

# Strategy for Non-academic Staff Learning and Development - Rajarata University of Sri Lanka-

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## **Background**

On-academic staff within the Sri Lankan universities plays a major role in improving quality and efficiency within the university system. Enhancing skills, capacity and competencies of these categories of staff has been a focus in national level through University Grant Commission and through individual universities. Rajarata University of Sri Lanka has long been considering that the capacity building of non-academic staff as a priority. Goal four of the corporate plan of the university has a special focus on improving staff competencies through training and developmental activities. To align with this goal, Staff Development Center (SDC) of the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka has long been fulfilling training needs of academic and non-academic staff categories. Training needs of the non-academic staff involved in financial and administrative functions has been a major focus of the university.

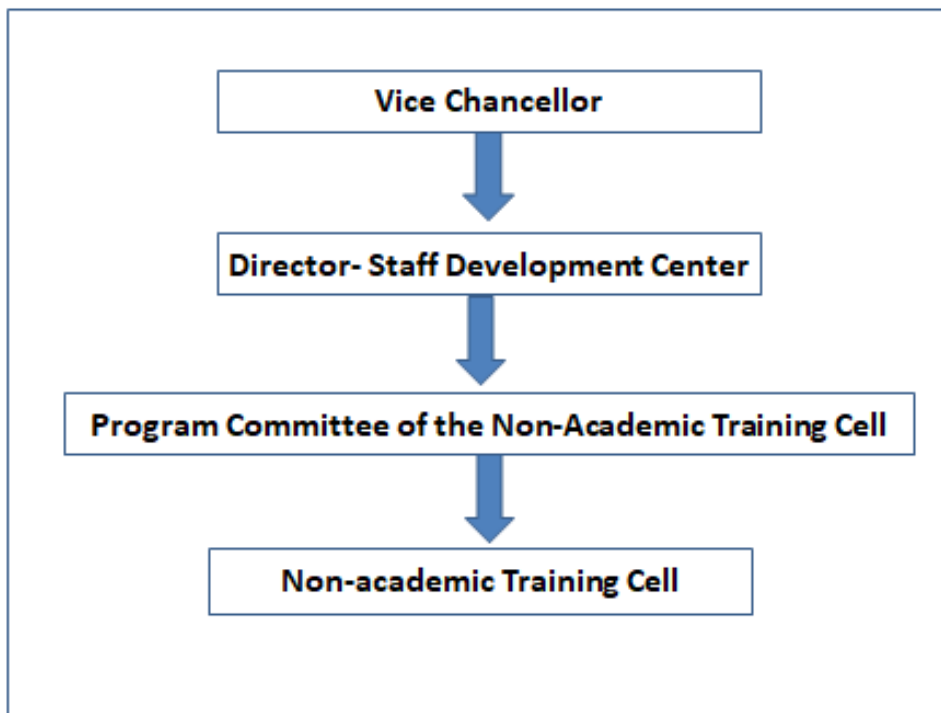
Selecting the Rajarata University of Sri Lanka as one of the partner universities for the Erasmus+ funded project aiming the Enhancing Governance, Management and Reform in Sri Lankan Universities through Non-Academic Staff Training (ENACT) create opportunities to improve non-academic staff capacity and competencies by working with other partner universities. The objectives of ENACT project was to enhance the governance, management and operations of Universities in Sri Lanka by building the knowledge and skills of non-academic staff, in view of enhancing organizational performance and supporting current and future modernization efforts and reforms in higher education. This objective aligns with the university goal in developing staff capacity and competencies.

ENACT project has adopted a training of the trainer method to improve staff capacity in all partner universities in Sri Lanka. This was planned to achieve through three main training programs in partner universities in Europe and then through subsequent multiplication training within the university. Rajarata University of Sri Lanka adopted this method as one of the strategies in policy level to improve non-academic staff capacity.

### **Establishment of the Non-academic Training Cell**

A dedicated facility to train non-academic staff was established under the Staff Development Center of the University. Establishment of this Non-academic Training Cell is approved by the governing body of the university and supported by ENACT project funding with necessary equipment. This cell is dedicated to identify training needs of non-academic staff through regular communication with key stakeholders, to plan training activities, conduct training and to evaluate the effectiveness of those training programs with key stakeholders. The Non-academic Training Cell is managed by the SDC through the Director of SDC and then will report to the management committee of the SDC and to the Vice Chancellors advisory committee. There is a separate program committee for the cell to plan and execute training programs. This committee is consists of non-academic staff members as representatives.

### **Hierarchical Position of the Non-academic Training Cell in the University**



Training programs of the non-academic Training Cell are currently arranged to cover following subject areas.

1. Trends and opportunities in Internationalization for higher education institutes the world and in Sri Lanka- Strategy and Action
2. Project Management skills- Project proposal development, costing & budgeting, implementation and monitoring & evaluation
3. University administration and financial management procedures
4. Accounting and Auditing in higher education
5. Procurement procedures
6. Good governance and effective financing
7. Modern Human Resource management practices
8. . Office management procedures
9. . Change management skills
10. Networking for learning and transfer of good practices of university administration,
11. Leadership skills
12. Productivity and time management
13. Work life balance
14. Diversity and maintaining equality

### **Mechanism to Develop Training Programs**

Training programs will be designed by the program committee of the Non-academic Training Cell under the supervision of the .Director/SDC. This committee will seek the input from external and internal experts, and from ENACT trainers who trained in partner universities in Europe.

Training programs will be delivered in physical lectures at the SDC and different delivering methods such as lectures, group discussions, practical activities and Q&A sessions will be adopted. Resource persons will be selected from the ENACT trainers, other resource persons from the university. In addition to that, the SDC and the Cell maintain databases of internal resource persons from different expertise. The current list consists of both academic and executive staff members. Director/ SDC, program committee of the Cell and ENACT management team members will be responsible for the administration of training programs.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The non-academic Training Cell will submit a monthly progress report to the Vice Chancellors advisory committee through the Director SDC. The suggestions and recommendation from the advisory committee will be incorporated to the activities by SDC director.

Following each training program, a post training evaluation questionnaire will be distributed to the participants. The collected feedback will be analyzed and formulated as a brief report. Feedback from participants will be used by the program committee to improve quality of the training activities.

### **Sustainability:**

Financial sustainability of the Non-academic Training Cell will be ensured by utilizing the service of already trained ENACT trainers and internal staff members as resource persons ( from the SDC resource pool). In addition to that training programs of the Cell will be included in the annual action plan of the SDC.