

Feedback: DSAC Departmental Bargaining Chamber meeting - 30 July 2024

Provisions of tools

The employer reported that 100 laptops have been procured to replace old ones that employees have been using. The connectivity issue at Film Archives will be permanently resolved once SITA and its service provider have been granted permission by Tshwane Metro and the landlord to excavate and lay cables. The employer further requested that employees should continue using available mobile network routers in the interim. The PSA noted the report and raised a concern that the employer was slow in the allocation of tools of trade to employees, which affected service delivery.

Organisational structure review

The employer reported that engagements with various stakeholders, which included labour, were ongoing regarding the draft organisational structure. It further stated that the draft document will be submitted to the DPSA for concurrence once the new executive authority has approved it. The PSA requested that the draft organisational structure and the staff establishment, which reflected filled posts and vacancies, must be shared before it is sent to the executive authority and the DPSA, so they could identify if their inputs were factored. The employer agreed to share the draft structure and staff establishment by 31 July 2024.

Lower-level posts

It was previously reported that a submission was routed to the Minister to approve the upgrading of all lower-level posts to commence at level 4. Furthermore, a letter was sent to the DPSA to guide the proposal. The employer will share the response from DPSA with labour in due course.

Language Practitioner occupational class

The employer reported that the DPSA will be leading in determining an occupational class for language practitioners as the Department cannot benchmark with provinces or other non-governmental entities such as PANSLAB. The new job evaluation online system, as per DPSA directive, will go live from 1 September 2024 and will assist in that regard. The PSA noted the report and will monitor developments.

Recruitment and selection/Filling of posts

The employer reported that there were no updated reports owing to continued cost-containment measures in place. It further reported that it received additional funding to advertise engineering posts. The PSA noted the report and will wait for updates in the next meeting.

PMDS

The employer reported that 425 employees had complied with the requirements of filling and submitting PMDS Performance Agreement documents before the end of May 2024 through the online system. It reflected that 89.66% of the entire workforce complied. The employer further reported that for the 2023/24 Performance Management cycle, a total of 538 Performance Assessments were received on time via the online PMDS system or manual. The employer is busy moderating the assessments and anticipates completing the process by the end of October 2024. The PSA noted the report and raised concern that owing to poor connectivity issues at some DSAC sites, some employees find it difficult to comply. It was agreed that the employees can submit manually.

Remunerative work outside public service (RWOP)

The employer reported that in the 2023/24-financial year, the number of RWOP applications submitted had improved significantly as employees were beginning to understand how to file these applications because of in-service training. The employer reported that 52 applications were approved to conduct RWOP. Labour welcomed the report and urged the employer to concentrate on educating employees as one income is not sustainable.

Bursary allocations

The employer reported that 114 bursary applications were received. The employer indicated that only 84 employees received the payments for the study fees and R2 309 121 was paid to various tertiary institutions. The PSA welcomed the report and requested that the employer follow up with employees who have not submitted their contracts. The PSA further requested that the Bursary Policy be reviewed to address the challenges experienced.

Workplace Skills Plan

The employer reported that it submitted three applications to the relevant PSETA in February 2024 for conditional grants to provide training interventions to identified employees through the Work Skills Plan. The employer further reported that out of the 500 employees, only 283 training interventions were received from employees. These were consolidated in the DSAC Work Skills Plan, which was approved by the acting DG and submitted to PSETA before 30 April 2024. The PSA noted the report and raised concern that employees have been submitting their identified training interventions for years, but no one has ever been trained and requested that the workplace skills plan be shared with labour. The employer noted the concerns and committed to addressing these.

Guidelines to manage service delivery during water interruptions

The PSA reported that there has been a trend of water interruptions at some, if not most, DSAC offices, regardless of geographical location, topography, or municipal jurisdiction. It was becoming a common threat to service delivery if no precautionary measures were in place. The PSA advised the employer to develop and approve guidelines that will be adhered to in case of water cuts as the employer is obliged by the *Constitution of the Republic of South Africa*, which encompasses the rights of all people and affirms the democratic values of human dignity, including the right to sufficient food and access to safe, sufficient, and affordable water (*Act 108 of 1996 - Chapter 2: Bill of Rights*). The employer agreed to consult its principals on the feasibility of developing such guidelines as presented by the PSA and will revert in the next Chamber meeting.

Flexible working conditions policy (Hybrid)

The employer previously tabled the draft flexible working conditions policy, which is aimed at enabling employees who have the necessary tools of trade to perform their duties from home. Members were requested to provide inputs and some of the inputs were included in the final draft document. The policy task team recommended that the policy be adopted.

Bereavement policy

The employer previously tabled the draft bereavement policy, which seeks to provide guidelines on what is expected of the employer and employees during the bereavement of fellow employees or family member passing away. Inputs by members were requested and incorporated into the final draft. The policy task team recommended that the policy be adopted.

Information Technology (ICT policy)

The employer reported that it is intending to amend the ICT policy to include the 5% charge for cell phones that are due for upgrade when employees are issued new ones. The PSA indicated that it objected to the proposal and advised the employer to table the draft policy properly at the DBC so that discussions could ensue.

Overtime policy

The PSA raised concern that the employer was no longer paying employees for overtime worked but decided to cap them at ten hours a week. The employer responded that its decision was based on the provisions of the *Basic Conditions of Employment Act*. It maintained that employees should not be allowed to work over and above ten hours a week of overtime. Parties agreed to review the departmental overtime policy to clarify the concerns raised by the PSA. The matter was deferred to the policy task team.

Members will be informed of developments.

Employees who want to join the PSA can visit the PSA's website (www.psa.co.za), send an email to ask@psa.co.za, or contact PSA Provincial Offices.

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