

What's happening at DTIC?

Fit for purpose organisational review and alternative utilisation of staff

The employer reported that it is busy appointing a service provider to conduct a skills assessment and develop a macro-structure. A report on the service-delivery model will be presented to labour in the next special DBC meeting in April 2024. The PSA remains of the firm view that the employer needs to clarify itself on all initiatives it is undertaking as the rationale remains unclear. The employer further reported its intention to conduct skills assessments and compile competency libraries. The PSA emphasised the need for consultation before the commencement of such assessments for parties to align on the purpose of the assessments and what the results will be used for. Skills assessments should primarily be used to identify areas for development and upskilling.

The employer further reported that employees who have been reassigned to alternative functions to assist the Department in achieving its Annual Performance Plan targets were issued with letters that indicate the period for the reassignment. This was after labour raised concerns in the previous meeting that the employer should not move employees verbally and letters issued to them should be specific and have a time frame.

Members should be aware of the following issues:

- The PSA has not agreed or disputed the issue of reassignments. However, it has emphasized that the process of moving employees from their functions to alternative functions should be done through a consultative process and informed by factual and rational reasons. The PSA demanded that the employer should follow the correct process whenever reassigning any employee.
- The above-stated right/discretion of the employer is not without limits. In a consultation process. The employee has the right to refuse to be assigned alternative functions if such employee has valid reasons for the refusal. When considering the reassignment, members must request the employer to provide them with reasons for its decision, clarity on performance targets and assessment, duration of reassignment, alternative options that may be considered, impact on the employee's current functions and reporting lines, impact on the employee's career and studies, required skills and competency for the new functions, steps to be taken should the employee not perform optimally, clarity on responsibilities and risk of disciplinary sanctions should the employee err and whatever question that the employee deems appropriate;

- The PSA raised a concern regarding the potential intimidation of employees during the consultation process. It was agreed that employees who are below senior management level will be consulted by the Chief Director of Human Resources and no longer the Deputy Director-General. Employees at senior management level will be consulted by the DDG. All employees, irrespective of their level, have the right to be represented by a PSA representative during the consultation process.
- The applicable terms to the reassignment should be clearly stated in writing, including its purpose and period.

Members are urged to report any form of intimidation or threats made by the employer during a consultation process. Members should not be forced to make rushed decisions on the matter but should request sufficient time (at least five working days) to apply their minds and decide. All members who have been reassigned functions of other vacant posts or made to perform functions of higher posts without a formal letter of appointment should bring this to the attention of the PSA.

Employees who want to join the PSA can visit the PSA website at www.psa.co.za, send an email to ask@psa.co.za or contact a PSA Provincial Office.

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