



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

**Director for Human Resources
Vienna, 08 April 2021**

Staff Instruction No. 14/Rev.3

Subject: Staff Learning and Development

1. Reference

Staff Rule 3.10.1
Staff Instruction No. 15

2. Purpose

This Staff Instruction specifies:

- The importance of continuous learning and development, including self-directed learning and continuing professional development;
- The responsibilities of all officials related to their own learning and development and how supervisors and others can and should support staff/mission members in the OSCE's continuous learning environment;
- The elements of the learning and development cycle;
- The procedures governing participation in resource-intensive learning and development activities.

3. Applicability

This Staff Instruction applies to all fixed-term staff/mission members (hereinafter "staff/mission members"), without prejudice to the possibility of other personnel participating in learning interventions, subject to the availability of resources and/or to the OSCE requirements.

4. Effective Date

This Staff Instruction shall take effect on 01 April 2021 and cancels and supersedes Staff Instructions No. 14/2004/Rev.2 of 5 December 2012, No. 19/2005/Rev.2 of 30 April 2012, and No. 22/2006/Rev.1 on IRMA Training of 23 May 2012. Staff circulars and other administrative issuances issued by the executive structures on the same subject shall be adjusted in accordance with this Staff Instruction and shall be cleared by the DHR prior to issuance. In the case of any inconsistency between this Staff Instruction and staff circulars in executive structures, the former shall prevail.

5. Purpose of Staff Learning and Development

5.1 Staff/mission members are expected to meet the requirements necessary to carry out their functions upon appointment as OSCE officials.

5.2 Staff learning and development has the following main purposes:

- a) to maximise the potential of staff/mission members so that they may best perform the functions assigned to them;
- b) to help staff/mission members adapt to evolving work needs and prepare themselves to take on increased responsibilities and thus contribute to enhanced organizational performance, while ensuring the most cost effective use of resources;
- c) to contribute to the OSCE's reputation and branding by meeting the expectations of candidates and staff/mission members that their professional development will be progressed during their tenure at the OSCE, leading to higher talent acquisition and retention rates.

5.3 The Organization's learning and development policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- a) **Learning is more than an event.** Learning is both a process and an outcome and refers to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes, through formal¹ and informal approaches,² experience or practice, which is expected to result in a lasting change in behaviour.
- b) **Learning is strategic.** Learning enhances the Organization's ability to meet its strategic goals and objectives and is an essential investment to ensure continued organizational capability; learning is thus linked to the overall goals of the Organization through the performance management process.
- c) **Learning is a shared responsibility.** The Organization, supervisors and individual staff/mission members share the responsibility for identifying needs, engaging in learning and development, and effectively applying the learning outcomes in the performance of their duties.
- d) **Learning should be transferred.** Staff/mission members are expected to share the acquired skills and knowledge with their peers, while managers participating in development programmes have the particular responsibility of cascading and passing on the newly acquired skills and knowledge to members of their teams.
- e) **Learning should be accessible.** Staff/mission members should be given opportunities and resources, in terms of time and space, in order to engage with learning, making use of modern technologies and techniques.
- f) **Learning should be effective.** Learning should have an impact on the abilities of staff/mission members to deliver organizational objectives.

¹ Formal learning refers to planned courses, activities or events typically led by an instructor or facilitator.

² Informal learning takes place outside formal education or training settings. Informal and experiential learning are generally gained through experience and critical reflection.

6. Responsibilities

In line with Staff Instruction No. 15, staff/mission members and their supervisors share a responsibility for identifying learning and development needs and opportunities.

6.1 The staff/mission member shall be responsible for:

- Ensuring his/her knowledge and skills remain up to date, including through self-directed learning and continuing professional development;
- Undertaking the learning required in order to perform his/her functions well, including any required learning as may be prescribed by the Secretary General, as well as any institution or mission specific learning prescribed by the head of the relevant executive structure;
- Initiating and maintaining a continuous dialogue with the supervisor regarding the staff/mission member's learning and development needs, as well as proactively identifying and discussing most effective and efficient ways of achieving those needs;
- Recording his/her learning and development objectives and reflecting on and documenting the results as part of the performance management process;
- Participating in learning for which they have been nominated and accepted;
- Applying the acquired knowledge and skills and sharing them with the team.

6.2 The first level supervisor shall be responsible for:

- Ensuring that the staff/mission member undertakes any required learning;
- Encouraging a continuous dialogue with the staff/mission member on learning needs and development opportunities, including as part of the performance management process;
- Assessing the learning and development needs of the staff/mission members in an equitable, organized, effective and efficient manner;
- Releasing or otherwise providing flexibility for the staff/mission member to participate in relevant learning activities within the exigencies of service;
- Seeking guidance from and communicating any learning and development needs³ to the relevant HR/learning function;
- Providing opportunities to the staff/mission member to effectively utilize the knowledge acquired and skills developed, and assessing the impact of learning activities on individual and collective performance;
- Helping the staff/mission members grow into new responsibilities.

6.3 Higher levels of management, such as Programme Managers, have the broader responsibility of ensuring that their team members have the up-to-date knowledge and skills for the functions they are expected to perform. Programme Managers may appoint **learning co-ordinators**, in line with para 7.6 of Financial Administrative Instruction No. 1 on Delegation of Approval Authority, to support the HR/learning function by:

- liaising between the Programme Manager and the HR/learning function;
- reporting on team learning needs;

³ Learning needs may be for a single individual or may apply to a group or team.

- co-ordinating nominations within their programme.

6.4 The relevant HR/learning function⁴ shall be responsible for:

- Analyzing and reporting on identified individual and team learning needs taking into consideration individual learning and development objectives, including those set out in the performance management process, and objectives of the Organization and the executive structure;
- Translating the needs into appropriate learning offerings and proposing a learning plan to the Director for Human Resources in the Secretariat or to the head of the executive structure in Institutions/Field Operations, prioritizing on the basis of organizational needs and available resources;
- Monitoring the implementation of the learning policy, providing feedback and proposing adjustments;
- Planning, organizing, co-ordinating and/or facilitating formal learning to address the recognized learning needs, within available funds;
- Advising staff/mission members on the application of informal learning such as on-job/experiential and social learning⁵;
- Monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of learning actions in the relevant executive structure.

6.6 The Chief, Talent Development Unit/DHR shall, in co-operation with the local HR/learning function:

- Promote a consistent approach in the design and delivery of learning and development interventions throughout the OSCE;
- Encourage OSCE departments and executive structures to consult and to seek and share internal knowledge and expertise;
- Safeguard quality assurance and efficient use of resources in learning interventions;
- Advise on the interpretation of the provisions of this Staff Instruction.

6.7 A learning and development board may be established by the Director for Human Resources in the Secretariat and/or the head of the executive structure in Institutions/Field Operations, to advise management on strategic, policy and/or operational issues related to staff learning and development issues and to discharge such other functions as it may be accorded.

7. Learning categories

7.1 For the purpose of this Staff Instruction, learning and development shall comprise on-the-job learning, individual lessons, social learning and self-directed learning, as well as courses, programmes, seminars and other events whose primary aim is to provide for the acquisition or upgrade of practical skills and/or theoretical knowledge

⁴ For the purposes of this Staff Instruction, the relevant “HR/learning function” refers to the CFA and/or the relevant HR/Personnel/Learning and Development Officer/Assistant, as defined by job design in the respective executive structure.

⁵ Social or peer-to-peer learning typically comes from interaction and communication between people.

aimed at improving work performance of the individual staff/mission member as well as overall organizational performance.

7.2 This Staff Instruction does not cover staff participation in technical/subject-matter fora, conferences, departmental or section/unit retreats and other events whose primary aim is not the acquisition or upgrade of skills or knowledge as outlined in para 7.1 above.

7.3 Without prejudice to any emergent learning and development needs, the Organization shall strive to support learning and development interventions in these broad categories:

- a) **Induction/Orientation:** This is designed to facilitate integration of new staff/mission members into the Organization, as well as orientating staff/mission members assigned to the field on the specificities of field assignments;
- b) **Leadership and management development:** This focuses on building management capacity, such as strategic thinking, decision-making, team leadership, diversity, people management and communication;
- c) **Subject-matter/technical skills:** Developing subject-matter knowledge and skills to adjust to new mandates or responsibilities.
- d) **Values and competencies:** This includes the development of values and competencies that are essential for the role in question, as defined in the OSCE Competency Model;
- e) **Languages:** Language learning aims to provide staff with an opportunity to achieve proficiency in the official languages of the OSCE and/or the official language(s) of the country hosting an OSCE executive structure;
- f) **Information technology:** Such learning focuses on the updating or acquisition of information technology related skills and on specific information technology applications;
- g) **Work-related life skills:** Work-life balance, security and safety, first aid, conflict resolution, well-being, and any development required for work in conflict zones;
- h) **Team development:** This focuses on building and developing the capacity of OSCE teams to implement their mandates in an effective and efficient manner. HR shall be consulted in planning such activities, while funding is regulated by Financial Administrative Instruction No. 17.

7.4 The Organization's mandate on gender mainstreaming shall be reflected in the planning and delivery of all learning interventions.

8. Learning needs analysis

8.1 For the purpose of preparing a **learning and development plan**, the HR/learning function will initiate the process of collating and analyzing individual and team learning needs. This shall include the inputs of staff/mission members and managers recorded through the performance management process (PMP). The most suitable methods will be applied for each individual executive structure, including, but not limited to, review of individual learning and development objectives as recorded in the performance review and staff and/or management surveys, focus groups or interviews.

8.2 Based on this review, the HR/learning function will consolidate the identified needs at the level of the executive structure and propose a learning and development plan for approval by the Director for Human Resources for the Secretariat and/or the head of the executive structure in Institutions/Field Operations. With a view of taking into account, to the extent possible, the individual learning and development objectives as recorded in the performance management document, the plan is expected to cover the period from April to March in order to allow time to analyse the learning and development objectives as expressed in the performance management review.

8.3 The Chief, Talent Development Unit/Secretariat shall be kept regularly informed by executive structures of their learning and development needs, in order to assess cross-cutting needs and requirements and to optimize the organizational learning interventions in an effective and efficient manner.

8.4 Advance planning supports the function of learning as a strategic enabler and ensures learning needs can be met in the most efficient manner. However, where unforeseen needs emerge, staff/mission members and supervisors may also bring further learning needs/requests, outside of the annual plan, to the attention of the relevant HR/learning function for consideration and approval of the head of the executive structure.

9. Learning interventions

9.1 The OSCE shall strive, to the extent possible, to meet staff learning and development needs, as mandated by the Organization's priorities, through learning interventions organized directly by the Secretariat, Institutions or Field Operations.

9.2 In addition, staff/mission members shall regularly and proactively explore the possibilities of **self-directed learning**, where individuals take the initiative in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning and development objectives, identifying resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning methods/interventions, and evaluating learning experience. Staff/mission members are encouraged to embark upon continuing professional development as a constant updating of professional knowledge. By building capacity to learn flexibly, including from experience, and to apply that learning to performance, staff/mission members will be well positioned to contribute to the Organization's learning capability.

9.3 Learning and development can be made up of a variety of **learning methods**, such as stretch assignments, self-study, mentoring, coaching, e-learning and peer-to-peer learning. A non-exhaustive illustrative list is given in Annex 1.

10. Required learning

10.1 Required learning shall be completed by all relevant OSCE officials as prescribed by the Secretary General and as reflected in the OSCE learning management system.

10.2 Required learning shall include, but not be limited to, on-boarding, ethics, safety and security, information security and professional working environment. Additional

learning interventions shall be applicable to staff/mission members with managerial responsibility.

10.3 Institution or mission specific learning prescribed by the head of the relevant executive structure shall form part of required learning for staff/mission members in that executive structure.

11. Evaluation of learning interventions

11.1 Staff/mission members who attend learning and development interventions are expected to evaluate their learning experience.

11.2 Supervisors shall evaluate the learning intervention or its impact on performance of their supervisees within the framework of the OSCE performance management system.

11.3 The HR/learning function may conduct evaluations in one or more of the four-levels of learning:

- a) learners' reactions to the intervention (source: end-of-course evaluation);
- b) learners' learning achievements (source: pre-learning and post-learning tests; external assessment and certification);
- c) changes in behaviour within the job role (source: performance reviews);
- d) organizational effects from the learning intervention (sources: management and/or staff surveys; focus groups and interviews; 360° assessment; external benchmarking).

11.4 The Organization's learning and development policy and its outcomes will be independently evaluated on a periodic basis.

12. Efficient use of resources

12.1 The responsibility for the management of the **staff learning and development costs** is centralized in the DHR/FAU. The learning budget shall be used for implementing the approved learning interventions according to the priorities of the executive structure. It is also recognized that it is not always possible to identify all learning needs in advance; where the need arises, unforeseen requests shall be considered, subject to the availability of funds, and any adjustments shall be reflected in the staff/mission member's performance management document.

12.2 All learning interventions shall be recorded in the ERP database and those with a cost implication for the OSCE shall be charged to the appropriate object code under Staff Costs.

12.3 **Cost-effectiveness** shall be considered when planning and organizing all learning and development activities. All efforts shall be made to keep costs to an absolute minimum, with the reduction of travel costs being particularly beneficial for achieving economic and environmental efficiencies. Wherever possible, technology and internal expertise should be leveraged, and learning and development opportunities should be organized for as wide an audience as practical. In particular, drawing on the

internal expertise from other executive structures may result in both making efficiencies and promoting further professional development and collaboration among staff/mission members across the Organization.

12.4 If a specific learning and development need cannot be met through OSCE-organized learning or through self-funded learning, staff/mission members may request **financial support from the OSCE**. Organizational resource support shall be considered according to the principles set out in para. 5.3, 7.1, 12.3, 14.3 and 14.4 of this Staff Instruction, especially how the new skills will be used on the job and benefit the OSCE. Staff/mission members who attend a learning activity funded by the OSCE may be required to conduct a briefing/information sharing session for colleagues, to the extent possible.

12.5 Participation in learning and development may be subject to a **cost-share agreement**, whereby the staff/mission member or his/her department makes a financial contribution towards the activity. Such an arrangement shall always be subject to prior approval by the Chief, Talent Development Unit in the Secretariat or the relevant HR/learning function in the Institutions/Field Operations.

12.6 Incumbents of extra-budgetary posts may attend learning and development activities which have a cost implication, other than the required learning, only if their participation is covered through the extra-budgetary funds. Incumbents of extra-budgetary posts cannot receive funding for learning and development through the OSCE Unified Budget, with the exception of the funds collected from the Indirect Common Costs.

13. Leave

13.1 Staff/mission members are encouraged to dedicate between 5 (five) up to a maximum of 10 (ten) working days to learning and development each calendar year, which should be reflected in their performance review document. This comprises learning organized or supported by the OSCE, as well as any special leave referred to in para 13.2 below. It may further include time dedicated for self-directed learning which requires absence from the workplace.

13.2 Staff/mission members may be granted up to 5 (five) working days of **special leave with pay** in one calendar year **for self-funded learning**, in accordance with Staff Regulation 7.04(c), subject to exigencies of service and advance approval by the supervisor. The following parameters shall apply:

- a) Such learning shall normally fall in one of the learning categories outlined in para. 7.1 and shall normally be associated with the staff/mission member's job.
- b) A certificate of attendance or a short self-evaluation report on the learning outcomes shall be submitted upon completion.
- c) For appointments/assignments not covering the calendar year, the benefit will be prorated so that 1 (one) such working day may be granted for each 50 (fifty) working days worked.
- d) Any unused self-directed and self-supported "learning days" shall be carried forward and used by the end of the next calendar year.

14. Academic degrees and professional certification

14.1 Staff/mission members may request special leave without pay for academic study purposes within the parameters set out in Staff Rule 7.04.2.

14.2 Staff/mission members may receive funding for a learning activity which leads to a professional certification or accreditation from the OSCE if such certification or accreditation is of clear benefit to the Organization and the discharge of their function, as confirmed by the first and second level supervisors, and subject to approval by the head of the executive structure.

14.3 Staff/mission member's participation in learning activities which directly lead to an academic degree cannot be funded by the OSCE.

15. Approvals

15.1 Requests for participation in learning interventions which involve the use of OSCE financial resources, such as individual fees, travel and accommodation costs or similar, shall be submitted, through the supervisor and programme manager, to the Fund Manager in the respective OSCE Institution or Field Operation or the Director for Human Resources in the Secretariat, or their delegated authority.

15.2 Applications for participation in learning interventions not involving the use of OSCE financial resources referred to in para 15.1 shall be submitted through the supervisor.

15.3 Decisions concerning the use of financial resources referred to in para 15.1 shall seek to achieve the best value for money in meeting the organizational needs. They shall also consider such factors as equitable distribution of resources across gender, staff category, department and thematic pillar.

15.4 OSCE financial resources referred to in para 15.1 shall be approved for a staff/mission member who is expected to leave his/her position within 6 (six) months only if the first and second level supervisors confirm there is a critical learning requirement, whose organizational impact can be ensured directly after the learning intervention.

15.5 Absence from the workplace for self-directed and self-funded learning, in the sense of paras 13.1 and 13.2, shall be subject to advance approval by the supervisor.

Annexes

Annex 1: Learning methods

Annex 2: IRMA Super Users

Annex 1

Learning methods

Depending on the context and resources, some of the cost-effective learning methods other than formal courses include, but are not limited to:

1. Stretch Assignments

- *Internal mobility opportunities* enable an employee to expand work experience in a different unit, department or duty station for a temporary period, before returning to their original job. These take the form of temporary assignments, job rotation etc.
- *Shadowing* is a means of learning through which an employee spends time following another more experienced manager or practitioner for a limited number of days and has opportunity to discuss the latter's practice.

2. Self-study

- *"Bite-sized learning"* refers to chunks of information (such as online quizzes, assessments and skill audits) or access to online reference material.
- *Reflective practice* involves the keeping of some kind of learning log, journal or diary to record critical incidents and systematic reflections to encourage double-loop learning (which involves challenging assumptions, where learning takes place through examining causes of problems, so that a new learning loop is established) and critical reflection.

3. Mentoring

- *Mentoring* typically refers to a relationship in which a more experienced individual uses their knowledge and experience to support the development of a less experienced person, the mentee. It focuses on more than short-term work performance and relates to the identification and nurturing of potential for the whole person.

4. Coaching

- *Coaching* refers to the development of a person's skills and knowledge so that their job performance enhances, hopefully leading to the achievement of organizational objectives. It usually lasts for a short period and focuses on specific skills and goals.
- *Buddying* is a means of learning through which a staff/mission member is paired with a slightly more experienced or established peer, who they can call on for advice on such issues as organizational culture and practices. Particularly useful as part of an induction period and for transferring tacit organizational knowledge.

5. E-learning

- *E-learning* can be defined as learning that is delivered, enabled or mediated using electronic technology for the explicit purpose of acquiring or developing knowledge, skills and attitudes in organizations. Mobile learning ("m-learning") is the ability to learn independently of place and time, facilitated by a range of mobile devices. Edutainment can be defined as the act of learning through a medium that both educates and entertains, or else, entertainment that is intended to be educational.
- *Blended learning* refers to the approach where new media are combined with traditional face-to-face training as part of a "blended approach".

6. Peer-to-peer learning

- *Action learning* typically involves a small group of people meeting together at regular intervals to work on one or more issues that they can explore through questioning each other, and they can take action to experiment with potential resolutions. It is particularly applicable for professionals, practitioners and managers at all levels who have a level of discretion in their roles.
- *Simulations* can provide realistic scenarios for developing e.g. managerial skills in strategy-making and operations management.

Annex 2

IRMA Super Users

1. Role of IRMA Super Users

A Super User in the OSCE's Integrated Resource Management Application (IRMA) is a staff/mission member with a high level of expertise in the applicable business area, both system-wise regarding the respective Oracle modules and also regarding business processes and the application of the CRMS. As such, s/he:

- provides peer-support as the first point of contact for the executive structure's staff on IRMA/Oracle issues;
- raises Oracle Service Requests, when possible, as well as change requests;
- trains new staff in his/her business area, both within his/her executive structure and within his/her geographic region, subject to the exigence of service and availability of funds and in co-ordination with the Secretariat Super Users and functional specialists;
- assists with testing in preparation for system upgrades or new functionalities.

2. Appointment of IRMA Super Users

Super Users are nominated by their respective CFA in Institutions/Field Operations or Deputy Directors in the Secretariat and are appointed by the Chief of the Information Security and Co-ordination Unit/Secretariat, upon consultation with relevant functional specialists in the DHR and DMF. To qualify for the role, the Super User shall:

- have a high level of expertise within their applicable business area, both in terms of the respective Oracle module(s) and in terms of the CRMS provisions and processes;
- demonstrate willingness and capacity to provide training and mentoring to other staff/mission members;
- display adequate communication and collaboration skills to identify and solve problems;
- demonstrate ability and willingness to engage in continuing professional development and to transfer their knowledge to the Organization and other staff/mission members.

3. Support to IRMA Super Users

The Organization shall endeavour to develop the IRMA Super Users by, inter alia:

- facilitating Super User communication, such as through dedicated online platforms;
- providing regular recognition to the work of Super Users, including by encouraging the inclusion of individual objectives related to the Super User function in the performance management process;
- releasing, to the extent possible, Super Users for dedicated events, provision of regional or Organization-wide support and/or provision of support to ICT changes and testing.