

General Guidelines
PARTNER EDUCATION & EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
As at July 2010

GENERAL

1. The employment of ADF partners is often disrupted because of the necessarily mobile Defence lifestyle. Although this is a universal problem facing all mobile families, Defence has assessed this issue as having a significant impact on the lifestyle of its families and consequently on capability and retention. In response, Defence has introduced a number of programs and initiatives to assist ADF partners access the workforce and to smooth their transition towards employment. The program incorporating these initiatives is the Partner Education and Employment Program (PEEP).
2. This instruction is in six parts:
 - a. Part 1 – Definitions;
 - b. Part 2 – Principles, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs);
 - c. Part 3 – Eligibility;
 - d. Part 4 – Initiatives Available;
 - e. Part 5 – Eligibility Process; and
 - f. Part 6 – Administration.

AIM

3. The aim of this instruction is to detail the principles, eligibility considerations, types of initiatives available and the processes for accessing assistance under PEEP.

PART 1 – DEFINITIONS

4. The following definitions apply in regard to this instruction:

Member. A *member* is an officer or enlisted member of the Permanent Forces or a Reserve officer or enlisted member on Continuous Full Time Service.

Removal. *Removal* means a Defence approved removal on posting to a new locality and includes a removal on marriage or on recognition of an interdependent partner vide DI(G) PERS 53-1. It does not include a discharge removal.

Partner. A *partner* is a person who has been officially recognised by Defence as either the spouse or a Defence recognised interdependent partner vide DI(G) PERS 53-1.

New Posting Locality. New Posting locality means a new locality within Australia or overseas where the Service member or partner has undertaken a Defence approved removal. It does not include postings within the same geographic area where a removal has not been granted.

Child Care Provider. A *Child Care provider* is a person or organisation that is currently registered with a State or Territory Government to provide child care services, or has successfully received approval from their respective State or Territory authority to work with children. (For more information about how to become registered, or to see if a child

care provider is registered, contact the Department of Families, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA)).

Child. A *child* for the provision of child care under the instruction is defined as a recognised dependant of an ADF member between 0 and 12 years of age inclusive.

PART 2 – PRINCIPLES

5. PEEP provides an Education and Employment Allowance of \$12,000 for a ten year period, to assist recognized ADF partners to better position themselves for employment through a range of initiatives when posted with the ADF member. Funding will be capped at \$6,000 per posting and payment of each initiative will be deducted from the \$12,000 Allowance. Any expenditure above this amount will be self funded.
6. Assistance is provided both within Australia and overseas at Departmental expense. However, only Professional Re-registration Expense Payments (PREP) and distance learning through Open Universities Australia are available for overseas applicants. Defence cannot and does not guarantee employment or placement for partners in the new posting locality.
7. Assistance is based on the possible disadvantage experienced by the ADF member and their partner because of the disruption to the partner's employment and income as a result of a posting to a new locality. The availability of employment or employment assistance for partners is not a condition of Service.
8. Defence provides assistance to partners so that the member can better meet their work and family responsibilities therefore assisting capability and retention.
9. Defence support to a partner is not to duplicate the support for which families may be eligible through other Government organisations.
10. Initiatives under PEEP do not include subscription fees unless mandatory to the requirement, nor do they cover accommodation, meals, postage and travel to and from the venue conducting the employment assistance.

PART 2 - KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPIs)

11. PEEP aims to provide a valuable service to its clients. As part of managing PEEP the following processes and procedures are applied ensuring that the needs of ADF partners are met in an efficient and effective manner.
12. We endeavour to answer telephone queries in relation to PEEP within 24 hours; applications are to be processed within 24 – 48 hours of receipt of paperwork; and payments and reimbursements are processed on a weekly basis.

PART 3 – ELIGIBILITY

13. PEEP was introduced with effect 1 July 2010. To receive assistance under PEEP, the ADF partner must meet the following eligibility criteria:
 - a. The applicant must be recognised on PMKeys as a partner of a full time ADF member or Reservists on CFTS;

- b. The \$12,000 Allowance is a one off Allowance valid for ten years and is irrespective of whether the applicant has a recognized relationship with more than one member.
- c. Assistance under PEEP must be taken up within two years of moving to your posting locality.
- d. Should the member die during Service, the partner may access the Allowance for up to two years after the member's death.
- e. Defence must have relocated the partner to a new posting locality upon the posting of the ADF member, or on marriage or recognition of an interdependent relationship;
- f. Where the partner is also an ADF member or a Reservist on CFTS, no entitlement to PEEP exists.
- g. Assistance is not available to partners of ADF members who are relocating on discharge.

PART 4 – INITIATIVES AVAILABLE

- 14. **Superannuation Set Up.** Financial assistance will be provided for the costs associated with setting up a superannuation fund ie., financial planning advice, so as not to be disadvantaged by being unable to contribute towards long term superannuation.
- 15. **Professional Employment Services Assistance.** Funding is available for an applicant to choose a professional employment service provider to provide the following assistance:
 - a. Career transition assessment and advice;
 - b. Job search techniques and strategies;
 - c. Preparation and presentation for interview;
 - d. Application and selection criteria preparation;
 - e. Identifying training options;
 - f. Identifying job options.

Applicants should contact the service providers in their area to determine what suits their needs. (See DCO website www.defence.gov.au/dco for tips on selecting a Professional Employment/Resume provider).

- 16. **Education and Training.** Partners may undertake education (tertiary/vocational) or a training course in order to better position themselves for employment. There is no limitation on the length or duration of the course, but funding will be capped at \$6,000 per posting up to a maximum of \$12,000. Partners are encouraged to take up distance learning through Open Universities Australia as students can learn at their own pace and from wherever they are currently posted. Overseas applicants will only be funded for study through Open Universities Australia. Open Universities Australia offer the following benefits to Defence partners:
 - a. Access to an online enrolment facility and unique client code.
 - b. Access to a priority corporate support team through a dedicated email contact point. Within Australia there is also a dedicated 1300 number supported by a team to assist any member in making the right choice about higher education, and government loan options.

- c. A flexible and totally international higher education study offer for clients no matter where their location.
 - b. Financial support to each student who enrolls using the code for the purchase of text books for the first five units. That is \$60 per undergraduate unit and \$100 per postgraduate unit.
 - c. Extended on-line tutorial support.
17. **Personalised Resume Preparation.** Funding assistance is available for a personalised resume to be prepared by a professional service provider. The applicant can select a professional service provider who best meets their needs and arrange to have their resume prepared. (See DCO website www.defence.gov.au/dco for tips on selecting a Professional Employment/Resume provider).
18. **Professional Resume Builder.** Professional resume builders are available on the internet that can readily be accessed by those partners who prefer to prepare their own resumes. This is completely free and is not FBT reportable. Simply do a Google search www.google.com.au and insert the words resume builder and an extensive range of resume builders will appear for you to choose from. You will also find tips in addressing selection criteria from these sites.
19. **Professional Re-registration Expense Payments (PREP).** PREP is available to assist partners who relocate to a new locality on posting whether in Australia or overseas, and are required to re-register in the same profession;
20. **Child Care.** Reimbursement is available up to \$250 per child (GST inclusive) per posting through a registered child care provider, while pursuing job search activities such as travelling to appointments, participating in training, preparing job applications or attending interviews. Applicants are entitled to submit a number of receipts from a registered child care provider, for child care until they reach the \$250 limit per child. Childcare does not include preschool or kindergarten fees and the provision is not available for children already in full time or regular child care.

PART 5 – ELIGIBILITY PROCESS

21. The applicant completes the PEEP application form inclusive of their acknowledgement that they and the member are aware of the FBT implications and forwards it to DCOHQ for approval. Assistance under PEEP can only be approved upon receipt of the application form at DCOHQ.
22. Partners wishing to undertake longer term study ie courses longer than 12 months in duration such as university study will be required to complete Part 2 of the application form each semester or year for approval.
- Semester 1 closing date 28 Feb,
 - Semester 2 closing date 31 Jul.

Applications for long term study received after these dates will only be considered if the applicant can demonstrate the reason for the late application was because of an unforeseen requirement and beyond the applicant's reasonable control.

23. DCOHQ will check PMKeys to confirm whether the applicant is a recognised spouse/partner.

24. Once eligibility is confirmed a PEEP ID is allocated and this will be the reference to track the expenditure of the Allowance.
25. A letter will be forwarded to the applicant advising them that they are an approved applicant and now have an Education and Training Allowance of \$12,000 capped at \$6,000 per posting for a ten year period.
26. The approved applicant only then has to forward the invoice for payment of the agreed program initiatives or approved long term study plan. All invoices are to reference the PEEP ID and payment will not be made on initiatives commenced prior to the approval of the Education and Employment Allowance.
27. **Please note the allocation of funds is dependent upon the total budget and money is approved pending funds availability.**
28. Once eligible, Defence becomes liable for payment upon presentation of invoice. Defence pays for the service regardless of whether the initiative/s are commenced or completed and the amount will be deducted from the Allowance.
29. Prior to the payment of any invoice, Defence will confirm that the partner is still a recognised partner of an ADF member or Reservists on CFTS.
30. A summary letter will be sent in May to each PEEP applicant advising them of the initiatives that have been funded from their allowance and the remaining balance.

Payment or Reimbursement

31. There are two methods of payment available:
 - a. Arrange for your professional service provider to send a valid tax invoice directly to Defence, to pay the service provider by credit card or into their bank account already identified by the Defence accounting system; or
 - b. Submit your receipt and reimbursement will be deposited directly into your ADF partner's bank account as identified by the Defence accounting system.

PART 6 - ADMINISTRATION

Fringe Benefits Tax

32. Assistance provided under PEEP will attract FBT. Defence pays the FBT to the Australian Taxation Office. If the total cumulative value of all the ADF member's fringe benefits provided by Defence exceeds the \$2,000 threshold during the FBT year (1 April to 31 March) it will be reported on the ADF member's pay summary in the Reportable Fringe Benefits Amount (RFBA).
33. The RFBA amount is not used to calculate liability for income tax, however, the amount is used to calculate the ADF member's eligibility for benefits such as family payments and liabilities for HECS payments, Medicare levy and child support obligations.

Evaluation

34. DCO HQ will conduct regular assessments and evaluations of PEEP to assess the validity of the services provided and where necessary adjust the initiatives to improve the assistance to ensure that the needs of Australian Defence Force (ADF) partners are met.

Approving Authority

35. Director General DCO is the approving authority for PEEP. However, the day to day approval of applications has been delegated to Executive Officer Defence Community Support Programs. Defence Community Support managerial staff will assess applications and provide a response to each application where necessary.

Discretionary Provisions

36. DGDCO is the discretionary approving authority for PEEP. However, the approval of discretionary provisions has been delegated to Director Retention Programs and Manager Defence Community Support Programs. If a partner does not qualify for assistance under the provisions of this document because they do not meet one or more of the eligibility criteria, the approving authority may approve payment that is reasonable according to the prevailing circumstances providing they are satisfied that:
 - a. The applicant does not qualify because of circumstances beyond their reasonable control; and
 - b. Payment is consistent with the intent of this instruction and that it should be provided in the particular circumstance.

JobSearch

37. JobSearch is Australia's largest free online jobs website. It is funded and operated by the Australian Government as a free service to assist job seekers into employment and connect employers with quality staff. www.jobsearch.gov.au

38. Job Services Australia providers and public employers upload their job vacancies to JobSearch and search for potentially suitable staff. ADF partners are encouraged to use this service when seeking employment. It is free to register and take advantage of the complete range of services. Simply search for jobs via the map on the homepage by choosing their state, local area and occupation category.