



**Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago  
Ministry of Public Administration**

**TITLE: POLICY ON EXTENSION OF THE DURATION OF SCHOLARSHIPS FOR  
RECIPIENTS OF GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIPS**

Contact	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Administration
Policy Summary	This document outlines the policy and administrative requirements associated with requests for extensions of the duration of scholarships for recipients of Government Scholarships
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## ***REVISED***

### **POLICY ON EXTENSION OF THE DURATION OF SCHOLARSHIPS FOR RECIPIENTS OF GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIPS**

#### **1.0 POLICY STATEMENT**

This policy governs all applications for an extension to the duration of the scholarships under the scholarship programmes offered by and through the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago (GoRTT) and administered by the Scholarships and Advanced Training Division (SATD). An **extension of a scholarship** is defined as an increase in the duration or time allotted to complete a specific programme of study as defined in the scholarship agreement. The grant of an extension will be guided by:

- (i) the country's need to harness areas of study which are considered to be a high priority for national development; and
- (ii) the Government's commitment to good governance through transparency, equity and accountability.

The (SATD) is therefore committed to the application of this policy in a fair, transparent and just manner. A definition of the terms used in this policy is provided at Section 10.0.

#### **2.0 POLICY OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the policy are:

- (i) To ensure that all extensions to the duration of programmes of study are in alignment with the approved policy;
- (ii) To minimize additional costs by keeping to a minimum the number of scholars requesting extensions; and
- (iii) To outline the standard procedure for managing requests for extensions.

#### **3.0 SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

The Policy for the Extension of the duration of a Scholarship applies to recipients of Government Scholarships who wish to extend or increase the duration of their Scholarship. This Policy does not apply to scholarship recipients who have not

commenced studies.

## **4.0 TARGET AUDIENCE**

Recipients of all scholarships offered by and through the GoRTT, Guarantors; Permanent Secretaries, Ministries and Departments, Statutory Bodies and State Enterprises.

## **5.0 POLICY REQUIREMENTS**

### **5.1 Grounds for an extension**

**For consideration to be given to extend the duration of a scholarship, at least one (1) of the following conditions must apply:-**

- (i) there is an official change in the course of study or course schedule by the academic institution and there is no remedy available for the enrolled scholarship recipient, except for an extension of the duration of the course of study;
- (ii) the occurrence of a natural disaster or civil unrest which affects the scheduled operations of the academic institution and/or the scholar and prevents the scholar from completing the course as scheduled; and
- (iii) where the scholar is required to continue his/her enrolment for a period not exceeding six (6) months, solely for the purpose of:
  - defending his/her thesis, where the defence of the thesis is not within the control of the scholar; or
  - writing certification examinations necessary for completion of studies which are not available during or by the end of the normal academic year. Such an extension shall not exceed TT\$50,000.00.

**A Scholar, whose request for an extension is declined, will be allowed to apply for a Deferral of Obligatory Service to complete his/her studies provided that he/she meets the conditions necessary for such consideration.**

### **5.2 Application for an Extension of the Duration of a Scholarship**

**5.2.1 The Required Documents to consider official changes in the course of study or course schedule by the academic institution and there is no**

alternative remedy available for the enrolled scholarship recipient, except for an extension of the duration of the course of study are as follows:

- (i) The completed application form for Extension of Duration of Scholarship;
- (ii) An official up-to-date Academic Transcript/Progress Report;
- (iii) An official letter of recommendation from the Head or official in charge of the academic institution and the course of study clearly outlining:-
  - a) The official changes in the course of study;
  - b) A recommendation for the extension, including the duration of the period of extension and the exact completion date;
  - c) The specific course/s to be pursued during the extension; and
  - d) The cost associated with the extension of the programme of study.
- (iv) Any other relevant documentation requested by the SATD for the purpose of clarifying or substantiating the request.
- (v) Where an academic institution has instituted a change which would require an extension, attempts should be made to pursue a waiver of fees.

5.2.2 The Required Documents to consider a request based on the occurrence of natural disaster or civil unrest which prevents the scholar from completing the course of study as scheduled, are as follows:

- (i) The completed application form for Extension of Duration of Scholarship;
- (ii) An official up-to-date Academic Transcript/Progress Report;
- (iii) An official letter of recommendation from the Head or official in charge of the academic institution and the course of study clearly outlining:
  - a) The effects of the natural disaster/civil unrest which resulted in the delay in the scheduled programme of study;

- b) A recommendation for the extension, including the duration of the extension and the exact completion date;
  - c) The specific course/s to be pursued during the extension; and
  - d) The cost associated with the extension of the programme of the study.
- (iv) Public official information on the nature of the disaster/civil unrest;
  - (v) Any other relevant documentation requested by the SATD for the purpose of clarifying or substantiating the request; and

**5.2.3 Extensions of the duration of scholarships based on the above-mentioned grounds (5.2.1 to 5.2.2) must be considered and approved by the Cabinet.**

**5.2.4 The Required Documents to consider a request where the scholar is required to continue his/her enrollment for a period not exceeding six (6) months, solely for the purposes of: defending his/her thesis where the defence of the thesis is not within the control of the scholar or writing certification examinations, necessary for completion of studies, which are not available during or by the end of the normal academic year;**

5.2.4.1 Extensions for this purpose will be considered by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry responsible for SATD.

5.2.4.2 In order for an application to be considered under this section of the policy, the cost associated with the extension must not exceed **fifty thousand dollars Trinidad and Tobago Dollars (TT\$50,000.00).**

5.2.4.3 An Extension for a period of six (6) months or less will be approved by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry responsible for SATD on the grounds that the scholar is required **to defend his/her thesis** and must continue to be enrolled as a postgraduate student. The scholar must be pursuing a research masters, MPhil or doctorate degree. If approved, the Ministry will meet the payment of Personal Maintenance Allowance or an Allowance equivalent to salary (Salary loan) for Public Officers. The following documents will be required:

- (i) The completed application form for Extension of Duration of Scholarship;
- (ii) An official up-to-date Academic Transcript/Progress Report;
- (iii) An official letter from the Head or official in charge of the academic institution and the programme of study clearly outlining the duration of the extension, including details on the circumstances which led to the need for the extension and supporting schedules; the exact date for defending the thesis and the exact completion date; and
- (iv) Any other relevant documentation requested by the SATD for the purpose of clarifying or substantiating the request.

5.2.4.4 An Extension for a period of six (6) months or less will be approved by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry responsible for SATD on the grounds that the scholar is required to **write certification examinations** which are necessary for completion of studies, but not available during or by the end of the normal academic year. If approved, the Ministry will meet the payment of Personal Maintenance Allowance or an Allowance equivalent to salary (Salary loan) for Public Officers. The following documents will be required:

- (i) The completed application form for Extension of Duration of Scholarship;
- (ii) An official up-to-date Academic Transcript/Progress Report;
- (iii) An official letter from the Head or official in charge of the academic institution and the course of study clearly outlining:-
  - a. The duration of the extension, including the exact completion date of the course of study;
  - b. The nature of the examination and the certification to be attained; and
  - c. The exact date for the examinations.
- (iv) Any other relevant documentation requested by the SATD for the purpose of clarifying or substantiating the request.

#### 5.2.5 Application Form

The application form for an Extension of Scholarship is available electronically on each Scholar's Profile on the Scholarships and Advanced Training Information System (SATIS), which can be accessed at

[www.scholarships.gov.tt](http://www.scholarships.gov.tt). Scholars must visit their electronic 'Scholar Profile' by logging into their 'SATIS' accounts regularly at [www.scholarships.gov.tt](http://www.scholarships.gov.tt).

### **5.2.6 Time Frame**

All applications along with the required documents must be submitted by the scholar at least three months prior to the applicant's desired date for commencing the extension.

## **6 ADMINISTRATION OF EXTENSIONS**

6.1 On acquisition of all the required documents, the SATD will assess the request and verify all the information. Requests that are in alignment with the priority development needs will be given favourable consideration. All applications for an extension, with the exception of those identified at 5.1 (iii), must be submitted to Cabinet for a decision. The scholar will be notified of Cabinet's decision as soon as this becomes available. Please note that the decision regarding extensions does not reside with the SATD. Scholars would be provided with regular updates on the status of their request via emails. All decisions regarding the request will be posted to the Scholar's Profile on SATIS.

### **6.2 General Conditions of an Extension**

6.2.1 Scholars who are granted approval to extend their Scholarships are required to sign "Letters of Exchange", which amends their existing scholarship agreement and details:

- (i) The duration of the extension;
- (ii) The date the scholars are expected to report in person upon completion of studies;
- (iii) The interest charged on the cost associated with the extension.

Scholars are also advised that all the other terms and conditions of the scholarship agreement remain in force.

6.2.2 The "Letters of Exchange" must be signed in the presence of an appropriate witness, that is, a Notary Public or an official of the Trinidad and Tobago Overseas Mission in the instance that the scholar is abroad. It must be received by the SATD within one (1) month of issue. The cost associated with completing and signing the Letter of Exchange must be borne by the scholar. In the event that the Letter of Exchange is not received by the Ministry within one (1) month, the Ministry will pursue breach of agreement action.



6.2.3 The scholar's period of obligatory service will be appropriately increased based on the expenditure associated with the extension. This cost will be added to the accumulated cost of the scholarship and obligatory service will be determined based on the total cost of the scholarship and will be in accordance with the terms approved by Government.

#### **6.2.4 Scholars who hold Temporary or Permanent Appointment in Public Sector Agencies**

6.2.4.1 Public Officers who have been awarded scholarships and require an extension of the duration of the scholarship period under the conditions identified above are required to submit an application to extend their period of No-pay Leave on grounds of public policy from the officer's substantive Ministry/Department/Agency. The scholar must also comply with the application process outlined in the preceding Sections. In the case of a public officer who is unable to complete the academic year or semester due to critical certifiable illness and tuition fees cannot be recovered, the scholarship will be suspended and the officer will be required to submit an application to their substantive Ministry/Department/Agency for sick leave or extended sick leave as the case may be. Public Officers must liaise with the SATD and their Human Resource Division for further guidance regarding Sick Leave and Extended Sick Leave in accordance with the Civil Service Regulations.

## **7.0 COMPLIANCE AND REVIEW OF POLICY**

7.1 Quarterly reports on all applications for extensions and their determination, with accompanying justifications, will be submitted to the Cabinet for noting.

7.2 This Policy will be periodically reviewed and revised where necessary in order to ensure adherence to the policy objectives, its requirements and its overall administration.

7.3 Scholars and other stakeholder are encouraged to provide feedback on this Policy by clicking [here](#). Such feedback will be considered in the Policy Review Process.

## **8.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

- (i) Scholarship Agreement.
- (ii) Other Policies pertaining to Scholarships offered by the Government of Republic of Trinidad and Tobago.

## **9.0 EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE POLICY**

This policy will come into effect on 06<sup>th</sup> February, 2014.

## 10.0 DEFINITIONS AND TERMS

An **extension of a scholarship** is defined as an increase in the duration or time allotted to complete a specific programme of study as defined in the scholarship agreement.

A **scholarship** is defined as an award administered by the government for the purpose of pursuing a stated course of study for a specified duration at an accredited academic institution locally or abroad.

A **scholar** is defined as a recipient of a scholarship offered by or through the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the primary party to the scholarship agreement who will perform the obligatory service in accordance with the service bond.

The **cost of a scholarship** is the total amount expended on a scholar for the purpose of pursuing a course of study and shall be calculated in total to determine the duration of a service bond.

A **Scholarship Agreement** is a legally binding agreement between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the recipient of a scholarship offered by and through the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

A **Letter of Exchange** is a legally binding document between the Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the recipient of a scholarship which records the amendments to the existing scholarship agreement to reflect the changes in the agreement,

**Obligatory service** is defined as obligation which requires a scholar to serve in the employ of the Government or any stated agency prescribed by Government in fulfilment of the service obligation under the scholarship agreement.

The **duration of the obligatory service** will be determined based on the cost of the scholarship.

A **donor country or organisation** is defined as the financial sponsor for a scholarship offered to citizens through the Government of Trinidad and Tobago.

The **Cabinet** is the executive branch of the Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago and is the ultimate decision making body for the country.

The **Permanent Secretary** is the official head of the Ministry of Public Administration with overall responsibility for all decisions and accounting matters.