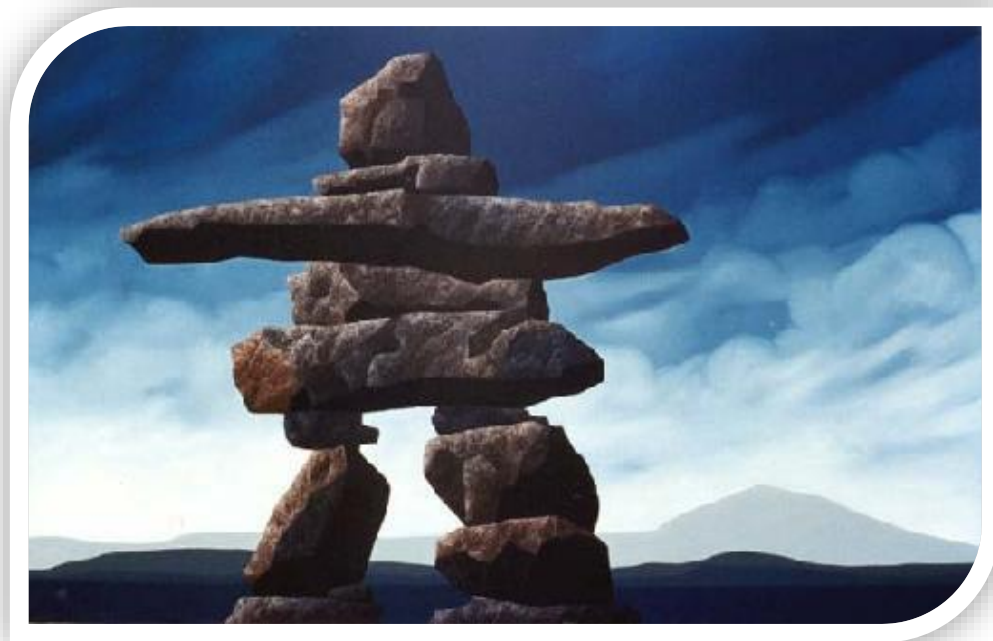# Continuous Learning Handbook

Centre for Learning & Development

cna

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

Employees will recognize their roles in self-improvement by:

a) Creating and maintaining a Continuous Learning Plan using the approved College template (latest version available on the College website).

b) Meeting annually with their immediate supervisor to review, discuss and consider learning goals making adjustments as necessary.

c) Demonstrating a commitment to continuous learning by participating in organizational learning activities.

d) Identifying learning opportunities that support their Continuous Learning Plan.

e) Completing a Learning Activity Evaluation Form (latest version available on the College website), with necessary supporting documentation, upon completion of training and submitting to their supervisor and the Centre for Learning and Development.

f) With reference to the Continuous Learning Plan, providing a demonstration of learning through:

    i. Application of new skills; and

    ii. Provision of a report; and/or

    iii. Delivery of presentation; and/or

    iv. Any other agreed upon return of service.

EMPLOYER RESPONSIBILITY

Through the immediate supervisor, Campus Administrator or Administrative Manager at the campus or Headquarters level and, where applicable, in consultation with the Dean of the School, the Centre for Learning and Development will:

a) Assist in the ongoing identification of organizational learning needs and priorities and encourage employees to participate in specific training and development activities.

b) Provide support to HL Staff in the development and maintenance of employee and functional unit Continuous Learning Plans.

c) Communicate the organizational continuous learning needs to the appropriate departmental directors and College Executive.

d) Incorporate in the annual budget a plan to address the campus/district needs.

e) Coach HL Staff to allow their direct reports to avail of appropriate training and education opportunities and approve/support requests consistent with the College needs and priorities.

f) Coordinate in-house training; e.g., summer institutes, etc., utilizing local college expertise to the greatest extent possible.

g) Evaluate the success of training and its impact on job requirements including, as appropriate, the request for an evaluation or other similar report from employees.

h) Ensure stakeholders are informed in a timely manner as to whether their continuous learning request is successful or unsuccessful, with rationale.

The Centre for Learning and Development, as directed by the Office of the President, and in consultation with the Department of Human Resources and other College departments and the campuses will:

a) Manage and co-ordinate continuous learning resources.

b) Research and report on effective practices in employee development.

c) Develop policies, protocols and guidelines to support continuous learning.

d) Provide advice concerning the relevance of the training to the strategic directions and plans at the Provincial, Departmental and Campus level.

e) Ensure that when financial support is approved these initiatives support the College's strategic directions and are based on clearly identified and measurable criteria.

f) Provide advice to ensure that reasonable and consistent decisions are made in the interpretation and application of the continuous learning policy.

g) Monitor and evaluate the application and administration of the continuous learning policy and procedures.

h) Encourage and promote the evaluation of employee-initiated training and development interventions on the basis of adherence to adult learning principles relevant to the workplace and other agreed upon criteria.

i) Maintain accurate electronic learning records and profiles for employees.

j) Maintain a database of all continuous learning activities supported by the College.

LEARNING CATEGORIES/FUNDING SUPPORT

3.1 Individual Learning

The College recognizes individual learning to be defined as employee embraced learning activities which enhances individual personal growth and provides benefit to individual professional and personal goals.

✓ Individual Learning requests require a completed Continuous Learning Plan to access funding; however, it is noted that some requests will not align directly to job and/or career related activities and may not be funded by the College.

✓ Individual Learning requests may involve activities within the College courses and programs or activities outside of the College.

✓ College courses deemed ineligible for funding under the Continuous Learning Policy may fall in the category of "general interest" in which case Policy FA-307, Section 3.3.3 may apply.

3.2   Professional Learning

The College recognizes professional learning to be defined as planned formal or informal activities that enhance short and/or long-term proficiency and professional excellence.

The activities that will support professional learning are normally associated with attending seminars, participation in post secondary, non-post secondary courses/programs, conferences, etc.

- ✓ All employees will develop a Continuous Learning Plan to guide their Professional Learning requests.

- ✓ Employees will ensure that the requested learning activity is job and/or career related by providing support in the form of a supervisor/manager endorsed Continuous Learning Plan.

- ✓ Employees are required to meet with their supervisor/manager to discuss their Continuous Learning Plan within two months of hire for new employees with a yearly review (prior to August of the current fiscal year) for every employee thereafter.

- ✓ The Continuous Learning Plan alone is not sufficient to approve learning requests; the employee must also discuss the request with their supervisor to determine job relevance and to ensure that, in the event participation is approved, work responsibilities are addressed.

- ✓ Employees will use the Continuous Learning Plan and Continuous Learning Request form to guide requests and ensure that all required documentation is included in their application.

- ✓ Should the request for professional learning be denied, the supervisor/manager will provide the employee with rationale using the Learning Request Feedback Form (latest version available on the College website).

3.3   Organizational Learning

The College recognizes organizational learning to be a strategic process of cross functional learning as required to invest in growth and excellence of both employees and the College. The following examples are some of the established precedents:

a)   Information Management and Technology Training:

Information technology training will focus on the development of the knowledge and skills to utilize and apply information technology in the completion of job related duties.

b)   Interpersonal Training:

Interpersonal training will focus on the large array of skills needed to get work done with, through, and for others. Interpersonal skills training involves interaction with others individually and in groups, therefore this training will focus not only on people-to-people skills, but often on attitudes, feelings and emotions. Examples of interpersonal training and education activities include task force building, front-line communications, etc.

c)   Occupational Health and Safety:

Learning activities will focus on the development of skills, knowledge, and attitudes to function in a work environment that advocates health and safety of employees and the general public, and adhere to related legislation and practices that govern health and safety in the workplace. This

category may include, but will not be limited to, the following: First Aid, Workplace Hazardous Material Information System, Transportation of Dangerous Goods, Health and Safety Committees.

Organizational learning activities which the College deems to be required for employees to effectively function in their current position will normally be initiated and funded by the College (an employee Continuous Learning Plan is not required in this case). In most cases participation in such activities will be deemed mandatory but there may be instances where participation is optional. The College will make all the arrangements (e.g. provision of physical space, guest speakers, and any meals provided during the event, etc.) for participation through the Centre for Learning and Development. Normally, the activity will be scheduled during the regular workday.

All employees who participate in and successfully complete any continuous learning activity initiated by or through the College will receive a Certificate of Participation.

COURSE CATEGORIES AND SELECTION CRITERIA

4.3 Course Categories

a) College of the North Atlantic (CNA) Courses (refer to Policy AC-101-PR for definitions):

Credit Courses

All eligible employees may enrol in a CNA credit course to be taken on the employee's own time, and may be reimbursed for course fees as stipulated in the College calendar.

Non-credit Courses (CT/CE)

CNA may reimburse eligible employees for the course tuition fee, to a maximum of two-hundred dollars per course, for any non-credit courses.

b) University Courses

To be eligible for reimbursement:

- ✓ The course/program must be taken at an accredited university, lead towards a certificate, diploma or degree, and align with the strategic direction of the Campus, School and/or College and in doing so, the employee's Continuous Learning Plan.

- ✓ The employee must demonstrate in their request that the institution of choice is a cost-effective option for the credential being sought, i.e. are there less costly options that provide a similar level of quality programming?

Note: Courses leading towards the Post-Secondary Instructor's Certificate are not eligible for financial support.

The selection criteria for university course tuition reimbursement shall be as follows:

- ✓ Requests for courses which lead to a university degree that is required for teaching in an approved CNA program will be given highest priority.

- ✓ CNA may identify objectives that are necessary in order to accomplish the College strategic directions and prioritize requests based on these objectives.

- ✓ Requests that support an employee's Continuous Learning Plan will be more favourably considered. A higher priority will be assigned to plans that address an identified current need for the credentials being sought or a possible need arising from future position vacancies that may require the credentials.

Stipulations:

- ✓ The maximum funding for any one university course will be an amount not exceeding $350.00 and the employee must successfully complete the course in order to receive reimbursement (refer to Section 7.4).

- ✓ If an employee is being funded for a graduate program, requests must be submitted on a course-by-course basis. Continuance fees, up to a maximum of two semesters, may be covered subject to evidence of program completion.

- ✓ Only courses that commenced after the issue of the Continuous Learning Policy and Procedure are eligible for consideration, i.e. they do not apply retroactively.

c) Other Courses

CNA will consider applications from employees whose development plans include courses that are dictated by industry standards and do not align with credit or non-credit definitions.

ELIGIBILITY AND EXPECTATIONS

Continuous learning activities allow for a variety of learning opportunities such as: seminars, courses, training and conferences.

4.1   Eligible Employees

College employees, excluding employees on development leave, with a full- or part-time position (minimum six months of continuous employment with the College) are eligible for continuous learning support. Temporary employees are eligible for internal (to CNA) continuous learning activities only. Exceptional circumstances (e.g. long-term project employees) may be considered and must be approved by the Executive Director of Human Resources.

4.2   Expectations

It is important that as many employees as possible have an opportunity to benefit from continuous learning support. While individuals must bear the primary responsibility for undertaking continuous professional progress, it is the policy of the College to provide individual and groups of employees with appropriate developmental opportunities and support. The college's mandate is to enter into a cost sharing relationship on continuous learning with their employees which will give the employee a greater degree of ownership in the programming and demonstrate their dedication to a positive continuous learning experience.

Requests for time off or other special leave must be approved by the employee's supervisor and must not impact on the support and services provided by the employee.

Courses (maximum of one per semester per employee unless employer-initiated) that are part of a certificate, diploma or degree program and courses, seminars, workshops and conferences intended to assist employees in maintaining and improving knowledge, skills and aptitudes relevant to their direct responsibilities or to their career development at the College, may be considered for financial and/or non-financial support. When a course is not available outside normal working hours, an employee may be permitted to register for or audit one course during working hours on approval of their supervisor provided that time is repaid or alternative mutually agreeable arrangements are made in accordance with the Collective Agreement. A Continuous Learning Plan is a requirement for all employee-initiated requests.

APPROVAL CRITERIA

Expense incurred to participate in approved employee initiated continuous learning activities may be negotiated between the employee and the supervising Campus Administrator and/or administrative manager. In making decisions and setting priorities for continuous learning support, the following statements are to be considered:

- ✓ All employees will identify their role in supporting continuous learning at the College through goals and objectives identified in their Continuous Learning Plan and alignment to the long term goals and objectives of College departments under the umbrella of "organizational learning" and their respective strategic plans.

- ✓ Requests are subject to financial and resource constraints.

- ✓ The College will attempt to identify and utilize learning resources with the broader College community to facilitate learning opportunities (e.g. Train-the-Trainer, Return of Service agreements, etc.).

- ✓ The College will, when possible, make seats available in its programs (classroom, DLS, CT/CE) for individual, professional and organizational learning, provided it does not take seats away from paying students.

- ✓ The Centre for Learning and Development will provide communication and support as it advances opportunities for learning, growth and development.

- ✓ A return of service agreement shall be required for training and this requirement will be discussed and agreed upon prior to the learning event.

- ✓ Employees shall complete an evaluation of the learning activity to be used for assessment of future requests.

- ✓ Special consideration shall be given to supporting those positions deemed "hard-to-fill".

- ✓ Relevance to the campus, school, department and/or College goals, the nature and requirements of the applicant's profession, the personal and professional growth requirements of the applicant and social justice principles that ensure fair treatment and equal opportunity for all employees shall be used when assessing requests.

- ✓ When assessing requests, there shall be consideration for equity in the distribution of resources.

The following will **not** be considered for financial support:

- ✓ Professional fees or dues unless identified under the terms of employment.

- ✓ Training to meet minimum job requirements in the employee's current job.

- ✓ Courses normally covered under a CNA tuition waiver.

- ✓ Textbooks (unless the activity is employer-initiated).

Requests will be reviewed on a weekly basis. In the interest of fairness and equitable distribution of resources, the amount of previous continuous learning support will be taken into consideration when reviewing all new requests. Priority will be placed on the following:

- ✓ Employees currently in, or planning to become employed in, hard-to-fill positions.

- ✓ Internal (to CNA) training, subject to availability.

- ✓ Requests that address current succession plan requirements.

Note: Procedures outlined in these guidelines respect all rights guaranteed under employees' collective agreements and Public Service Secretariat's Personnel Administrative Procedures unless approved by the Minister in accordance with the College Act.

MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

The oversight of continuous learning support and activities shall be the joint responsibility of the President's Office and the Department of Human Resources and will be managed by the Centre for Learning and Development. The College will work towards a comprehensive program of monitoring and assessing all continuous learning activities. This monitoring and assessment will include regular activities to review the success of the continuous learning program and to assist the identification and development of future programs. The processes of monitoring and evaluation will be designed to:

- ✓ Encourage all employees to reflect on their work for continual self-improvement

- ✓ Promote the informal sharing of ideas and best practices

Monitoring of activities will provide the information on which to base judgements on the efficiency and effectiveness (the evaluation) of the continuous learning program. Such monitoring will be provided through one or more of the following:

- ✓ Clear setting of targets, goals and objectives for the identified priorities (for each Department)

- ✓ Timeframe for achieving targets

- ✓ Consultation and involvement of employees in target setting

- ✓ Type/range of information collected in the monitoring process

- ✓ Procedures for consultation and involvement

- ✓ Barriers to implementation of the program

- ✓ Steps to be taken to overcome barriers

To evaluate the impact of the program, a further set of criteria may be applied, to include:

- ✓ The achievement/non-achievement of targets

- ✓ Factors hindering or helping achievement of targets

- ✓ Increases in the level of activities and support

- ✓ Establishment or improvement in communication links and reporting

- ✓ Sustained and significant achievements of previously identified needs

- ✓ Changes in teaching/managerial/administrative practices

- ✓ Impact on employee performance/achievement

- ✓ Variation in actual and unforeseen outcomes

- ✓ Benefits/difficulties generated by unforeseen outcomes

REPORTING

A quarterly expenditure report will be prepared by the Centre for Learning and Development for all departments. The report will include, but not be limited to, a summary of all continuous learning activities and expenditures (e.g. participant(s), departments, amount of requested and approved funding, closing budget balances, and summary of the continuous learning activities). The Centre will also prepare annual reports highlighting key continuous learning activities and their alignment to the college's Strategic Plan.