



## ***COL's Policy on Professional Development and Training***

COL will contribute to professional development and training in open and distance learning (ODL) and technology-based approaches, knowledge and skills by providing individuals with experience outside their normal working environment — at COL, an attachment in another institution or through conference participation. COL may also support conference organisers if the conference objectives are consistent with COL's mandate and Strategic Plan.

### **This policy paper:**

- Defines the types of professional development and training COL will fund to develop, strengthen and improve human resource capabilities of institutions and organisations in the knowledge and skills required for the successful implementation, management and administration of well-functioning and sustainable ODL and technology-based approaches.
- Describes when and how COL will support individuals and/or groups with their professional development and/or training needs.
- Seeks to ensure minimal administrative processes with regard to application and compliance whilst satisfying the need for accountability in the disbursement of COL funds.
- Aims to allocate funds with due regard to gender equity and regional representation.

### **Guidelines and Provisions:**

1. Applicants must submit proposals within the context of COL's Strategic Plan "Learning for Sustainable Development".
  2. All applicants will submit a work plan with expected outputs and outcomes to be achieved within a specified time frame.
  3. All applications will be submitted for review at least three months prior to the date of the proposed activity.
  4. Successful applicants will be required to submit a report within four weeks after the conclusion of the activity. The nature of the report will be determined by mutual agreement.
  5. All applications will be submitted to the Vice President c/o the Programme Coordinator, at [lmeister@col.org](mailto:lmeister@col.org).
- **Executive Secondment Programme:** Offers secondment/sabbatical opportunities for senior officials/academics/civil society representatives in Commonwealth governments, institutions or organisations to stay in Vancouver, Canada, for up to one month and work on specific projects related to COL's mandate.

The work will include involvement in the planning and/or execution of projects related to learning for sustainable development and innovative and technology-based approaches. Activities could include research on policy issues, developing content, or delivery systems relevant to their own countries and local needs. Recipients are expected to give



at least two presentations to COL staff during their stay in Vancouver—one at the beginning and the other at the end of their secondment.

COL will provide a modest monthly subsistence allowance, the equivalent of a return economy airfare and accommodation. No additional expenses will be considered.

- **Attachments Programme:** Provides financial support for ODL professionals and COL partners who are at an early stage or mid-point in their careers and would benefit from a short-term attachment to another institution/organisation. Usually the attachment will be within the geographic region of the applicant unless the applicant can establish that the experience required can only be gained out of region. All attachments will be within Commonwealth Member States.

Applicants are responsible for making their own arrangements with institutions/organisations and for organising their own travel and professional development activities.

In some instances, COL may provide a partial grant to support an attachment. Applicants are encouraged to seek further support from other sources, such as their own institution and the receiving institution.

Applicants for funding must demonstrate how they and their institution will benefit from their attachment, and must be accompanied by a supporting letter from the head of their institution and a letter of invitation from the receiving institution. On completion of their attachment grant recipients must provide COL with a report on what they have achieved and how they intend to put into practice in their home institution what they have learned from their attachment.

- **Conference Organisation:** COL may support conference organisers within the Commonwealth where the aims and objectives of the conference are consonant with COL's mission and values and the objectives of its Strategic Plan. Usually this support will be requested at a minimum three months before the conference takes place and be in the form of a grant accounted for at the end of the conference. All financial support from COL must be recognised in the conference publicity materials, literature and publications.
- **Conference Attendance:** Provides resources to enable individuals to attend ODL conferences. This will usually include (but not necessarily always) conference registration, lowest-fare travel and/or accommodation. COL exercises the right to select attendees and conferences where we believe that it will benefit those partners with whom we are working on our Programme.
- **Visiting ODL professionals to COL headquarters:** Provides use of COL's Information Resource Centre and other resources for international and local ODL academics and professionals.

**GENERAL: Applicants who have benefited from any of the above opportunities will not normally be considered for a second opportunity.**

Applicants from developing Commonwealth countries, particularly women, are encouraged to apply.