

Professional Development Allowance Guidelines

1 Purpose

The purpose of these guidelines is to assist NTPS Agencies and employees who are subject to the Northern Territory Public Sector 2013 – 2017 Enterprise Agreement (the Agreement) in the application of the Professional Development Allowance (PDA) under clause 58.3 of the Agreement.

These guidelines must be read in conjunction with clause 58.3 of the Agreement. In the event of any inconsistency with the Agreement, the Agreement shall prevail.

2 Background

It is acknowledged that employees in the Professional stream are required to maintain the professional standards associated with their classification. This may be through registration with professional bodies, attendance at seminars or conferences, research or maintaining qualifications.

As professionals there is an expectation that employees will meet the costs associated with the maintenance of their professional status. PDA provides some financial assistance to enable the employees to keep abreast of the developments within their profession. The PDA is not intended to cover all professional development costs and is not paid as a substitute for agency developmental programs.

3 General conditions applying to PDA

PDA is a reimbursement of an expenditure or payment of financial assistance (*as in the case of advance payment*) to an employee who has been employed in the Professional stream for the specified qualifying period, to offset professional development costs. The following general conditions apply:

- (i) The annual PDA entitlement year is the period 1 January to 31 December.
- (ii) Continuous service in the NTPS Professional stream is determined as at 1 January of the year of the claim for PDA.
- (iii) An employee can only make one (1) claim per PDA entitlement year for professional development activity/activities undertaken in that entitlement year.
- (iv) An employee can claim his/her annual PDA when he/she has reached the maximum annual entitlement anytime during the PDA entitlement year.
- (v) An employee must provide sufficient evidence (eg. receipts) substantiating professional development costs and activity/activities incurred, or to be incurred, along with evidence that the employee attended the activity/activities.
- (vi) An employee will only be reimbursed, or receive an advance payment under clause 58.3(b)(viii) of the Agreement, up to the maximum annual PDA and any unused portion of the allowance will not roll over to the next qualifying period.
(Note: The maximum annual PDA from one entitlement year can be combined with another year's PDA only where prior approval has been given under clause 58.3(b)(ix) of the Agreement - see also Item 5B of these guidelines).

- (vii) A reimbursed amount will be paid in the form of a lump sum and does not count as salary for any purpose. Lump sum PDA payments will be processed as soon as practicable after lodgement of the claim.
- (viii) An advance payment of PDA will be paid as salary (*see Item 5A of these guidelines*).
- (ix) The PDA shall apply to part time employees on a pro rata basis in accordance with his/her contracted hours of employment.
- (x) Casual employees are not eligible for PDA.

4 PDA amount

The amount of the PDA is dependent upon the number of years of continuous service an employee has completed within the NTPS Professional stream, as at 1 January of the commencement of the PDA entitlement year. Under the Agreement the values of the PDA (applicable to the years 2013 and 2014) are as follows:

- 1 year up to 5 years continuous service in the Professional stream:
 - as at 1 January 2013 – up to \$537 per annum (GST inclusive);
 - as at 1 January 2014 – up to \$555 per annum (GST inclusive);or
- 5 years or more continuous service in the Professional stream:
 - as at 1 January 2013 – up to \$1181 per annum (GST inclusive);
 - as at 1 January 2014 – up to \$1221 per annum (GST inclusive).

The allowance amounts outlined above will be adjusted annually in accordance with the annual September to September Darwin Consumer Price Index, and issued via a Commissioner's Determination, with effect from 1 January each year.

5 Assistance meeting substantial PDA costs

A. Advance Payment – Refer clause 58.3(b)(viii) of the Agreement

- (i) On production of sufficient evidence an advance payment of the allowance may be approved in circumstances where the employee is under personal financial hardship and is required to meet substantial costs in advance for an approved professional development activity (e.g. an interstate conference).
- (ii) The amount of an advance payment is up to the maximum PDA amount applicable to the PDA entitlement year in which the claim is made.
- (iii) An advance payment will be paid through the payroll system (i.e. the payment will be subject to PAYG tax).
- (iv) An employee must subsequently provide sufficient evidence of payment (e.g. receipts) and completion of the activity (e.g. certification/declaration of attendance). Failure to do so will mean the advance payment is an overpayment and is recoverable.
- (v) If an employee resigns or is terminated prior to completing the proposed activity the payment is an overpayment and is recoverable.
- (vi) Advance payment is subject to Chief Executive Officer, or his/her delegate, approval.

B. Combining more than one year's PDA – Refer clause 58.3(b)(ix) of the Agreement

- (i) As part of the performance planning and review process, an employee and his/her manager may agree to forward plan a professional development activity that may incorporate more than one year's allowance (e.g. employee combines two years' worth of PDA when they have booked and paid for an event, such as an overseas conference, in the second year).

Example:

In August 2013 Jan, who has not claimed her PDA entitlement in 2013, is given approval to combine her PDA entitlement for the years 2013 and 2014. Jan will be attending an overseas conference in March 2014.

The value of the 2013 PDA is determined in accordance with the employee's continuous service in the Professional stream as at 1 January 2013. The value of the 2014 PDA is determined in accordance with the employee's continuous service in the Professional stream as at 1 January 2014.

- (ii) Where an employee has received approval to incorporate more than one year's allowance the employee must subsequently provide sufficient evidence of payment (e.g. receipts) and completion of the activity (e.g. certificate/declaration of attendance) substantiating that the professional development costs have been incurred and the activity completed before a reimbursement can be approved.
- (iii) Advanced payment of the combined allowance may be approved, in accordance with clause 58.3(b)(viii) of the Agreement and Item 5A of these guidelines, provided that the Commissioner for Public Employment has determined the PDA amounts for the applicable PDA entitlement years.
- (iv) Combining more than one year's PDA is subject to Chief Executive Officer, or his/her delegate, approval.

6 Eligible professional development activities

The allowance is payable for the following professional development activities:

- fees for professional courses, tuition, conferences or similar;
- fees for professional bodies where eligibility for membership is essential for professional registration and/or practice in the Public Sector;
- subscriptions to technical/business publications;
- the purchase of technical books; and
- air travel to conferences (up to 50% of the allowance).

7 Making a Claim

Reimbursement

To make a claim for reimbursement of professional development costs, eligible employees should:

- (i) Download and complete a Professional Development Allowance application form from the [Accounts Payable](#) section of the DCIS website:
(http://uluru.nt.gov.au/dbe/finance/forms_procedures.shtml#ap)
- (ii) Send the completed form and supporting evidence to DCIS Accounts Payable once approved by the CEO/Delegate.

Advance Payment

To make a claim for advance payment of professional development costs eligible employees should:

- (i) Discuss with their manager the circumstances surrounding the requirement for an advance payment.
- (ii) Download and complete a Professional Development Allowance application form from the [Accounts Payable](#) section of the DCIS website:
(http://uluru.nt.gov.au/dbe/finance/forms_procedures.shtml#ap)
- (iii) Send the completed form and supporting evidence to DCIS Payroll once approved by the CEO/Delegate.

8 Enquiries

Enquiries about the operation of the Professional Development Allowance should be directed to your Agency's Human Resource Services Section.