

## Public Service Office



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Post Office Box 68  
Bairiki, Tarawa  
Republic of Kiribati  
Central Pacific

Telephone:  
PSO.....(+686) 22-790  
HRMC.....(+686) 21-128  
Website: [www.pso.gov.ki](http://www.pso.gov.ki)

## Study Assistance Scheme:

Formerly known as the reimbursement scheme.

### VISION:

*High Development and competent Public Service providing high quality public service to the public*

### MISSION:

*To provide and administer the Human Resource framework which promotes a high skilled workforce that enables Ministries and Agencies to deliver their quality service to the people*

### Principles:

- Is open to ALL employees, in the Public and Private Sectors.
- To enable employees to support their own study initiatives in Kiribati.
- To obtain a qualification.
- To upgrade their skills and/or knowledge.
- To obtain eligibility criteria for an In-Service Academic award or to improve their chances of receiving an In-Service Academic award.
- To reward employees for successful study (courses/programs).
  - Is limited to essential course fees.
  - Approval will be supported by a certified copy of the enrolment with the institution.
  - Original receipts from the institution will be required, along with certified copies of transcripts.
- Employees must have the written approval of the Secretary for PSO prior to commencing the course of study.
- Employees undertaking study are expected to do so in their own time and must maintain their attendance and performance at work.
- Any time off will be limited to time to attend examinations (during work time).
- All eligible applications will be approved, regardless of the priority of the course, ONLY if there is sufficient funding

### Eligibility:

- Must be a Kiribati citizen, in ongoing full-time employee.
- No age limits
- Must prove and maintain a high standard of work performance
  - Minimum total result of 50 points (Performance assessment)
- Program/course must consistent with a priority listed in National HRD Plan.
- Program/course of study must be post school, with a recognised institution and undertaken in Kiribati
  - KIT and USP
  - Should seek recognition of program/course and the institution from HRPC, through HRPC Secretariat, if wish to study through other institutions.
  - The seeking institution must be a tertiary body recognised by the relevant training authority, providing programs in English that relevant to Kiribati and its priorities.

### Selection Criteria:

- Compete on merit for the available funds.
- Merit will be assessed using the following selection criteria:
  - Highest standard of work performance (minimum score: 50/100)
  - Highest priority of program

### Application process:

- PSO will advertise this scheme early in each Semester (normally January and July).
- Approvals will be given on a semester by semester basis only. If the course is year long, approval may be given for that course.
- The date line for the reimbursement scheme is normally within one month of advertisement.
- Certified copies of relevant documents must be attached.
- The anticipated costs must be stated. These are limited to essential course fees.
- Courses must be related to programs listed in the National HRD Plan.
- Performance assessment must be attached to the application.
- Applications will be checked for eligibility by the Employer and then forwarded to PSO for assessment before the due date.
- False or misleading applications will be disqualified and the applicant may be subject to disciplinary/legal action.
- Late applications will not be accepted.
- HRMC PSO will confirm the assessment of eligibility and conduct merit assessment.
- HRMC PSO will compile a National Order of Merit list for potential funding.
- HRMC PSO will allocate the available funding in order of merit score to the eligible applicants.
- HRMC PSO will forward a list of applicants, in merit order, with recommendations regarding approval/non approval, to the Secretary, PSO.
- If there is insufficient funding to support all applicants, PSO may maintain a reserve list, for funding allocation should some candidates fail their programs or should further funding become available.
- The recommended list will be endorsed by Secretary, PSO.

### Assessment of Applications:

- Is to be done by the employer or delegate. If the employer delegates task, this must be done in writing and cannot be delegated to an officer at a level lower than the applicant.
- Employees who disagree with an ineligible assessment should in the first instance discuss the matter with their employer. If they remain unsatisfied they may refer the matter to HRMC PSO for a review of the decision.
- If the course is English (LL114 or EL001), it will be counted as Priority 1 because it relates to ALL programs.
- The approved applications will be completed within 2 weeks of the closing date (normally in Feb and Aug).
- The PSO HRMC will advise all applicants the outcome of their application (normally in Feb and Aug).

### Applications for Reimbursement:

- Reimbursement will ONLY be paid for courses passed IF the employee has maintained their performance at work.
- Performance Assessment dated within one month of the claim, the ORIGINAL of the receipts for fees paid, and a CERTIFIED COPY of the official results notification from the institution must be attached to the Reimbursement form.
- Reimbursement applications must be lodged with the Employer within 2 weeks of receipts of results from the institution.
- Reimbursement applications must be received in PSO no more than one month after the release of results from the institution.
- PSO will check all claims for reimbursement against the approved list.
- PSO will enter the updated Performance Score and the confirmed refund amount into the Reimbursement Order of Merit list.
- Any employee whose Performance Score has reduced from the application is not entitled to a refund. A 0.00 value will be entered in the actual refund column and the employee will be advised accordingly.
- Where the claim for reimbursement exceeds the anticipated amount of reimbursement, PSO will query the difference with the employee. The approved amount will normally be only the anticipated amount.
- Any claims not received in PSO by this time will not be processed. Employees who have not submitted claims by this time will be presumed to have failed their course and a 0.00 value will be entered in the refund column.
- PSO will update the actual budget drawdown column, with the amounts claimed, until the funds are exhausted.
- PSO will forward the final list of Claims for payment to NZAID for their reimbursement.

### Use of Unallocated Funds:

- NZAID allow the Government of Kiribati to use the funds for other In-Country programs if it is not required for reimbursements.
- HRPC will confirm the proportion of the available funds that are to be used for the reimbursement scheme, and the proportion that will be used for other In-Country activities.
- PSO will identify the amount of unallocated funds on conclusion of each semester's refund period.
- PSO will report to HRPC by the end of March each year, the anticipated amount of unexpected funds. PSO will prepare a proposal for HRPC endorsement to expend these funds, the proposal will come from the In-Country priority programs for funding for that year.