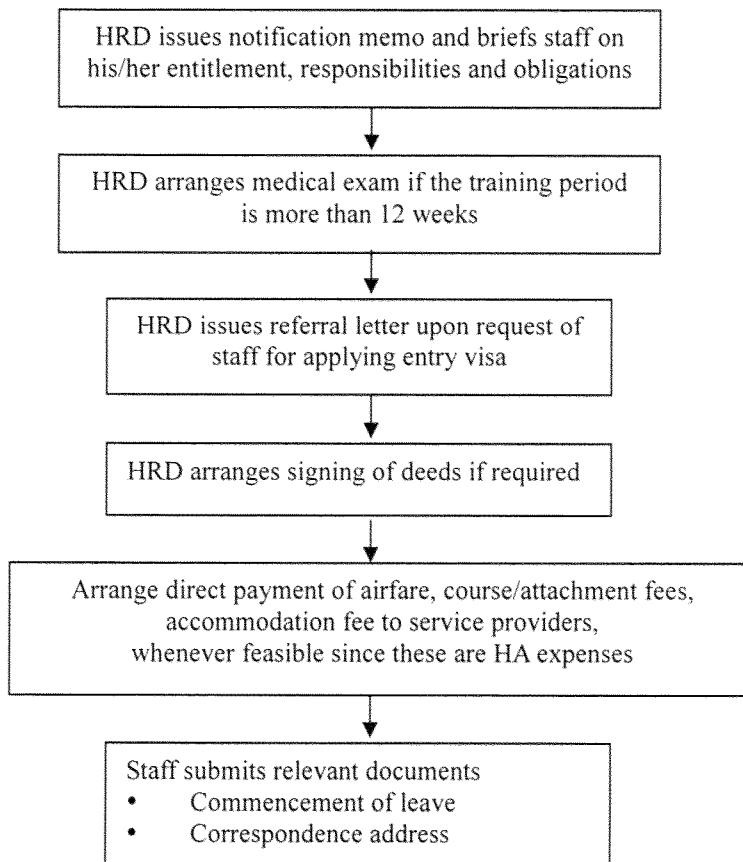
^{*} Explanatory statement (through supervisor) if supporting document is lost.

Procedural Guide on Overseas Training

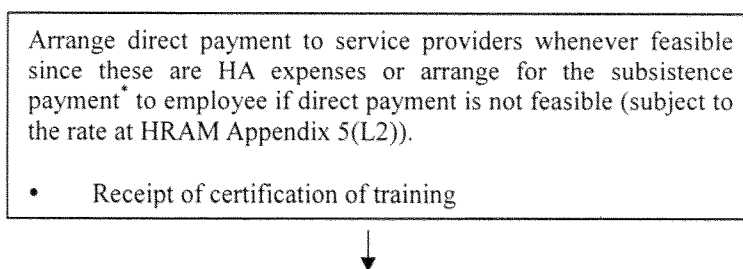
Arrangement before approval is given



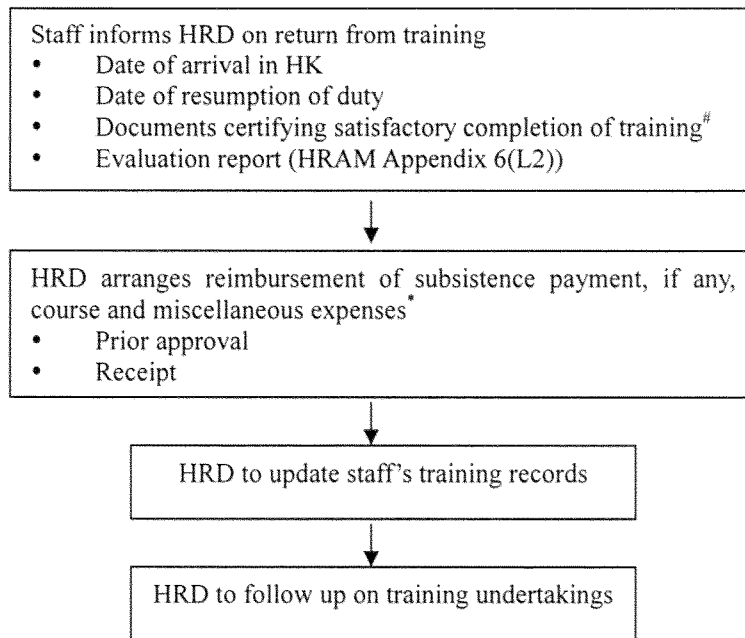
Arrangement before departure



Arrangement during training



Arrangement after training



[#] If the staff fail to complete the training (including fail in the requisite exam (if any), hospital has the right to reclaim the training expenses.

* All claims of expenses reimbursement (e.g. subsistence payment, course fee and miscellaneous expenses etc) should be supported by receipts.

Revised Procedures for Processing Training Assistance **Frequently Asked Questions**

Coverage

Q1 Why is there a need to change the existing workflow and payment logistics?

A1 The changes are required to clarify that training assistances granted to employees for courses approved by HA (excluding those granted under self development programs) are HA's core business and strategic priorities.

Q2 : What changes are involved in the revised workflow for training?

A2 : Nomination Form

- i. For HA sponsored training programs, supervisors and concerned employees should duly communicate with one another about the relevancy and appropriateness of the staff attending these courses and then nominate the appropriate staff to attend by completing training nomination form. HRD will issue notification memo to the staff concerned afterward.
- ii. For self-initiated development training programs of staff, the prevailing application procedure can continue to be used (i.e. staff have to submit training application form to their supervisor for consideration / approval). If financial assistance is involved, HA has to report it as income in the Employers Tax Return in accordance to Inland Revenue Ordinance and staff should also include the sponsored amount in their tax returns.

Direct Payment

- i. All training expenses e.g. course fee, airfare / accommodation (for overseas training) etc granted under HA sponsored training programs will be paid as far as possible by HA direct to the supplier similar to other business related expenses.
- ii. Reimbursement should be avoided unless direct payment is not feasible, e.g. supplier does not accept direct payment, overseas transportation fee, overseas meal expenses etc. Such reimbursement could be arranged with production of original receipt and certificate of completion of the training.

Q3 : When will this revised workflow be implemented?

A3 : 1 February 2010.

Nomination

Q4 : If a staff member finds a suitable professional training program for himself/ herself, should he/ she go through the training nomination or application procedure?

A4 : The staff member should communicate with his/ her supervisor to discuss whether his/ her participation in the course would help the service need of the unit. If the supervisor, having considered the criteria set out in HRPM Chapter L1.4.2, considers it appropriate to nominate the staff to attend the training, HoD/supervisor should complete the nomination form for HCE/CCE approval. The staff member then has to indicate whether he/ she accepts the nomination or not by returning the signed form to cluster / hospital HRD via their supervisor. HRD will issue notification memo to the staff concerned afterwards.

If the training is mainly for self-development purpose, the staff member should submit training application form to his/ her supervisor for consideration / approval.

Q5 : Can supervisor grant financial assistance on a lump sum basis without breakdown by items?

A5 : Since relevant parties have to rely on the approved financial assistance granted for each training items to arrange direct payment, clear breakdown is required. This could also help to avoid over spending of budget.

For the rates of subsistence payment, please refer to Appendix 1 & 2 (E3) of the HRAM.

Direct Payment

Q6 : What is the meaning of direct payment?

A6 : HA arranges payment to the service providers directly through HA's normal procurement procedure.

Q7 : What is the reason for changing reimbursement into direct payment?

A7 : Training assistances granted to our staff are business related expenses. As such, HA will apply the normal procurement procedures as it would do to business expenses, to training expenses.

Reimbursement which is not a normal business expenses workflow should be reduced as far as possible.

Q8 : What is the responsibility of user department / staff for arranging direct payment?

A8 : Each cluster has its own workflow. According to Procurement, normally user department will:

- Nominate suppliers
- Raise PR / PO to Procurement for quotation (No need to seek quotation for course fee since each training is unique. Please note that user and approving authority / budget holder should exercise control on this to ensure that no abuse of the use of "course fee" to by-pass or act ultra vires to the established PSCM policy.)
- Raise and confirm receipt of the PO with the appropriate payment terms once the service provider is selected
- Provide invoices or payment requests approved by the Budget Holder to FD for payment (If the invoice amount and other details match with the PO, Budget Holder's approval is not required.)
- Provide justification to Procurement if staff do not choose HA's vendors
- Follow up with FD on the payment status

User department can start creating the vendor code via Procurement once the service provider is confirmed in order to speed up the procurement procedure.

Q9 : Any exceptions to direct payment allowed?

A9 : For HA-sponsored training, exceptions may be allowed under the below situations for the time being:

- (i) The vendor only accepts credit card payment method
- (ii) The overseas vendor refused to accept HA direct payment method
- (iii) There are unavoidable circumstances encountered by HR/FD/Procurement logistics which are beyond the control of staff and which makes direct payment impossible
- (iv) Those training activities approved by HA and the related expenses have already been paid by the staff before 1 February 2010

Q10 : How can direct payment of air ticket and accommodation for overseas training be arranged?

A10 : Staff can book air ticket and accommodation through HA's nominated travel agents (currently they are Farrington American Express Travel

Services Limited and Lotus Tours Limited).

Their services include planning of itinerary (most direct and economical route to the destination), booking of air ticket, delivery of travel documents to place of work and booking of hotel in destination etc.

Besides the nominated travel agents, staff can also use the services from other travel agents provided that the fare quoted is lower than or equal to either one of the nominated travel agents. However, it may involve more time and effort for vendor creation if HA does not arrange payment to that travel agent before.

To comply with the Procurement and Materials Management Manual, travellers should obtain more than one quotation either from the nominated travel agents or obtain one from their selected travel agents for comparison. Enquiry can be made by telephone or e-mail to the nominated travel agents.

For details, please refer to HAHO General Administration Circular No.4/2000.

Q11: How to handle partial sponsorship?

A11: For partial sponsorship, there are two alternatives –
(a) either HA pays cheque (addressed to vendor) to staff to settle; OR
(b) staff pays HA and HA to settle with the vendor

Staff should mark clearly the responsible amount paid by HA and themselves on the invoice in order to avoid wrong payment.

Q12: User departments plan to use 2010/11 budget to sponsor a HA-sponsored training held in May 2010. However, they are unable to arrange direct payment of related training expenses (e.g. air-ticket and accommodation) now. What can they do?

A12: Users can get assistance from their respective cluster / HO FD for necessary arrangement.

Others

Q13: If a staff member is unable to complete the training for a reason beyond his/ her control (e.g. sick leave), can he/ she apply for exceptional approval so that the training assistance granted will not be reclaimed from him/ her?

A13 : HA has the right to reclaim the financial assistance granted if the staff member fails to complete the training (including failing in the requisite exam (if any)). Management should consider each case based on the respective merits and exercise discretion on whether exceptional waiver of such repayment is justified.

Updated as at 27 Jan 2010