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20 May 2020

PAYMENT OF STIPENDS TO QUALIFYING 2019/2020 LEARNERS DURING AND POST NATIONWIDE LOCKDOWN

Dear Valued Stakeholders

In line with the SETAs COVID-19 directive from the Department of Higher Education and Training, CATHSSETA wishes to inform all its stakeholders that it will continue to pay learner stipends with no condition of training or work during the COVID 19 period (April, May and June 2020).

CATHSSETA remains committed to the purpose of the National Skills Development Plan i.e. to ensure that CATHSSETA subsectors have adequate, appropriate and high quality skills that will contribute towards economic growth, employment creation and social development, particularly under these trying times.

To allow for continuity and achievement of the objectives of our learning programmes post COVID-19, instead of paying the full learner stipend and administration/training provider costs, CATHSSETA will pay 50% of both learner stipends and training provider costs per month.

Stakeholders are required to invoice CATHSSETA at 50% of the grant for the months of April, May and June 2020. The invoice should be accompanied, by a revised implementation plan which should cover the phase-in approach to resumption of learning and a catch-up plan including the use of online learning platforms where possible. Learners must return to the workplaces and training institutions in line with their gradual opening as per guidelines of each Level.

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The following key conditions should be noted:

- The learning programme agreements signed between learners, employers, and training providers will be extended by an additional three months to cover the period of lockdown (April, May and June 2020);
- Payments will be made on a month-to-month basis as opposed to the three months that was done before;
- Only learners who were active during the last invoice paid (where attendance registers) were verified would be eligible to claim for this period, unless if a particular learner was on Maternity leave or some form of extended leave. Employers must also provide declarations on their company letterheads listing all learners being claimed for and confirming that those learners are still active in the learning programme;
- Employers will be expected to submit one month proof of stipend paid to learners to their respective regional offices to initiate the next payment;
- The Discretionary Grant Contracts signed between employers and CATHSSETA will also be amended to extend the project duration time to accommodate time lost;
- CATHSSETA, through its regional offices and ETQA department will continue to monitor training provision in the sector using electronic means;
- Employers who have submitted tranche claims with outstanding documents (e.g. missing attendance registers) can only invoice CATHSSETA for the COVID-19 related claims once their previous tranche claims have been paid; and
- Employers who are not up to date with their tranche claims, will not be able to claim until they have brought their tranche claims up to date.

Stakeholders and employers are requested to provide their learners with a clear communication stipulating the above changes to avoid confusion especially during this challenging time.

CATHSSETA remains committed to comply with the SETAs COVID-19 Guidelines of the Department of Higher Education and Training and will honour claims for stipends paid during the lockdown, on condition that employers did not receive any payment from the UIF for the same.

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We continue to provide services to stakeholders remotely and our Regional Managers are available to address any issues you may have during this lockdown period.

Yours in Skills Development

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "K. Lebaka", written over a horizontal line.

Keitumetse Lebaka (Ms)

CATHSSETA CEO