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Ghana Education Decentralization Project (GEDP)

General Administrative Practices and Procedures Manual for National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

April 2012

GEDP

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General Administrative Practices and Procedures Manual for National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

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INTRODUCTION

A comprehensive program of Local Government and Administrative Reform is being implemented through decentralization by the Government of Ghana. The program as outlined in the 1992 Republican Constitution of Ghana, the Ghana Education Service Act, 1995 (Act 506) and the Education Act, 2008 (Act 778), introduced broad-spectrum structural and systemic changes in Ghana's Education system.

To ensure an effective and sustainable implementation of this massive decentralization program, a separate Public Service Institution, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment has been created by an Act of Parliament – The Education Act, (Act 778) of 2008.

Section 17 of Act 778 creates the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, to among other responsibilities, determine the goals, aims and structure of courses at the various levels of pre-tertiary education, ensure an inclusive and representative curriculum development process and guide curriculum development in a timely and effective manner.

As a step towards streamlining and standardizing Administrative Practices and Procedures at National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, there is the need to develop a reference manual that will facilitate the easy handling of administrative problems that managers might face in their day-to-day dealings with staff and customers.

This manual is to serve as a guide for managers, secretarial, and administrative staff at National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

It is aimed at addressing the administrative bottlenecks that serve as setbacks to effective and efficient service delivery at the pre-tertiary level of education.

It is hoped that all managers will use this manual as reference material whenever one is confronted with an administrative problem in the management of the affairs of this secretariat.

1.0 The Secretariat

The Secretariat should be composed of:

- Stenographer Secretary
- Secretary/Receptionist
- Data Entry Clerk

Some of these staff can competently combine these roles.

1.1 Functions

The functions of the secretariat shall include but not limited to:

- Receive and answer telephone calls.
- Receive record and distribute incoming and internally generated correspondence e.g. Letters, tellers, fax, e-mail etc.
- Attach reference papers and to pass the correspondence to officers who are supposed to act on them.
- Office management.
- Open, index, build up and control files.
- Provide storage and references for all registered files and other documents.
- Review and properly dispose of all out –dated files and other records.
- Control and monitor the movement of files for efficiency.
- Organize and keep records in a systematic way to ensure easy retrieval of information at the right time and to the right person at the least possible cost.
- Keeping and documentation of minutes.
- Organize meetings in consultation with the head of the unit.
- Customer service/reception.
- Management of consumable requisitioned from stores for office use.
- Dissemination of minutes

2.0 Registry Practices and Procedures

It is important to have a well-structured program for records in the institution. The program will be to systematically ensure that all files follow a pattern in their management. Suffice it to say that the key role of the registry where valuable detail information on the organization and its operations are kept cannot be overemphasized.

In this era of information, communication and technology (ICT), speed and accurate retrieval/submission of information to facilitate effective managerial decision-making or action is very critical.

2.1 Records

Records can be defined as published information, captured in a reproducible form that is created, received and maintained by an agency, institution, organization or an individual in pursuance of its legal obligations or in the transaction of business.

Files, forms, circulars, reports, microfilms, disk and tape films are some of the examples of records that are used or dealt with within an organization.

The under-listed systems of record management can be used to ensure organizational efficiency:

- Filing Papers
- Creating New Files
- File Index
- Recording the Existence of New Files
- Control of File Movement
- Closing and Retiring Files
- Storage of Records
- Vital Records Program
- Time Management
- Performance Measurement
- Raising the Image of the Registry

2.2 Procedures

Receipt of Mail

On receipt of official mails /letters, the receiving officer is supposed to open it and enter the details in the in-coming mails register. The in-coming mails register shall have the following details:

- Date of Receipt
- Reference Number
- From whom
- Subject
- Security classification
- Date of the letter received
- Signature of Receiver

The in-coming mails register can be put on the computer. The letter is stamped and forwarded to the schedule officer for action. Below is an example of how the register should be set up.

DATE OF RECEIPT	REFERENCE NUMBER	FROM WHOM	SUBJECT	SECURITY CLASSIFICATION	DATE OF THE LETTER RECEIVED	SIGNATURE OF RECEIVER

Dispatch of Mails

There shall be maintained a Dispatch Register that would be used to make entries in respect of all out-going official correspondence. The letters Dispatch Register shall have the following details:

- Date of Dispatch
- To whom sent
- Security classification
- Reference number
- Subject
- Date of letter
- Signature of Dispatcher

Below is an example of how the letter dispatch register should be set up. This format is applicable to both internal and external dispatches.

Date of Dispatch	To whom Sent	Security Classification	Reference Numbers	Subject	Date of Letter	Signature

Mode of Dispatch

All out-going mails should be dispatched by the appropriate/relevant means such as courier, postage, fax or e-mail. The same principle applies to letters sent to external organizations. Here, the only difference is that if the letter is posted, the receiving officer's signature might not apply. However, the officer who posted the letter must append their signature or initials.

2.3 Storage of Documents

Creation of New Files

The receipt of a correspondence for which no file has been created for the subject matter shall necessitate the creation of new files. These new files may be classified under individuals, companies, groups, government or non-governmental organizations using the file classification index as a guide and must be entered in the file index appropriately.

Procedures for Creating Files

- A new file may be opened if no appropriate file exists
- The new file should have a reference number and a title
- Each file should relate to a single subject matter or transaction e.g. on individuals, companies, government, or non-governmental organizations.

Assigning File Titles

It is important to choose a clear and precise title for each file. The chosen title should be

- As description as possible
- Specific
- Concise and Brief

The chosen titles shall not be changed unless it has become absolutely necessary and with the empress permission of the head of department.

A Temporary Jacket file may also be created for new or old subjects that have not been dealt with. Temporary Jacket files are used in situations where the movement of the original file is restricted, especially if the new correspondence has to be "minuted" or brought to the attention of several officers before it is dispensed with or filed or when the original file is not immediately available.

File Index or Reference Numbers

A file index/reference number may comprise:

- Mix-up of letter codes for which the file belongs
- Two key word codes
- A sequential file numbers preceded by the number zero (0)

For ease of retrieval, the acronyms that are to be used for the respective file indexes could be related to the Directorate/Unit or subject matter.

All acronyms should be prefixed by NCCA, which could then be followed by the acronym for the respective departments. The particular title or subject matter and volume will then follow in that order.

For instance the Finance and Administration Directorate will have this file index, NCCA/FAD-01/Vol.1 for general files. The following indexing could be adapted for use by other departments.

Office of Executive Director: NCCA/ED/….

Finance and Administration Directorate: NCCA/FAD…….

Research and Evaluation Directorate: NCCA/RED……

Inspection and Supervision Directorate: NCCA/ISD……

Standards and Enforcement Directorate: NCCA/SED…..

2.4 Filing

One of the surest means of keeping institutional memory is to ensure proper records keeping practices. Poor record keeping is one major problem that had engulfed most institutions with its attendant unpleasant outcomes/consequences. Strictest adherence to filling of all documents received and dispatched will be ensured at all levels. The following steps must be followed when dealing with letters/correspondence in the office:

- File letter on flat file.
- Take action or minute immediately.
- Put away (pa) or dispatch as expected.
- Bring up (bu) for a later date when necessary.

Files should be serialized or categorized in alphabetical order for ease of reference. Each correspondence should be given identification number, commonly referred to as folio number, before filing.

All documents which have clearance for future reference, must be filed in the appropriate files before they have been acted upon or immediately on receiving them to forestall their misplacement.

File Inventory

File inventory is another area where Registry staff normally falters in their assignments. There is the tendency to put new letters in very old files that have been used for twenty years or more.

The system is to provide a basis for immediate recognition of new files as separate from the old ones. To be able to manage the files well, action should be taken group files according to ages: e.g. one to three (1-3) year group, four to six (4-6) year group, seven to ten (7-10) year group etc.

Control of File Movement

To facilitate prompt location and retrieval, officers must track files. This would be enforced through three control mechanisms namely:

- File Diary
- File index and
- File movement register.

File Diary

This is used to record:

- The reference number of the new file
- Date of opening
- The full title of the file

Below is an example of how to set up the file diary.

Reference Number	Date of Opening	Title of File

File Index Book

File Index Book refers to a Register in which acronyms and numbers of files used are recorded for ease of reference. It attempts to group the files into subject areas with defined numbers. Below is an example of a file index.

Index heading	**File Series Number**
Medical bills/refund	NCCA
	FAD
	HR/MB
	P.4

File Movement Register

A file census is to be organized every morning to enable the schedule officer to know off-hand, which officer has which file in custody. This process is facilitated by the use of a File Movement Register. Below shows an example of how to set up a file movement register.

File Index/No.	Subject	Requested By	Date Received	Date Returned	Signature of Clerk	Remarks

Timely management of files/records is fundamental to the attainment of organizational goals and objectives. Movement of files from one office/officer to another should be done timely so as to facilitate a quick expedition of action. Letters should not spend more than two days on an Officer's desk.

File Returned to Registry

Users should return files to the Registry as soon as they have acted upon the matter referred to them. The Registry Officer should check to see whether returned files contain letters to be dispatched. If so, the file copy must be filed immediately and letter for dispatch removed, recorded and dispatched.

All returned files must be recorded in the File Movement Register. All files must be put away in the absence of any outstanding action to be taken.

Closing and Retiring Files

The closure or retirement of a particular file is a function of the volume and content. Preferably, any file that contains one hundred and fifty (150) separate sheets or documents should be closed and retired. Additionally, a general file that has been in use for at least five (5) years may have to be closed or retired.

Storage of Closed or retired Files

Records should be stored after they are closed/retired. Under normal circumstances, closed/retired files must be sent to the National Archives for storage. However, it is advised that closed/retired files should be stored by the unit/institution for some time to facilitate occasional reference to records in such files. After ten (10) years of files not being in use, they need to be transferred from the institution's storage facility to the National Archives.

2.5 Improving Registry Practices

A series of actions or activities need to be taken to improve performance of Registry practices of the institution. These include:

Re-covering files

When a file cover is badly damaged, there will be the need to provide a new one. When this is done, the old file cover must be pasted at the inner page of the new file.

Tracing of Missing Files

If it comes to the knowledge of Registry staff that a file is missing, the must proceed immediately to locate it.

- The Head of the Registry must contact the officer to whom the file was last sent making reference to the File Movement Register.
- If they are unable to trace the file, the Head of Registry must circulate a memo to all Directors asking them to check if the file is in their possession.
- A special check must be initiated if the earlier options fail. A list of missing files should be maintained.
- While the search for the missing file is on, a Temporary Jacket file should be opened but the cover must be marked "Temporary".
- All documents in the Temporary Jacket file must be transferred to the found original file.
- The front cover of the Temporary Jacket file should be endorsed with the date on which the original file was found placed just before the first folio on the original file.

Monitoring Registry Performance

Continuous monitoring of the Registry must be undertaken to improve the performance of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment by carrying out the following:

- The Head of the Registry must initiate regular survey of users response to services provided by the Registry.
- Take prompt action to improve performance.
- Reports on the performance of the Registry must be submitted to the Executive Director for redress.

These reports should include the following:

- Number of files opened
- New file index created
- Number of letters received
- Length of time it takes to clear files in circulation
- Any problems confronting the Unit

Common Problems of Poorly Managed Registry

- Allowing files to become so thick that filed documents are exposed to damage.
- Failure to file documents.
- Placement of documents on wrong files.
- Failure of users to return files to the Registry after use.
- Misplacement of files either deliberately of accidentally.
- Keeping a backlog of inactive files in the Registry.
- Using inappropriate methods to store files.
- Lack of skilled Registry staff.

Conclusion

Timely management of files/records is very important in the organization. Efforts should be made to facilitate the movement of files from one office/officer to the other on time so that action can be taken on them. It is important to state that letters should not spend more than two days on the desk of an officer. This means that staff whose responsibility it is to move the files from tables of the schedule officers must do their work effectively.

3.0 Administrative Practices

Introduction

Administrative practices are the routine/static laid-down rules and regulations that are followed in the day-to-day running of an organization such as National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. Such practices are guidelines meant to improve upon organizational effectiveness and efficiency.

The under-listed, among others, constitute some of the administrative practices intended to improve performance of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment:

- Writing of memoranda (memos)
- "Minuting" a letter
- Writing of official correspondence (letters, reports, queries, petitions)
- Flagging of letters/documents
- Communication procedures
- Orientation of new employees
- Protocol for handing over notes
- Issuing circulars

3.1 Writing of Memoranda (Memos)

A memorandum (Memo) refers to a written note or communication especially in business between people working from the same organization such as the various Directorates/Units of the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.

Purpose of Memos

A memo is written to seek information or reminder to members of staff within the same organization. It can however, be copied to officers outside one's organization.

It is a mutual correspondence purposely designed to ask a responsible officer to act on an issue, request for a feedback or advice on an issue.

In such cases, a Memo could be used to provide background information to:

- A letter
- A document that requires the endorsement of another officer within the organization
- A clarification on a document received
- Information on research issues

Features of a Memo

The memo traditionally has the following features that make it distinct from formal or informal letters. It must always have a heading captured as the subject. An example of a memo heading is below.

MEMO

TO: Executive Director

FROM: Director, FAD

DATE: March 20, 2012

SUBJECT: 2011 Annual Review Meeting

Who Writes a Memo?

Any member of staff can write a Memo to another member of staff. It can also be written to an officer with copies to other officers.

How is a Memo signed?

Memos can be signed in two different ways.

1) When the letterhead is used, the Officer writing it signs at the bottom right or left corner of the memo with their name.
2) When the letter head is not used, the Officer signs against their title as illustrated below:

MEMO

To: **Executive Director**

From: **Director –FAD (signed)**

Date: **March 20, 2012**

Cc: **Deputy Director-Finance (where applicable**)

Subject: **Request for funds for the payment of National Health Insurance Scheme (NHIS) premium for staff.**

"Minuting" a Letter

In-coming mails must be dealt with dispatch. Usually a letter is addressed to a responsible Officer or to the head of the organization. For instance, a letter addressed to the Executive Director may require the action /attention /remarks of Director, Inspection and Supervision Directorate.

The remarks written on such letters by the respective Officers is referred to as "minute", in administrative parlance.

The Process of "Minuting"

"Minuting" is done on letters for the attention of responsible officers or to ask for further information from other officers. The "minuting" could either be done on the letter/document or issued in a cover letter, depending on the level.

Note that the first letter is assumed to be the first minute and the Officer "minuting" is the second. Therefore, the Officer may have to write on it (2) before writing the name or title of the next Officer who is supposed to see or act on the comments or directives in the letter as illustrated below:

(2) DI&S/DF&A

Approval recommended pl.

Signed: AFK

20/03/2012

When it reaches the Director of Finance and Administration (DF&A), the Director will also minute it to the schedule officer for action after the discussion with the Director Inspection and Supervision (DI&S) in this instance.

(3) <u>Enoch</u>

Kindly process for payment pl.

Signed MD

20/03/2012

For instance where the letter is supposed to be seen by all Directors, the Executive Director will minute it in this form:

Minute (2) Director: <u>FAD/RED/ISD/SED.</u>

The above directive is for your information and compliance please

Signed: JSA

20/03/2012

The respective officers are required to initial such memos with dates after taking the needed actions.

3.2 Flagging of Letters

This is done to draw the officer's attention to where action is to be taken in a particular file in addition to information provided at the page on the file. Flagging should be done with the use of special flagging cards, ordinary sheets or paper where necessary.

3.3 Writing of Official Correspondence

Managing an institution requires efficient flow of information at all levels. It is therefore critical to ensure that a suitable procedure or process is applied to the initiation or responding to official correspondence.

Types /Nature of Official Correspondence

Correspondence with National Council for Curriculum and Assessment may take the following forms:

- Letters
- Reports
- Petitions
- Queries, etc.

Features of Official Correspondence

- Each official letter must be written on the official letterhead of National Council for Curriculum and Assessment.
- It must bear the date on which it was written/signed.
- It must have a reference number.
- It must have a heading or subject matter e.g."Invitation to 2011Annual Review Meeting".
- Make reference to earlier correspondence on the subject matter, if any.
- Body - the subject matter of the body must be precise to convey the right meaning to the recipient(s).
- Enclosures must be indicated in the body.
- Concluding remarks.
- Signature, title and name of sender must be indicated.

- Addressee(s) must be clearly indicated.
- May be copied to other officers/addressee(s).

3.4 Submission of Returns/Reports

Prompt and timely submission of returns/reports to needy offices/officers is vital for the efficient running of the institution. These returns/reports may not necessarily need the attention of the Executive Director. Therefore, the returns/reports may be submitted directly to the needy/respective Directorates.

When addressing such letters, attempts should be made to address it to the Executive Director with note of attention to the officer who is requested to address the issue.

3.5 The Use of REFERS OF REFERENCE (RE/REF):

The abbreviation **RE/REF** as often used in official correspondence is the short form of the word **REFERS or REFERENCE**. The abbreviation is usually used in correspondence in which the subject being addressed has come up before. It is also used when you are responding or replying to the same issue, which has been dealt with earlier. In replying to such letters, the subject or topic under reference must be stated and should be preceded by the word **RE/REF**. The reference number of the letter and the date of issue must also be stated.

E.g. RE: Exemplary Behavior of Kosi Adetor, your letter No. NCCA/FAD/HR/02 dated 21/03/2012 under reference.

3.6 Commonly Used Administrative Abbreviations

- ayc	at your convenience
- ad hoc	for this or the other particular purpose
- bu	bring-up
- cf	confer
- esp	especially
- fna	for necessary action
- FE	Financial Encumbrance
- fyi	for your information
- fua	for usual action
- fms	for my signature
- idc	in due course
- inter alia	among other things
- memo	memorandum
- nfan	no further action necessary
- nat	necessary action taken
- asap	as soon as possible
- pa	put away
- NB	note well
- pro tem	for the time being
- ps	postscript/written after
- tna	take necessary action
- wrt	with reference to
- vide	see
- viz	namely, to wit
- EW	Establishment Warrant
- GW	General Warrant
- PV	Payment Voucher
- RV	Receipt Voucher
- LPO	Local Purchase Order

- tua	take usual action
- wef	with effect from
- vice versa	terms being exchanged
- FAR	Financial Administration Regulation
- SR	Stores Regulation
- SRA	Stores Received Advice
- GCR	General Counterfoil Receipt
- CHR	Change of Holders Return
- KIV	Keep in view
- RE/REF	Reference
- NCCA	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment

4.0 Protocol for Handing Over Notes, Orientation ff Staff Petitions and Queries

Preparation of Handing Over Notes

Invariably, officers will exit National Council for Curriculum and Assessment either permanently through retirement, resignation and dismissal, or temporarily through suspension or leave. In order to facilitate undue disruption, officers leaving the company should follow this protocol to facilitate the preparation of handing over notes.

Background Information

- Indicate the management structure that is in place.
- Organogram and reporting relationships i.e. who reports to who and at what level should also be clearly stated.

Committees

- List all committees in which the office is a member.
- State the role played.
- State their membership.
- State their functions.
- State the meeting times: monthly, quarterly, bi-monthly etc.

Accounts

- State the number, types and signatories to the various accounts.
- Also, state the banks the institution operates its account with.
- State balances standing on the various accounts and cash balance, current audit report and responses or queries answered.

Inventory

- Equipment and other items in office and residence.
- Transportation.

Unfinished Business

- State all unfinished businesses that need action, attention and follow-up.
- Any other relevant information the in-coming officer needs to know.
- All handing over notes should be signed and dated by the out-going and in-coming officers.
- Where the opportunity exists that the out-going officer should brief the in-coming officer on other details in addition to the written notes.
- In cases where movable property is stated in the handing over notes to be in the possession of another officer, such an employee should be made to authenticate (in writing) that statement in the handing over notes.
- Handing over notes are mandatory for all officers leaving office.

Orientations for New Staff

In order to get new staff settle quickly to their new setting, orientation programs must be organized for them. Such programs enable the staff to acquaint themselves with and share in the vision, mission strategic objectives and aspirations of the Council.

The following key issues should be highlighted during the orientation

- The Council's vision, mission and strategic objectives.
- The Council's policies, procedure, philosophies, practices, culture etc.

- Organizational structure and channels of communication.
- Job description(s).
- Formal introduction of the new staff to the respective Officers in the Council.

Petitions

All written petitions for individuals or groups that require the attention or action by the Executive Director should be forwarded though the heads of respective Directorates.

The rational is to change a decision or course of action in favor of the petitioner.

Features of Petitions

- Petitions emanate from lower level to a higher level.
- All petitions are usually in a written form.
- Petitions can be of two kinds i.e. official and unofficial.

(Refer to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures Manual for further details).

Queries

- They may be verbal or written. Queries in writing must have the features of an official letter or memos.
- They usually emanate from a higher level to a lower level.
- They must state the reason(s) for demanding the query.
- The receiver must be given the opportunity to explain their action, inaction or omission
- They must set datelines for submission of the response to the query.

(Refer to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment's Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures Manual for further details).

5.0 Report Writing Format

There are different types of reports that are used generated in organizations. Ideally, every report should have an introduction, the body and conclusion. This chapter primarily looks at Progress and Assessment Reports.

5.1 Progress Report

Progress reports like assessment reports are all forms of narrative reports that can be used for special program funding and other institutional reports.

The focus of Progress Report, which is often referred to as monitoring report, is on the work done during a particular period of time. It essentially looks at the INPUTS USED and ACTIVITIES undertaken.

The Importance of Progress Report

- It enables management to know whether the pursuance of organizational activities are in line with agreed objectives.
- It could be used to assess deviations, if any, from set objectives and reasons for such deviations (constraints).
- Lessons learnt from the assessment of such reports could be used to improve upon performance or review current objectives.
- Progress reports can assist management to clarify the impact of organizational activities on our clients, competitors and employees.

Progress Report Outline

Different out lines can be used to prepare a progress report. The following outline is however recommended for submitting progress reports:

i. Activities

Give a brief summary of the major activities that were carried out during the period under review.

ii. Results:

- Clarify to what extent short-term objectives have been achieved.
- How they were achieved.
- How conclusions (regarding the achievements) were arrived at i.e. indicators used.
- The impact of the program on key stakeholders or benefits derived either directly or indirectly e.g. number of people, male/female ration, and other features.
- Brief explanation on how stakeholders benefited from the program.

iii. Analysis

Issues to consider when analyzing progress reports are:

- The relationship between those results that were achieved with respect to the agreed objectives or plans.
- Reasons for deviation from agreed objectives or plans.
- The extent to which the next planning phase will have to be adjusted (with reference to the deviations).

iv. Concluding Comments or Remarks

Give relevant conclusion or recommendation within the context of the general findings and the way forward.

5.2 Assessment Report

This report primarily focuses attention on the realization of the program's objectives for both short and medium-term objectives.

- It is normally prepared one year before a particular project or program comes to an end.
- It thus serves as an input for planning and preparation of another phase of the program.
- Assessment reports are quite comprehensive and donors may prefer assessment reports to progress reports.

The use of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis in Writing Assessment Reports:

SWOT is an acronym that refers to internal and external factors that impact on the attainment of organizational objectives and can be illustrated as follows:

- Organizational Strengths (S)
- Organizational Weaknesses (W)
- Organizational Opportunities (O)
- Organizational Threats (T)

Assessment Report Outline

The normal outline used in the preparation of Assessment Report is explained as follows:

i. Objectives

Give a brief summary of short-term objectives that have been achieved:

- Indicators used to arrive at the attainment of these objectives.
- To what extent these realizations are in accordance with the planning.

ii. Results

Summarize which medium-term objectives have been achieved:

- Indicators used.
- The relationship between the achieved results and the planned objectives.

Describe the impact of the program:

- Indicate the side effects of the program i.e. unforeseen positive or negative effects.
- The effects of the program on gender, environment, human rights, employees, competitors, etc.

iii. Analysis

This basically looks at factors that have influenced the implementation of the program, either positively or negatively and is similar to the SWOT analysis. These factors are:

- Internal aspects of the program.
- Approach/strategy followed; adequacy of the problem analysis, the relationship between objectives and the problem analysis, expectations or aspirations of the target group etc.
- External factors; e.g. influence of climatic conditions, change of political environment, market fluctuations, and inflationary effects, influence of competitors etc.

iv. Follow-up Envisaged: Indicate

- Whether changes in the medium or long-term objectives are envisaged.
- Reasons for such changes.
- Whether adjustments regarding intervention strategy or workplan or organizational measures are foreseen.
- Concluding remarks.

6.0 Meetings

The need for efficient communication between different departments in increasingly complex education administrative structures makes it inevitable that meetings will feature even more prominently in our working lives.

What is a Meeting?

More often than not we hear the phrase "The Director (or other title) is in a meeting" whenever two or more people are holding any form of discussion. In the context of this manual, our attention will be on formal gatherings for which notice has been given and a record is to be kept.

The following serves as a guide to facilitate meetings at the institutional level.

- There must be a formal invitation.
- There should be a quorum.
- There should be an agenda for the meeting.
- There must be a Chairperson and a Recorder.
- There should be a recording of minutes.

Aims of Meetings

Essentially meetings aim at communicating information, giving up-to-date report and reach decisions or solve problems.

- Communicate Information:
  - Management wishes to give out information.
  - Management wishes to collect information.
  - Department wishes to pool information.
- Give up-to-date report:
  - Exercise of regulatory function by requiring participants to give up-to-date report on progress of work or task.
- Reach decisions or solve problems:
  - An immediate difficulty or grievance has to be resolved.
  - A research for long-term improvements.

Purpose of Meetings

In organizations, meetings are held with different reasons and purposes. The following checklist can be used to identify the purpose, result, and decision of a meeting.

Purpose of meetings:

Is it to brief staff on decisions already taken by senior management?

- For senior management to consult staff.
- For different departments/units to pool information.
- To solve an immediate problem or grievance.
- For long-term planning.
- To hear reports on progress, thereby exercising a regulatory function.

Is decision-making the result of?

- A vote?
- A consensus?
- The considered opinion of the senior members of staff present at the meeting?

Are the decisions reached?

- Binding?
- Advice to be passed to a higher authority?

Importance of Meetings

There are problems inherent in the meeting process. Is it therefore worth asking questions such as the following:

- How many people attend the meeting?
- How often must meetings be held?
- Is there no other way to attend to matters to be raised than bringing it up at a meeting?
- Is the meeting necessary at all?

Reaching Decisions at Meetings

Decisions are arrived at meetings in a number of ways, which include the following:

- Meeting reaches decision after a vote.
- Meeting continues until a consensus is reached.
- Senior member of management present in the meeting hears all views and then takes a decision.
- Meeting is only advisory; final decision will be taken elsewhere.
- Meeting ending in stalemate.