



Amaqtaarniq Education Program Guidelines

WHAT IS AMAAQTAARNIQ¹?

The aim of Amaqtaarniq is to remove barriers to post-secondary education for eligible Inuit employees and to help the Government of Nunavut to fill specialized positions with qualified Inuit employees.

Amaqtaarniq sponsors long-term post-secondary education leave for Government of Nunavut (GN) employees who are enrolled on NTI's *Inuit Enrolment List* [referred to as "Inuit" in the rest of the guidelines] and wish to qualify for a hard to fill job or profession in the GN that is not found in their home department.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

This program is based on the following Inuit societal values:

- **Inuuqatigiitsiarniq:** Respecting others, relationships and caring for people.
- **Tunnganarniq:** Fostering good spirits by being open, welcoming and inclusive.
- **Pijitsirniq:** Serving and providing for family and/or community.
- **Ajiiqatigiinni:** Decision making through discussion and consensus.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Overview

GN Departments and Public Bodies [collectively referred to as 'Department' in the rest of the guideline] identify positions or professions that are hard to fill and require post-secondary education and/or professional certification.

If an Inuk employee wishes to pursue one of those jobs or careers, and it is in another department, the employee can contact the Sivumuaqatigiit division or the Career Planning Specialist (CPS) to explore Amaqtaarniq as an option for achieving the post-secondary requirements.

Before submitting an application, they may participate in job shadowing of the position or career path in which they are interested, in order to learn more about it first. This can be noted as

¹ Amaqtaarniq: A bud spreading roots

additional information for the selection committee to consider.

The Amaaqtaarniq Education Program Committee reviews all applications and, using a set of criteria, decides which ones will be approved.

Financial provisions of the current Education Leave Policy apply: education costs are covered; and an allowance equivalent to base salary is provided. If the employee must relocate for their course of study, they will be reimbursed according to the Relocation Guidelines.

Successful applicants are assigned to a position number in Sivumuaqatigiit Division of Human Resources (HR) for the duration of their leave. HR will pay all eligible costs.

Employees must commit to work for the GN after they complete their education for a time that is at least equivalent to the length of time they were on Amaaqtaarniq leave.

The GN guarantees employment when the Amaaqtaarniq leave is completed.

Eligibility

1. Inuit employed in the GN on an indeterminate, term or casual basis may apply, and will be eligible for Amaaqtaarniq if she or he:
 - i. Has completed 3 years of continuous service with the GN;
 - ii. Has the necessary prerequisites to enter a post-secondary degree or accredited diploma program;
 - iii. Has positive performance evaluations or equivalents; and
 - iv. Wishes to pursue a degree or accredited diploma program which is
 - Not consistent with the employee's home Department's Inuit Employment Plan (IEP) or Workforce Strategy; and
 - Is in demand elsewhere in the GN.
2. Education programs must lead to a degree or post-secondary accreditation for a job, profession or trade required by the GN in order to be eligible, and can include:
 - online courses leading to college accreditation, undergraduate degrees and post-graduate degrees;
 - in-person attendance and distance learning; and
 - full-time and part-time study.

Amaqtaarniq supports long term education leave to study at educational institutions in Nunavut and elsewhere in Canada.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Sivumuaqatigiit Division, HR

Sivumuaqatigiit will:

- Provide career planning assistance to employees including a discussion of options, if needed;
- Explain how the program works, including financial implications and the requirement to

- return to work for the GN;
- Assist with arranging for a job shadowing opportunity with an appropriate department, and if required;
- Arrange for the appointment of the employee to a position number in Sivumuaqatigiit for the duration of the leave;
- Fund education costs and pay allowance in lieu of salary.

Sivumuaqatigiit will provide the following support to employees during their Amaaqtaarniq leave, as discussed with the CPS:

- Course selection
- Connection with the educational institution's Indigenous student support centre
- Learning and studying skills
- Coaching on living in a southern community
- Assistance finding appropriate work placement with a Target Department during summer sessions and on return to the GN

Coaching and other support may also be provided to the employee's family to ease the transition to life away from their home community.

Program Participants

Employees who participate in Amaaqtaarniq will:

- Work with the CPS to identify career goals, learning objectives, and learning styles, and complete or update the Career Achievement Record (CAR).
- Participate in job shadowing if required by participant
- Discuss with the CPS their level of interest in the job or career path and in pursuing related post-secondary education.
- Carry out all the requirements for applying to the program and to educational institutions.
- Stay connected with the CPS throughout the program. The method and frequency of communication will be agreed-upon when starting the program.
- Provide transcripts to the CPS within two weeks of receiving them from the educational institution.
- Provide travel information to the CPS in preparation for job placement.
- Update the CPS of any changes that may affect their leave as soon as possible.

Departments

All Departments will support the program by:

- Identifying specialized and hard to fill positions and communicating these to HR
- Conducting performance reviews and discussing career options with Inuit employees;
- Supporting and encouraging employees to meet with CPS to discussion options and eligibility.
- Whenever possible, agreeing to release the employee to participate in the program.

Target Department

A Target Department may foster a participant's development by:

- Facilitating job shadowing requested by an Inuit employee interested in exploring a specialized or hard to fill position.
- Providing employment during summer breaks, work terms, or to satisfy professional designation requirements.
- Offering a position in order that the employee has a home position in the target Department prior to graduation.

Amaqtaarniq Education Program Committee

The Deputy Head of HR will establish an Amaqtaarniq Education Program Committee that is responsible for reviewing all applications for Amaqtaarniq. The composition of the committee will be at the discretion of the Deputy Head of HR, and may include representatives from the Target Departments. The following should be considered when reviewing applications:

- GN Inuit Employment Plans and Business Plan objectives;
- Positions which have been identified as specialist or hard to fill;
- Relationship of proposed curriculum subjects to present or anticipated future duties;
- Length of service of applicant, length of time in their current position, and efforts they have made to develop their skills and knowledge;
- Employment status of applicant (priority will be given to eligible casual employees);
- Applicant's current knowledge, skills and abilities;
- Whether Applicant's training and development plan, annual performance appraisal and/or Career Achievement Record support attendance at an educational institution;
- Support of current department and target department; and
- Priority will be given to degree programs.

The Deputy Head of HR will endeavor to advise the employee in writing whether their application has been approved or denied within thirty (30) days after the application deadline.

HR will report annually to the Inuit Employment Steering Committee and Building Capacity Committee (BCC) about the program and its outcomes.

PROCESS

Stage One: Exploration

1. Inuit employees wishing to be considered for Amaqtaarniq should contact the CPS, Sivumuaqatigiit, HR and complete or update their Career Achievement Record. The employee and CPS review the employee's career goals, education, and experience;

discuss GN's hard to fill positions; and consider whether Amaaqtaarniq or other career development initiatives are suitable for them.

2. Inuit employees wishing to apply to Amaaqtaarniq must meet with their supervisor to discuss time frame, feasibility, and other considerations.
3. If an employee is eligible for the program, they may seek a job shadowing opportunity to observe the duties, responsibilities, and working conditions of the position or career path they are interested in.

The job shadowing assignment should be designed so that the employees can observe:

- The full range of job duties
- Responsibility and authority of the position
- Working conditions such as:
 - Independent or part of a team
 - Regular hours, shift work, or varying schedule
 - Inside an office, outdoors or various locations
 - With people or with machines, technology etc
- Degree of variation in duties from day to day

The Human Resources (HR) Coordinators in each Department will assist with obtaining approvals by the Deputy Heads of the Home and Target Departments for the job shadowing, which will last for a minimum of one week and a maximum of four weeks. HR will pay the salary of the employee's home position during the job shadowing.

4. After completing the job shadowing, the employee will discuss the experience with the CPS and a representative of the target department. The purpose is to ensure that the employee has a good understanding of the position, and to allow for further discussions between the employee and the target department regarding required qualifications.
5. The employee will then discuss the options for acquiring the needed post-secondary qualifications to the CPS. This will include the practical considerations involved in the process of making the decision (family situation, financial impacts, relocation) and completing the process of becoming enrolled in a college or university program.

Stage Two: Application and Decision

1. The employee complete the application form for Amaaqtaarniq, which must be signed by the Deputy Head of the employee's department. The CPS will submit the completed application to the Deputy Head of HR for review and for decision by the Amaaqtaarniq Education Program Committee. The application form is available in Appendix "A".
2. The mandate of the Amaaqtaarniq Education Program Committee is to review and make decisions about Amaaqtaarniq applications. The Deputy Head of HR will establish an Amaaqtaarniq Education Committee, which is responsible for reviewing all applications for Amaaqtaarniq requesting financial assistance. The Committee will normally consist of the following:

- Deputy Head of HR or designate (Committee Chairperson);
- Director, Sivumuaqatigiit;
- Deputy Head of Family Services (or other Department with labour market responsibilities or Article 23 responsibilities or Co-Chair of BCC)
- Designated Nunavut Employees Union staff member (or Excluded staff member in Departments of Finance, HR and Legislative Assembly)

At the discretion of the Committee Chairperson, additional departmental representatives may be assigned to the Amaqtaarniq Education Program Committee (i.e. finance/ corporate services, sector or professional specialist etc.)

3. Amaqtaarniq leave may be approved for one or more of the following reasons:
 - The GN, through BCC, has a forecasted need for a particular level of education or qualification related to hard to fill positions, and the individual has the interest and prerequisites to enter the required program;
 - A high potential Inuit employee's career could be enhanced by completing the education.
4. When reviewing applications for Amaqtaarniq, the Committee will take into account the considerations set out under Roles and Responsibilities on Page 4 of these Guidelines.
5. The Deputy Head of HR will endeavor to advise the applicant in writing whether the application has been approved or denied within thirty (30) days after the application deadline.

Stage Three: Beginning the Program

1. If the employee is approved for the Amaqtaarniq Education Program:
 - (i) Before starting their leave, they must show proof of acceptance by the educational institution.
 - (ii) They must sign an Amaqtaarniq Education Program Agreement which stipulates the terms and conditions of the Amaqtaarniq leave.
 - (iii) She or he will be placed into a position at HR for the duration of their time on leave.
2. Sivumuaqatigiit staff will support the employee through the relocation process if they move, and connect them to supports provided by the educational institution.
3. Target Departments are encouraged to provide employees in the program with relevant employment during summer placements.
4. The Target Department may choose to appoint the employee to a position in the Department at any time during the leave. HR will continue to pay the costs of the employee's participation in Amaqtaarniq.

Stage Four: During the Leave

1. The employee will remain in regular contact with the CPS throughout the leave. The frequency and method of contact will be agreed upon at the beginning of the program.
2. The employee will connect with the CPS if they encounter difficulties or challenges that may have an impact on their ability to succeed or complete their program. The CPS will make every effort to ensure the employee has the services and support they need to address the challenge.
3. The employee will forward their transcripts to the CPS within two weeks of receiving them from the educational institution.
4. The CPS can assist the employee to find appropriate work placement with a Target Department during summer sessions.

Stage Five: Return to GN Employment

1. Sivumuaqatigiit will support the returning employee to gain a position in the GN, at a minimum comparable to the one she or he held prior to participating in the Amaaqtaarniq.
2. The target Department where the acquired skills and knowledge are normally employed will have the option to appoint the employee into a position as an indeterminate employee at an appropriate level upon the employee demonstrating that the requirements of the degree have been fulfilled.
3. Should a casual employee return from Amaaqtaarniq leave without securing an indeterminate position, the Deputy Head of HR may agree to continue the individual's casual status for an additional six months to enable participation in job competitions.
4. The CPS will contact the returning employee to update the Career Achievement Record.

PROVISIONS

Level of Financial Assistance

HR will ensure that financial assistance for Amaaqtaarniq Education Program is granted consistently and fairly using the following guidelines:

Basic Assistance

Basic assistance is paid to all Inuit employees whose applications have been approved for Amaaqtaarniq leave that is directly related to present or future requirements of employment in the Public Service. Basic assistance will include, but is not limited to such costs as:

- tuition
- one-time return travel expenses from home community to location of educational institution
- removal of personal effects from home community to location of educational institution (and back to home community) as per GN Relocation In Weight Entitlements
- books and other required materials
- laboratory fees
- registration fees

Full Allowance In lieu of Salary

In addition to the basic assistance described above, the employee is entitled to receive an allowance equivalent to 100% of present Base Salary for nine and half (9.5) months per year for the duration of the Education Leave.

Benefits and Payments While On Amaqtaarniq Leave

Employees who are approved for Amaqtaarniq will be placed into a position at HR. For the purposes of leave and attendance administration, employees on Amaqtaarniq leave will apply for "leave without pay." Financial Assistance will be considered to be an allowance in lieu of present Base Salary, with the following provisions:

Employees on Amaqtaarniq leave will receive salary increases brought about by collective bargaining.

Leave greater than six (6) months postpones the employee's next pay increment until the employee returns to work and completes twelve (12) months of paid, full-time employment from the effective date of the employee's last increment. This includes all periods of employment before and after the absence(s) but since the last increment date.

Leave credits are not earned while on Amaqtaarniq leave.

Overtime provisions and duty travel allowances do not apply for employees on Amaqtaarniq leave.

Nunavut Northern Allowance will not be paid to employees attending an educational institution outside of Nunavut. If attending an educational institution in Nunavut, the employee will receive the Nunavut Northern Allowance for the community in which he/she is residing during the Amaqtaarniq leave period.

Allowances payable to employees due to the nature of the duties performed on-the-job will not be paid during the Amaqtaarniq leave period. These include bilingual bonus, trainer's allowance, responsibility and annual special allowances (nursing) and other allowances.

The employee must prepay regular premiums for medical insurance. This will ensure that normal coverage is maintained.

Superannuation, Supplementary Death Benefit and Disability Insurance contributions are normally recovered when the employee returns to full employment. Payments will be recovered over a period equal to that of the Amaqtaarniq leave.

Moving and Relocation

Costs for moving personal effects to the new residence and back to the place of employment after completing the leave will be paid for employees on Amaqtaarniq leave. These costs will be calculated as per GN Relocation In weight entitlements.

Return travel expenses from home community to the location of the educational institution will be paid for dependents of employees on Amaqtaarniq leave.

The employer is not responsible for duplicate household expenses, real estate costs and storage costs incurred by the employee while on Amaqtaarniq leave.

Employees residing in GN staff housing must advise Nunavut Housing Corporation that they are leaving to participate in the Amaqtaarniq Education Program and provide Nunavut Housing Corporation with sufficient notice of their return to Nunavut when their leave is completed.

Employment during Amaqtaarniq leave

Employees on Amaqtaarniq leave are eligible to work in GN casual positions during breaks in the Academic Year. Employees will be paid at either Step 1 of the casual position's pay band or the rate of pay equivalent to the allowance in lieu of salary being received while on Amaqtaarniq leave, whichever is greater. In the event that the employee returns to his/her former position or a position with the same duties and responsibilities, the employee will be paid the salary of the position occupied before taking the Amaqtaarniq leave.

Return airfare from the educational institution to the place of work may be paid for an employee (only) who is offered and accepts work placements with the GN during breaks in the Academic Year.

Return To GN Commitment

Employees who participate in Amaqtaarniq Education Program must return to employment with the Government for a period at least equal to the period of leave granted. GN employment during academic breaks is counted towards returned service.

If the employee on Amaqtaarniq leave

- (1) Fails to complete the approved program of studies without justifiable reasons;
- (2) Does not resume employment with the employer following completion of the program; or
- (3) Terminates employment (or is terminated) prior to completing the return of service period as described above;

The employee shall repay the employer all financial assistance paid to him/her during the Amaqtaarniq leave or a lesser sum on a pro-rated basis.

If the Employee fails to complete this agreement through unforeseen circumstances, the Employee may request a review of those circumstances by the Deputy Head of HR and the Department may release the Employee from further obligation.