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REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE ARMED FORCES

STUDY LEAVE POLICY

By Command of the
Defense Policy Committee

 April, 2023

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
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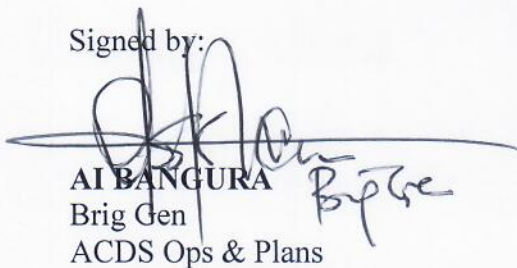
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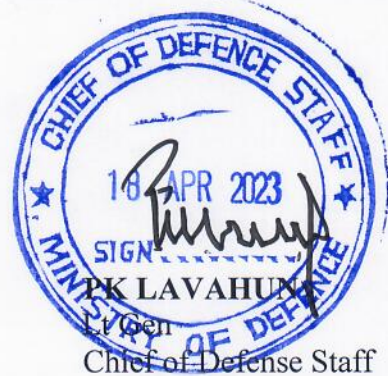
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Signed by:


AI BANGURA
Brig Gen
ACDS Ops & Plans



Authorized to sign on behalf of the Defence Council

Dated 18 April 2023

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REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE ARMED FORCES STUDY LEAVE POLICY

Ministry of Defence

March 2023

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REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE ARMED FORCES
STUDY LEAVE POLICY

This Republic of Sierra Leone Armed Forces (RSLAF) 2023 Study Leave Policy hereby repeals and replaces, the RSLAF Study Leave Policy 2011.

INTRODUCTION

1. Human resource capacity development is an integral part of the RSLAF to enhance the output of personnel and improve on the professionalism of the force. Educational improvement of personnel will enable the RSLAF to meet its academic challenges and to proficiently contribute to development of the institution and enhance national and international security. While it is acknowledged, it must deliver demonstrative and corresponding long-term value back to the RSLAF. The successes of Study Leave will be measured by clearly defined increase in military capabilities and professionalism. Furthermore, it must be affordable within the annual spending priorities and any potential value must be weighed against the full capital cost of any proposal, including both the actual time away from a military post and longer term career benefits.

PURPOSE

2. This policy establishes the guidelines and outlines the processes involved in dealing with Study Leave applications.

SCOPE

3. This policy applies to all serving personnel in the RSLAF for both national and international courses. The following are considered critical for this policy:

- a. Definition of Key Terms
- b. Conditions for Study Leave
- c. Eligibility
- d. Calling Notice
- e. Application Process
- f. Study Leave Selection Board
- g. Return of Service (RoS)
- h. Categories of Study Leave Sponsorship
- i. Board Decision
- j. Administrative Arrangements
 - (1). Military Secretary's Implication
 - (2). Reporting for Duty
 - (3). Personal Report
 - (4). Course Report
 - (5). Course Duration
 - (6). Course Review/Changes
 - (7). Application for Extension of Study
 - (8). Absent Without Leave (AWOL) on Study Leave
- k. Key Command and Staff Appointment Not Qualify for Categories 1A, and 1C Study Leave
- l. Return of Service Form


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- m. Removal Procedure
- n. Recommended Courses
- o. Conclusion

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

4. The following terms are formulated to contextualise this Study Leave Policy:
- a. Beneficiary: A serving RSLAF personnel or an Individual who derives advantage from the Study Leave arrangement.
 - b. Study Leave: The period of time that beneficiaries are approved to be away from active military duties to improve on their education for professional and personal development.
 - c. Policy: A guide or principle of action adopted or proposed by an organization, institution or individual.
 - d. Educational Course (s): Educational Course means any course offered for academic credit at an Accredited college/university or Military Institution for capacity building and professional development.
 - e. Training: The process, or method engendered by the RSLAF to acquire new skill, knowledge or experience for professional enhancement and career progression of serving personnel or individuals.
 - f. Return of Service: Return of Service (RoS) is a written acknowledgment through the study leave process which outlines specific period to be spent on military duty after completing a course/training in relation to the time spent on approve study leave in the various categories.

CONDITIONS

5. The RSLAF Study Leave policy deals with educational courses opted for by service personnel primarily for professional development and service delivery in the RSLAF as well as personal development of beneficiaries. These courses may be offered in either military or accredited civilian institutions and can be either within or outside Sierra Leone.
6. The nature of courses required by the RSLAF are Specialist; Legal and Sciences, Technology, Engineering, Medical, Agriculture [STEMA). Undergraduate courses should be done in-country except for courses that are not offered in Sierra Leone.
7. The Government of Sierra Leone Grant-in-Aid offered RSLAF or granted to serving personnel elsewhere is equally RSLAF Study Leave grant. Beneficiaries are encourage to take advantage of government proposed Student Loan Scheme.
8. Military personnel Must NOT engage in college politics, as it has direct relation to national politics. The RSLAF will not approve in-country courses for duration exceeding four (4) years, except for medical, legal and engineering courses. Study Leave AWOL cases are not entitled to discharge benefits.


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9. Military duties supersede personal studies; thus, security and national emergencies and exigencies may precipitate the cancellation of study leave for the duration of the security existence.

10. Course Duration beyond 4 years of full-time training will not be sponsored by the RSLAF, except for medical doctors, lawyers and engineers (Honors classes). DDTED is to establish liaison with learning institutions, to ensure cooperation for those institutions to be submitting periodic semester or progress reports of approved beneficiaries of study leave.

11. Commanders who unilaterally approves study leave for their personnel either

implicitly or facilitates without the expressed permission of the MoD will be viewed to be in violation of this policy and will face the necessary disciplinary action.

12. Personnel who apply or get approval from tertiary and vocational institutions and attend courses in those institutions without the expressed approval of the MoD/RSLAF, will be viewed to be in violation of this policy and shall face the necessary disciplinary action.

ELIGIBILITY

13. The following conditions must be met before an application for Study Leave is considered:

a. Eligibility Duration: Applicants should have served a minimum of 5 years. This time frame is applicable for Regular, Short Service Commissioned Officers and Other Ranks. For Specialists Commissioned Officers, Administrative Commissioned Officers and Specialist Other Ranks, the time frame is 3 years after Commissioning/Conversion.

b. Approval by Chain of Command: There must be full endorsement of the application by the chain of command. At each level, units/formations must consider the military impact of the individual's absence from normal duties and comment realistically on that impact. Military duties supersede personal studies; thus, security and national emergencies and exigencies may precipitate the cancellation of study leave for the duration of the security existence. In lieu of the aforementioned, the immediate withdrawal of all personnel on study leave could be a possibility.

c. Rank Eligibility for Undergraduate Courses:

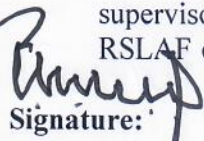
- Officers: Senior Lt – Maj

- Other Ranks: Pte – S/Sgt

d. Officers above the rank of Major and Warrant Officers: will not be eligible for full time study leave for courses above the duration of 3 years; **especially Undergraduate Courses.**

e. Officers and Warrant Officers in key command and staff appointments: shall not be accorded study leave in certain categories. However, in order not to disadvantage them they may be granted study leave provided they relinquish their appointments.

f. Identifying Priorities of Study: Formations, Units Commanders and supervisors must clearly identify the value the proposed cause of study will bring to RSLAF current or future capabilities and make a clear recommendation accordingly.


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It will not suffice to simply forward the application up the chain without an assessment of the benefit. This evaluation must realistically assess the merit of any specific usable skills that the applicant will attain or in the case of academic courses, the level of enhancement to staff skills.

g. Return of Service (RoS): Study Leave will be reinforced by a contractual Return of Service (RoS) upon completion of the approved course. **NB: Service personnel will only be eligible for another study leave after fulfilling the contractual return of service after end of their previous study leave.**

CALLING NOTICE.

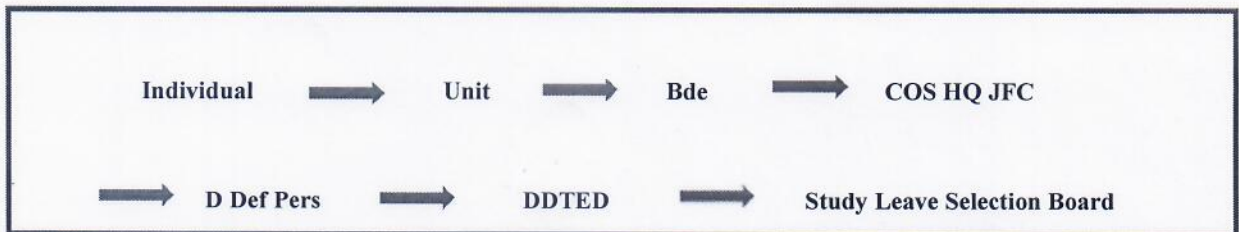
14. The calling notice for individuals to start submitting their Study Leave applications will be issued at the end of July each year. This will be preceded by the D Def Pers providing DDTED with the number of targeted sponsorships for Study Leave. D Def Pers, in liaison with DDTED, will indicate annual vacancies in order of priority, and courses for which sponsorship can be secured.

APPLICATION PROCESS.

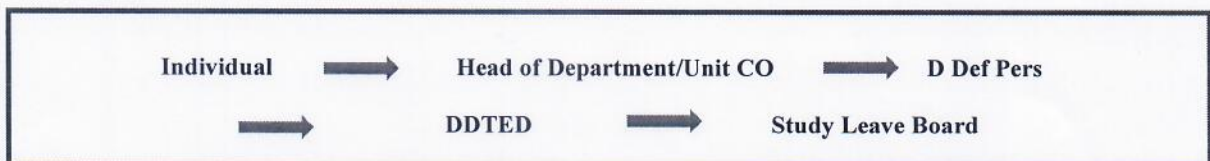
15. The RSLAF Study Leave Application form should be duly completed as follows:

All applications must be evident: To provide key application documents including; *acceptance letter from the institution of study* (otherwise applications will be filtered out prior to the formal Selection Board). NB: Preference will be given to applicants who propose **part-time course** of study wherein their normal military duties are combined with time away to pursue their studies.

a. **All HQ JFC Formations/Units** should submit application through the chain of command using the process.



b. **MoD personnel, or those in units commanded directly by MoD:** should follow the process identified below.




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STUDY LEAVE SELECTION BOARD

16. The Study Leave Selection Board will convene once a year (ideally not later than September due to the academic year acceptance availability) to consider applications. However, the board could be convened to address emergency administrative matter in the Study Leave Scheme. The Study Leave Board will be chaired by the COS MOD. Other members to include; ACDS Trg/Doc, COS HQ JFC, D Def Pres and DDTED as secretary.

RETURN OF SERVICE (ROS)

17. The contractual obligation/requirement to give a RoS upon completion of approved Study Leave is mandatory. It must be signed by any individual that is awarded study leave and a copy retained in the individual's personal file before he/she proceed on the course.

18. The RoS agreement must be signed by the beneficiary, DDTED and ACDS Tra/Doc. Failure to sign the RoS agreement by the beneficiary within one month period prior to the commencement of the course will result in the cancellation of the study leave. When once the RoS agreement is signed, the beneficiary is not eligible for voluntary retirement until he/she completes serving the RSLAF for the prescribed period of RoS. ***NB: On failure to complete the prescribed RoS, the beneficiary is liable to return cost of sponsorship (including salaries, medical, rice/ration, etc) up to 50% of total expenses benefitted from the RSLAF while on study leave.***

CATEGORIES OF STUDY LEAVE SPONSORSHIP

19. The Board will assess individual applications in line with the published conditions and is empowered to award the following categories for courses in civilian institutions in and out of Sierra Leone (overseas). All category One (1) Sponsorships are covered for Internal courses in-country (Sierra Leone), whilst Category Two (2) Sponsorships covers for External/Overseas course. The various Categories with specific Return of Service (RoS) is detailed as follows:

Category (a)	Description (b)	Return of Service (c)
1A	Full Sponsorship (Internal Full- Time) , defined as when the RSLAF would provide funding for the course and the individual's current military salary (including all normal monetary allowances, rice ration, military health care and military housing) for the duration of the course. The individual would be excused all military duties for the duration of the course.	The beneficiary must fill and sign the ROS. The ROS Period is calculated as 2 years for every 12 months period of study.

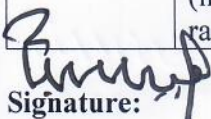

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1B	Full Sponsorship (Internal Part –Time) , defined as when the RSLAF would provide funding for the course and the individual's current military salary (including all normal monetary allowances, rice ration, military health care and military housing) for the duration of the course. The individual would continue to undertake the majority of his/her military duties, but would receive a limited quantity of time away from work by negotiating with his/her Unit Commander in order to pursue part-time study.	The beneficiary must fill and sign the ROS. The ROS period would be 9 months for every 12 months of study.
1C	Part Sponsored (internal full-time) , defined as when the RSLAF would not pay any course fees but would provide the individual's current military salary (including all normal monetary allowances, rice ration, military health care and military housing) for the duration of the course. The individual would be excused all military duties for the duration of the course.	The beneficiary must fill and sign the RoS form. The RoS period would be 1 year for every 12 months study.
1D	Part Sponsored (internal part-time) , defined as when the RSLAF would not pay any course fees but would provide the individual's current military salary (including all normal monetary allowances, rice ration, military health care and military housing) for the duration of the course. The individual would continue to undertake the majority of his/her military duties, but would receive a limited quantity of time away from work by negotiation with his/her Unit Commander in order to pursue part-time study.	The beneficiary must fill and sign the RoS form. The RoS period would be 6 months for every 12 months study.
2A	Full Sponsorship (External Full-time) , defined as when RSLAF would provide funding for the course and the individual's current military salary (including all normal monetary allowances, rice ration, military health care and military housing to dependents) for the duration of the course. The individual would be excused all military duties for the duration of the course.	The beneficiary must fill and sign the ROS. The ROS period would be 3 years for every 1 year of study.
2B	Part Sponsorship (External full time) , defined as when RSLAF will partially pay the course fees and provide the individuals current military salary (including all normal monetary allowances, rice ration, military health care and military housing to dependents) for the duration of the course. The individual would be excused all military duties for the duration of the courser.	The beneficiary must fill and sign the RoS form. The RoS period would be 2 year 6 months for every 12 months of study.
2C	Part Sponsorship (External) , defined as when RSLAF would not pay any course fees but would provide the individuals current military salary (including all normal monetary allowances, rice ration, military health care and military housing to	The beneficiary must fill and sign the RoS form. The RoS period would

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	dependents) for the duration of the course. The individual would be excused all military duties for the duration of the course.	be 18 months for every 12 months of study.
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20. **BOARD DECISION.** The decision of Study Leave Selection Board will be promulgated through the chain of command by DDTED within five (5) working days after the board convened. Under no circumstances will the RSLAF pay educational costs for applicants who begin Study Leave without signed authorization from the Directorate of Defence Training, Education & Doctrine.

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENTS

21. Personnel approved for categories 1A, 2A, 2B and 2C (full -time study) will be placed on the Y-List by the Study Leave Selection Board for the duration of their course. Categories 2A, 2B and 2C will be the responsibility of DDTED. Director AFTEC will be responsible for all category 1A approved Study Leave personnel while on course. Those approved as Category 1B, 1C and 1D sponsorship will continue to be administered by their Unit commanders. D Def Pers will post Category 1A, 2A, 2B and 2C students to the Y List.

Military Secretary (MS) Implications.

22. All Categories 1A, 1C, 2A, 2B and 2C students are not eligible to be selected for promotion until resumption of work. The promotion board following the individual's resumption of work will only consider him/her if due for promotion and had fulfilled the requirement including the career courses (specialist units are exempted). However, they can be granted back-dated seniority when due for promotion.

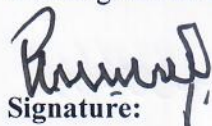
23. Nevertheless, Categories 1B and 1D beneficiary are eligible for promotion since they carried out their military duties whilst on studies. *Categories 1B, 1C & 1D beneficiaries are not to be posted to units away from their studying institutions until their courses are completed.*

24. All specialists (Legal, Medical; Engineer, etc) trained by the RSLAF should remain in that directorate/unit as specialists upon completion of his/her course. All overseas courses are to be communicated to the relevant Sierra Leone Embassy through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation to enable them facilitates the supervision of students

Reporting for Duty

25. **Category 1A and Study Leave.** Personnel approved for Category 1A Study Leave are to report to AFTEC within 5 working days of the start of their approved course. They will be given an administrative aide memoire and formally taken on strength. In the event that studies disperse for more than one month within the duration of a course, personnel are to report to AFTEC at the beginning of the dispersal period where they will be attached for duty until the course re-convenes.

26. **Categories 2A, 2B and 2C Study Leave.** Personnel in this category are to report to DDTED within 5 working days after the approval of their Study Leave applications. They will be given an administrative aide memoire and formally posted to Y List. Personnel in this

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category are to report to DDTED 14 days after the expiration of their approved Study Leave as recorded on the Trg RoS. DDTED will inform D Def Pers for their posting order.

27. **Categories 1B, 1C and 1D & Study Leave.** Personnel for this category are to confirm with their Unit Commanders that satisfactory administrative arrangements are in place for their part time study no later than five (5) working days before their study commences. **Note:** *All categories of personnel are to submit personal and course institutions contact details (residential, phone and email) to DDTED/Director AFTEC/Unit Commander as applicable.* Category 1C beneficiaries are to report for duties at their various units whenever there is recess at their educational institutions.

Personnel Report

28. **Category 1A Study Leave.** This category of students must be accounted for on AFEC weekly personnel report.

29. **Category 2A, 2B and 2C Study Leave.** DDTED must account for personnel of this category on the weekly personnel report.

30. **Category 1B, 1C and 1D Study Leave.** The formations/units must account for personnel of this category on the weekly personnel report.

Course Reports

31. DDTED to liaise with learning institutions of study leave beneficiaries for All categories, for the submission of periodic semester or progress reports; to enhance accountability and strict control measure in the study leave process. This could be achieved by mail delivery or e-mail (scanned copy to ddtermo@gmail.com). **Note:** *For courses longer than one year duration, failure to present an annual progress report will result in removal from the Study Leave Scheme and redeployed.* Beneficiaries of RSLAF sponsored courses who fail their respective courses will repay sponsorship costs. Beneficiaries of academic courses shall present their dissertation both soft and hard copies to the RSLAF through AFTEC at the end of their course. **Similarly, for courses of less than one year, failure to provide an end-of-course report will result in repaying of sponsorship costs.** **Note:** Fraudulent course reports shall not be acceptable; and any evidence of such act should result in cancellation of Study Leave as well as stringent disciplinary action against perpetrator.

32. Director AFTEC, formations and units commanders shall be visiting various institutions to monitor the progress of the sponsored students. The MoD to inform Defence Attaches about the granting of overseas study leave to beneficiaries within their jurisdiction. Defence Attaches to monitor on the progress of beneficiaries and report to MoD on a quarterly basis.

Course Duration

33. The RSLAF does not sponsor courses beyond 4 years full time training except for medical doctors, lawyers and engineers (Honors classes). When students complete the approved category of sponsorship, they are to complete the RoS period before applying for another sponsorship except where in RSLAF Senior Management deems it necessary due to capability exigencies.


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Course Revision/Changes

34. Beneficiaries will not be allowed to change courses from what was awarded by the Study Leave Board except with the expressed permission of the MoD. In the circumstance wherein a beneficiary changes his/her course without the expressed permission of the MoD, will result to the immediate cancellation of the Study Leave and the beneficiary shall return to work.

Application for Extension of Study Leave

35. Personnel wishing to apply for an extension of study leave sponsorship must have justification(s) and those on overseas sponsorship must apply through DDTED including those on local sponsorship through Director AFTEC/Formation and Unit Commanders. All applications for extension must be forwarded by the end of each academic year for approval by the ACDS TraDoc after consultation with the RSLAF Senior Management. **NB: Application for extension shall be based on course duration and unforeseen circumstances, with permission sought from MoD.**

Absence Without Leave (AWOL) on Study Leave

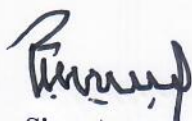
36. AWOL procedure for personnel on study leave sponsorship will be initiated under the following conditions:
- i. Cancellation and withdrawal of Study Leave benefits.
 - ii. Seek effort to have personnel on Study Leave arrested.
 - iii. Administrative action shall be taken to recover all issued military kits and monies spent on sponsorship (cost of tickets, course fees, salaries, rice/ration, medical, etc) up to 50% of total expenses benefitted from the RSLAF while on study leave.

REMOVAL PROCEDURE

37. In the event that an individual fails to complete an approved course to the standard required by the institution, or does not provide the required progress reports to Director AFTEC (for Category 1A beneficiaries), DDTED (Category 2A, 2B & 2C) or the Unit Commander/HOD (Categories 1B, 1C & 1D), then he/she is to report to be redeployed. Failure to report will result in the individual being posted **AWOL** with the resultant stoppage of pay and allowances. Disciplinary procedures will follow including the liability to recover course costs. In the event that an individual fails to make satisfactory progress during any stage or academic year of his/her course, he/she will be given only one chance to repeat that stage or academic year.

38. Any beneficiary who unilaterally breaks/halts his/her approved study leave course will have his/her study leave terminated immediately.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned, a beneficiary may apply to the RSLAF to halt/break his/her course with justifiable cause(s). In this circumstance the RSLAF shall consider the application on a case-by-case basis and grant a continuance of the study leave on resumption of the course.


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RECOMMENDED COURSES

39. The Study Leave Selection Board will give priority to courses that offer a direct benefit to RSLAF occupations as detailed in the SOTR. Priority is also based upon the preferred manning levels of specialized occupations. However, proposals for other courses not identified on the SOTR can be considered.

REVIEW

40. This policy shall be reviewed at least every four (4) years.

References:

- A. CDS Convening Orders Dated 7 November, 2022.
- B. RSLAF Extant Policies Review Committee meeting of 22 November, 2022.
- C. RSLAF 1961 Act.


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ANNEX A TO
RSLAF STUDY LEAVE POLICY
DATED 18 APR 23

LIST OF KEY COMMAND AND STAFF APPOINTMENTS NOT QUALIFY FOR
CATEGORIES 1A AND 1C STUDY LEAVE

1. Brigade COS
2. BDE DCOS
3. Commandant /Commanding Officer
4. All Directors at MOD
5. All Chiefs at JFC
6. SO3 G1, G2 and G3 at HQ JFC and Brigades
7. Adjutant and Ops Officers at Battalions
8. BSM
9. RSM


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ANNEX B TO
RSLAF STUDY LEAVE POLICY
DATED 18 APR 23

Study Leave Return of Service Declaration Form

1. I, Svc No..... Rank Name of Fmn/Unit.....do hereby accept the offer of study leave to attendat Institution.....Country..... from to I further accept that as the course attracts a Return of Service of {.....} years and (.....) months from the end date of the course. I shall not tender my resignation from the RSLAF until the completion of my RoS.

2. Failure to accept this RoS condition will result in the immediate termination of the offer of study leave.

3. Having been awarded study leave that attract a RoS, if I fail to honour the RoS commitment, I will face either disciplinary, administrative and or legal action and I will be liable to repay all emolument received during the course, as well as all associated costs; *up to 50% of total expenses benefitted from the RSLAF while on study leave.*

Signed, sealed, and delivered on this.....day of.....in the year of our lord

.....
Signature

.....
Signature

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Name & initials

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Name & initials

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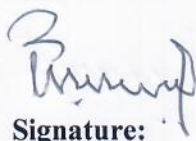
Applicant

Supervising Officer

Witness

Disposition:

1 Copy to candidate
1 Copy to D Def Pers
1 Copy to DDTED


Signature:

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