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දිනය } 2024.07.17
திகதி }
Date }

Circular No.: 26/2024

All Provincial Secretaries of Education,

All Provincial Directors of Education,

All Zonal Directors of Education,

All members of the Staff of Provincial and Zonal Information Technology and Distance Learning Hubs,

Administration/Financial Management of Provincial and Zonal Information Technology and Distance Learning Hubs

This new amended Circular is issued with the objective of formalizing the administration and financial management of Provincial and Zonal Information Technology and Distance Learning Hubs (ITDLH) implemented island wide under the Distance Learning Promotion Branch of the Ministry of Education as regional centers in improving the distance learning opportunities in overcoming the present and future global challenges. Accordingly, the management of all Provincial/Zonal Information Technology and Distance Learning Hubs will be entrusted under the purview of a suitable instructor serving in the relevant Hub in terms of the decision of the Cabinet of Ministers by the Cabinet Paper No.24/0816/607/078 dated 28.05.2024 and, the authority is delegated for the revision of the fees charged for the courses on timely requirements to the Management Committees of Provincial/Zonal Information Technology and Distance Learning Hubs.

2.0 The matters relevant for School Information and Communication Technology Education Centers stated under No. 1 of the Circular 2005/29 dated 30.09.2005 issued by the Ministry of Education will be implemented in the same manner. Accordingly, the provisions stated under No.2 and No.3 will be abolished and the guidelines mentioned herewith will be effective hereafter.

3.0 Moreover, the management of the centers stated under No. 1 of the Circular 15/2014 dated 30.04.2014 will be amended as follows by this circular and, other provisions will be implemented in the same manner.

4.0 Provincial and Zonal Information Technology and Distance Learning Hubs

4.1 Objectives

4.1.1 Conducting relevant courses for the groups that intend to improve the Information Technology literacy and to follow vocational courses.

4.1.2 Assisting the management operations in maintaining computer hardware and software in provincial/zonal centers.

4.1.3 Providing online facilities requested by Public/Semi- Government/Private Institutions and assisting in conducting various programs.

- 4.1.4 Conducting Distance Learning Programs with Public/Semi- Government/Private Institutions.

4.2 Staff of the center

4.2.1 Academic Staff - Minimum 03

Center Manager	- 01
Instructor of Information Technology	- 02

4.2.2 Non-Academic Staff - Minimum 03

Management Services Officer or Development Officer	- 01
Sanitary laborer	- 01
Watchman (as required by the Centre)	- 01

4.3 Management Committee of the center

4.3.1 Composition of the Management Committee of Provincial Information Technology and Distance Learning Hubs

- 4.3.1.1 Provincial Director of Education - Chairman
- 4.3.1.2 Deputy/Assistant Director of Education (Provincial Education Department) – Distance Learning Promotion / Information and Communication Technology
- 4.3.1.3 Center Manager - Secretary
- 4.3.1.4 Accountant, Provincial Department of Education
- 4.3.1.5 Instructor of Information and Communication Technology of the center -Treasurer of the Centre

4.3.2 Composition of the Management Committee of Zonal Information Technology and Distance Learning Hubs

- 4.3.2.1 Zonal Director of Education - Chairman
- 4.3.2.2 Deputy/Assistant Director of Education (Zonal Education Office) - Distance Learning Promotion / Information and Communication Technology
- 4.3.2.3 Principal / Head of Institute of the premises
- 4.3.2.4 Center Manager – Secretary
- 4.3.2.5 Accountant (Zonal Education Office)
- 4.3.2.6 Two instructors of Information and Communication Technology of the center (one should be appointed as Treasurer)

4.4 Role of the Zonal Information Technology and Distance Learning Hubs

- 4.4.1 Conducting Information Technology and Distance Education Courses for Students who sat for G.C.E. (O/L) and G.C.E. (A/L) Examinations and for School Leavers.
- 4.4.2 Provision of necessary services and facilities including producing e- learning content according to the need of the education zone for distance education promotion programs related to general education .
- 4.4.3 Providing necessary services and facilities for various programs requested by government/Semi-government/ private institutions.
- 4.4.4 To provide relevant services and facilities to school and private candidates seeking for the service in online application process of university admission.

- 4.4.5 Conducting distance education courses with local/foreign universities which are properly registered.
- 4.4.6 Conducting courses related to legitimate online jobs.
- 4.4.7 Upgrading Information and Technology skills of teachers in the education zone that required in the teaching-learning process.
- 4.4.8 Providing ICT literacy to suit the needs of the general community.

4.5 Role of Provincial Information Technology and Distance Learning Hubs

Providing necessary services and facilities for teacher training and other programs recommended by the Ministry of Education/ National Institute of Education/ Provincial Ministry of Education/ Provincial Department of Education/ Zonal Education Office/ Divisional Education Office.

NB:- These centers must give priority to the above functions and in addition the duties done by zonal Information Technology and Distance Learning Hubs should also be done.

4.6 Appointing of the staff

- 4.6.1 Appointing the manager to a center should be done by an appropriate committee which is chaired by the provincial/zonal director of education and with the membership of provincial/ zonal deputy/assistant Director of Education - (Information and communication technology / distance learning promotion). Among the instructors working in that center, a suitable instructor should be selected after considering the period of time he/she has worked in the center, educational and professional qualifications .
- 4.6.2 In appointing other academic staff to a center , it should be done by a suitable committee chaired by the provincial/zonal director of education and with the membership of the provincial/ zonal deputy /assistant director of education - (Information and communication technology / distance learning promotion) and the center manager after calling applications from the teachers of the province/zone and conducting an interview.
- 4.6.3 In appointing the non academic staff, it should be done as per the approval of the provincial/zonal management committee considering the needs of the staff of the center.
- 4.6.4 At least the staff composition given in 4.2.1 and 4.2.2 shall be maintained in a center. The necessary staff to be employed by the provincial/zonal management committee according to the number of students/number of computers/number of courses conducted in the center.
- 4.6.5 The academic and non- academic staff of these centers include the permanent approved cadre of the province.
- 4.6.6 In case the center is located in a national school premises, or if the school has excess non-academic staff, with the approval of the Ministry of Education, the provincial/zonal director of education can make actions to assign non-academic staff to the center.

4.7 The Role of the Management Committees of the Provincial and Zonal Information Technology and Distance Learning Hubs

- 4.7.1 Recommending the teachers who are suitable to be appointed to the academic staff of the center- The provincial/zonal Management Committees shall act to fill up the vacancies in the centers and shall inform the Secretary of Education about such changes.

- 4.7.2 Recommending the appointments, transfers and removal of academic/non-academic staff to the provincial/zonal director of education.
- 4.7.3 Identifying, planning and providing relevant recommendations to the line ministry about human resource development of staff at the center.
- 4.7.4 Approval of annual plans of the centers.
- 4.7.5 Granting approval for commencement of new courses.
- 4.7.6 Determining the maximum number of candidates who can participate in the courses/programmes of the center.
- 4.7.7 Taking necessary measures to aware students of schools and the community about the courses conducted in the centers.
- 4.7.8 Determining the fees for the courses and services provided by the Center subject to a minimum charge of Rs.60.00 per hour for a course from one person and revising it based on the timely needs.
- 4.7.9 Giving approval for all necessary financial activities including purchasing goods and services , maintenance and repairs of the centers.
- 4.7.10 Granting necessary approvals for the use of information technology for education and for the implementation plans submitted by the center on the requirement of the community.
- 4.7.11 Coordinating and working with government/non-government institutions to promote and expand the use of information technology.
- 4.7.12 Supervising the center and maintaining the documents related to all functions under the scope of the management committees in an orderly manner.
- 4.7.13 The provincial/zonal management committee should assess the cost of electricity, water and internet consumption of the center and the provincial/zonal management committee should make necessary actions to recover the relevant recurring costs every time the center is used. (Management committee should act to recover recurring expenses even for a service obtained by any government institute using the center(
- 4.7.14 The provincial/zonal management committee should summon meetings at least twice a year and as other requirements arise and a copy of the meeting minutes should be given to the Secretary of Education.

4.8 Performance appraisals, increments and leave

- 4.8.1 All administration and management of the center should be conducted under the supervision of the deputy/assistant director of education (ICT/distance learning promotion) of the province/zone as authorized by the provincial/zonal director of education.
- 4.8.2 The performance appraisals and increments of all academic and non-academic staff of the center should be recommended by the provincial/zonal deputy/assistant director of education (Information and communication technology/distance learning promotion) and be approved by the provincial/zonal director of education.
- 4.8.3 The leave of the center manager should be approved by the deputy/assistant director of education (Information and communication technology/distance learning promotion) of the province/zone.
- 4.8.4 Leave of other instructors of the academic staff should be recommended by the center manager and be approved by the deputy/assistant director of education (ICT/distance learning promotion) of the province/ zone.

4.8.5 Leave of all non- academic staff of the center should be approved by the center manager.

5.0 Financial management

5.1 Collection and accounting of revenue

- 5.1.1 Under the objectives of 4.1 above and under the role of 4.4 and 4.5 , measures should be taken as much as possible to collect income by conducting courses that can generate income and by providing services using the human and physical resources of the center .
- 5.1.2 All revenue should be credited to a current account which is being maintained in the name of the provincial/zonal information technology and distance learning hub in a state bank and only that account should be maintained for the financial needs of the center.
- 5.1.3 Cheques which are printed with "Not Negotiable" should be obtained.
- 5.1.4 An annual of income-cost plan for the center should be prepared and be approved by the provincial/zonal management committee.
- 5.1.5 All recurring expenses should be incurred from the account of the center as per the requirement and approved annual revenue expenditure estimate and a monthly cash book should be maintained. In addition, an income expenditure account and a balance sheet should be prepared at the end of the year. If there is a surplus in the year according to the income expenditure account, all the information should be mentioned in the balance sheet. All such transactions should be recorded in accordance with accepted accounting standards and concepts and accounts should be prepared accordingly.
- 5.1.6 A fixed deposit may be opened in a state bank in the name of the center with special prior approval of the provincial/zonal management committee. Also, prior approval of the provincial/zonal management committee should be obtained in the case of withdrawal of money from a fixed deposit with a formal arrangement .
- 5.1.7 For minor procurement activities of the center a sub-procurement committee consisting of three members chaired by the center manager should be appointed with the approval of the provincial/zonal director of education and in case of insufficient number of officials the necessary actions can be taken with the agreement of the deputy/assistant director of education) information and communication technology/distance learning promotion) of the province/zone and the center manager. The maximum of minor procurement limit that can be done accordingly is Rs. 25,000.00.

5.2 Spending by petty cash

- 5.2.1 An amount of Rs.5000.00 may be retained by the Center Manager for essential and minor expenses. This money can be spent not exceeding Rs.2500.00 per day subjected to a maximum of Rs.15000.00 per month without calling quotations under the approval of the provincial/zonal director of education as the chairman of the provincial/zonal management committee.
- 5.2.2 A petty cash advance should be maintained for these activities and a petty cash book should be maintained .
- 5.2.3 The information about the items and services purchased with petty cash for the daily needs of the center should be included in this.
- 5.2.4 The expenditure can be reimbursed by providing Bills/receipts through a common 35 voucher to prove the expenditure under petty cash. At the end of the year , the petty cash advance should be settled .

5.3 Expenditure limits on supplies and services (non-petty cash)

- 5.3.1 To obtain goods and services above Rs.2500.00 and to Rs.25000.00 selection of a suitable supplier must be done with the approval of the provincial/zonal management committee, following the instructions of Procurement Guidelines.
- 5.3.2 For the supplies and services above Rs.25000.00, the approval of the provincial/zonal procurement committee should be obtained according to the procedure of the provincial/zonal procurement process.
- 5.3.3 All expenditure shall be in accordance with the government financial regulations and procurement guidelines.

5.4 The following procedure should be followed on receipts/payments

- 5.4.1 An Education C100 receipt should be issued for all receipts.
- 5.4.2 All receipts received (Excluding petty cash) should be deposited in the bank within 3 days.
- 5.4.3 A two-column cash book should be maintained which is balanced monthly and the treasurer of the provincial/zonal management committee should balance the bank accounts before the 15th of every month.
- 5.4.4 All payments must be made by Public 35 vouchers or other vouchers approved by provincial councils for equivalent financial functions. The treasurer of the committee should certify that all bills of expenditure are true and every payment should be recommended by the center manager and be approved by the chairman of the provincial/zonal management committee .
- 5.4.5 The cheques should be signed by the chairman and the treasurer of the provincial/zonal management committee.
- 5.4.6 All payments should be recorded in an expense ledger.
- 5.4.7 At the end of the year, final accounts of receipts and payments should be prepared and the copies approved by the Committee should be submitted to the provincial audit division.
- 5.4.8 The income and expenditure reports should be presented at committee meetings.
- 5.4.9 The internet, telephone, electricity and water bills of the center must be paid from the center fund.
- 5.4.10 The purchasing/maintaining/updating of computer hardware/software of the center and maintenance of the center can be done from the center fund.

5.5 Payments for lectures and services

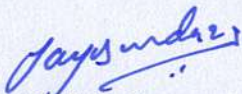
- 5.5.1 The staff of the center can be paid for the services given for three hours per weekday after school hours and four hours per day during weekends/public holidays/during school term holidays, which are approved by the Management Committee as per existing government monetary regulations and circulars.
- 5.5.2 However, the total amount of lecture fees for a particular course should not exceed 40 % of the income of that course.
- 5.5.3 An arrival/departure signature register should be maintained in the center to record the arrival and departure of the lecturers.
- 5.5.4 The provisions mentioned in this circular are directly applicable in the financial transactions with government/government affiliated/semi-government institutions and in cases not covered directly, the relevant rules and regulations imposed by the government from time to time should be followed.
- 5.5.5 Dealing with private institutions requires prior approval of the provincial/zonal management committee. In such cases, the chairman of the provincial/zonal management committee shall

enter into the agreement and the secretary shall appear as witness. The income received from the programs/projects/courses related to those institutions should be used for the development of provincial/zonal information technology and distance learning hubs.

6.0 General Facts

6.1 Staff of the centers should follow the following points.

- 6.1.1 All the academic staff of the center should give priority to the teaching learning process of the center.
 - 6.1.2 All documents of the Center shall be kept safe in such a manner that they can be produced for audit queries.
 - 6.1.3 All receipts of capital goods received by the center should be duly invoiced and should be recorded in the stock verification book and depreciable items should be entered in a separate register.
 - 6.1.4 At the end of each year, the stock verification should be done under the provincial/zonal education office and all the officers of the center are jointly responsible for all the assets of the center.
 - 6.1.5 After preparing the plan for the annual activities of the center and obtaining the approval of the management committee, a copy must be submitted to the Secretary of Education.
 - 6.1.6 Before starting a new course an estimate should be prepared including all details (course hours, practical hours, names of lecturers, names of assistant lecturers, the cost for the course, number of lecture hours, lecture fees etc.) It should be recommended by the provincial/zonal management committee and be approved by the provincial/zonal director of education.
 - 6.1.7 A log book as well as a separate signature book for staff and lecturers to record arrival and departure must be maintained in the centre.
 - 6.1.8 The duty hours of the academic staff in all centers is the normal school hours and the duty hours of the non-academic staff is the normal duty hours of the service to which they are included.
 - 6.1.9 The center manager must use an official stamp bearing the name and designation.
- 6.2** Here Center means Provincial/Regional Information Technology and Distance Learning Hubs.
- 6.3** Here the Committee means the Management Committees of the Provincial/Zonal Information Technology and Distance Learning Hubs.
- 6.4** It is emphasized to follow the instructions of this circular by the provincial/zonal IT and distance learning hubs hereafter.
- 6.5** If there is any inconsistency prevailing among the languages of translations of this circular, the Sinhala language text shall be prevailed.
- 6.6** On any issue arising out of the provisions of this circular, the final and conclusive decision will be taken by the Secretary to the Ministry of Education.



J.M. Thilaka Jayasundara
Secretary
Ministry of Education

Copies:

1. Auditor General
2. Director General, Department of Public Finance, Ministry of Finance
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9. Chief Financial Officer, Ministry of Education
10. Chief Accountant, Ministry of Education
11. Director, Department of Management Services
12. All Provincial Chief Secretaries
13. Accountant, Internal Audit Unit, Ministry of Education
14. All Provincial/ Zonal Chief Accountants
15. All Provincial Audit Departments, Accountants
16. All Provincial Information Technology and Distance Learning Promotion Coordinating Officers
17. All Zonal Information Technology and Distance Learning Promotion Coordinating Officers