



# basic education

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Department:  
Basic Education  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

## **ORIENTATION MANUAL FOR EDUCATION ASSISTANTS AND GENERAL SCHOOL ASSISTANTS IN THE BASIC EDUCATION SECTOR**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The emergence and spread of the COVID-19 pandemic has been devastating to the South African economy and thus the livelihood of South Africans. As part of a proactive response, government introduced an economic recovery stimulus package. Central to the economic recovery stimulus package is an employment stimulus initiative, which is aimed at creating employment opportunities for young South Africans. The introduction of the economic recovery stimulus package does not only assist in providing employment opportunities, but also provides much needed relief to address some of the sector inherent challenges related to the teacher work force. Young people employed as Education Assistants and General School Assistants will also get an opportunity to develop critical skills that have a potential to improve their employability. It is against this backdrop that the DBE conceptualised the Education Assistant Programme.

These young people, referred to as Education Assistants or General School Assistants, are not teachers, but they are administrators who provide support to and work under the supervision of a teacher. They will not be entrusted with teaching responsibilities. The work they do must be allocated and supervised by a teacher.

The DBE has developed this an orientation programme for the Education Assistants and General School Assistants. Schools will be expected to provide overall mentoring, training and support for the assistants, based on specific responsibilities allocated. The Education Assistants and General School Assistants will be assigned a supervising teacher in the school. The DBE will also determine the framework for monitoring, oversight and reporting. This orientation program will provide you with an extensive background in completing many different tasks a teacher might need help with and will allow you to provide exceptional assistance throughout your career. The Manual has the following eight (8) topics to be dealt with.

Topic 1: Job profile/description of Education Assistants and General School Assistants and Broad expectations

Topic 2: Conditions of employment for Education Assistants and General School Assistants

Topic 3: School Governance and Management structures

Topic 4: Communication lines/protocol

Topic 5: School safety

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Topic 6: Resources for conducive working and school resources

Topic 7: Professionalism and Code of Conduct

Topic 8: Performance Reviews

## 2. ORIENTATION

### TOPIC 1: JOB PROFILE/DESCRIPTION OF EDUCATION ASSISTANTS AND GENERAL SCHOOL ASSISTANTS AND BROAD EXPECTATIONS

**(a) Job purpose:**

To provide administrative support to the school and assist teachers by supporting learners with their educational and social developmental needs as well as promoting a safe and secure learning and teaching environment.

**b) Roles and responsibilities:**

In acknowledging the COVID-19 environment, schools will be permitted the flexibility to utilise the Education Assistants according their contextual needs. The roles and responsibilities that can be allocated to education assistants include, but are not limited to the following:

- (i) Provide support to the teacher, such as typing, photocopying, distribution of teaching materials, capturing of data, filing, record keeping, etc.
- (ii) Support the teacher with technical preparation of the classroom for teaching and learning and ensure that teaching materials are available and ready for use.
- (iii) Oversee learners in and out of the classroom settings such as in the library, laboratory, school events and during lunch breaks.
- (iv) Provide after school support to learners, such as homework classes, sports events, cultural activities and school trips.
- (v) Provide services to maintain a safe, secure and clean classroom environment in promotion of the COVID-19 standard operating procedures.
- (vi) Carry out administrative tasks as required by the school.

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(vii) Infrastructure data collection and collation.

**c) Required Skills**

- (i) Good organisational skills.
- (ii) Flexibility and creativity.
- (iii) Basic IT skills.
- (iv) Enjoy working with children.
- (v) Patience, confidence and a compassionate attitude.
- (vi) Good literacy and numeracy skills.
- (vii) Ability to manage groups of learners and deal with challenging behaviour.
- (viii) Ability to communicate in English and one other official language.

**d) Useful qualities of an Education Assistant and General School Assistants**

In noting that both Education Assistants and General School Assistants will be supporting children's learning, they have to have certain traits.

**(i) Being Flexible**

Being flexible is a key trait of a **good education assistant (EA) or General School Assistant (GSA)**. Having the ability to adapt your time to meet the everyday needs of the teacher will ensure that lessons are carried out to plan and that pupils get the best learning tools and environment for their success.

**(ii) Being Friendly**

When working as an EA and GSA, being able to build good relationships is essential as you will be talking to pupils, staff and parents. The EA and GSA should be able to communicate clearly and build a trusting relationship with the learners they are supporting. This will help to develop learners' educational needs and allow their parents to feel confident that their children's development is in safe hands.

**(iii) Being Dedicated**

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A good EA and GSA will show dedication to the task allocated to them. The Education Assistant will show initiative and will cooperate with the supervisors in the school.

(iv) **Being Reliable**

This means showing up for work consistently, as expected and adhering to the principle of punctuality. The EAs and GSAs will complete the tasks that have been assigned to them and will refrain from giving excuses for not being able to fulfil their role as expected.

**Activity 1.1:** Once you have completed orientation, complete the checklist below:

<b>Roles and responsibilities</b>	<b>Response Yes/ No</b>	<b>Comment</b>
(1) Provide support to the teacher, such as typing, photocopying, distribution of teaching materials, capturing of data, filing, record keeping, etc.	Yes No	
(2) Support the teacher with technical preparation of the classroom for teaching and learning and ensure that teaching materials are available and ready for use.	Yes No	
(3) Oversee learners in and out of the classroom settings such as in the library, laboratory, school events and during lunch breaks.	Yes No	

<b>Roles and responsibilities</b>	<b>Response Yes/ No</b>	<b>Comment</b>
(4) Provide after school support to learners, such as homework classes, sports events, cultural activities and school trips.	Yes No	
(5) Provide services to maintain a safe, secure and clean classroom environment in promotion of the COVID-19 standard operating procedures.	Yes No	
(6) Carry out administrative tasks as required by the school.	Yes No	
(7) Carry out all maintenance work such as painting, door fixing and repair etc.		
(8) Keep the school premises clean and conducive for learning		
(9) Infrastructure data collection and collation.	Yes No	

**Activity 1.2:** Once you have completed orientation, complete the checklist below:

<b>Skills Required</b>	<b>Response Yes/ No</b>	<b>Comment</b>

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a) Good organisational skills.	Yes/ No	
b) Flexibility and creativity.	Yes/ No	
c) Basic IT skills.	Yes/ No	
d) Enjoy working with children.	Yes/ No	
e) Patience, confidence and a compassionate attitude.	Yes/ No	
f) Good literacy and numeracy skills.	Yes/ No	
g) Ability to manage groups of learners and deal with challenging behaviour.	Yes/ No	
h) Ability to communicate in English and one other official language.	Yes/ No	



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## TOPIC 2: CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT FOR EDUCATION ASSISTANTS AND GENERAL SCHOOL ASSISTANTS

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document contains the standard terms and conditions for the employment of Education Assistants and General School Assistants.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 In this Document –

**“department”** means the Provincial Education Department

**“employer”** means the Provincial Education Department

**“management”** means any person employed by the department at a school or Provincial Education Department.

**“Worker ”** means any person working as an Education Assistant or General School Assistant

### 3. TERMS OF WORK

3.1 Education Assistants and General School Assistants are employed on a temporary or contract basis.

### 4. NORMAL HOURS OF WORK

An employer shall not set tasks or hours of work that require an Education Assistant or General School Assistant

4.1 to work-

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4.1.1 More than forty hours in any week;

4.1.2 On more than five days in any week; and

4.1.3 For more than eight hours on any day.

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4.2 An employer and Education Assistant or General School Assistant may agree that an Education Assistant/ or General School Assistant will work four days per week. The EA or GSA may then work up to ten hours per day.

## 5. MEAL BREAKS

5.1 An EA or GSA may not work for more than five hours without taking a meal break of at least thirty minutes' duration.

5.2 An employer and EA or GSA may agree on longer meal breaks

5.3 An Education Assistant may not work during meal break, however an employer may require an EA or GSA to perform duties during meal break if those duties cannot be left unattended and cannot be performed by another EA or GSA . An employer must take reasonable steps to ensure that an EA or GSA is relieved of his or her duties during meal break.

5.4 An EA or GSA who is paid on the basis of time worked must be paid if the Education Assistant is required to work or be available during the meal break.

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**6. DAILY REST PERIOD**

6.1 Every EA or GSA is entitled to a daily rest period of at least twelve consecutive hours. The daily rest period is measured from the time an EA or GSA ends work on one day until the time an EA or GSA starts work on the next day.

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**7. WEEKLY REST PERIOD**

7.1 Every EA or GSA must have two days off every week (Normally Saturdays and Sundays or public holidays). An EA or GSA may only work on their day off to perform work which must be done without delay and cannot be performed by EAs or GSAs during their ordinary hours of work ("emergency work").

**8. SICK LEAVE**

8.1 Only EA or GSA who work more than 24 hours per month have the right to claim sick-pay in terms of this clause.

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8.2 An EA or GSA who is unable to work on account of illness or injury is entitled to claim one day's sick leave for every full month that the EA or GSA has worked in terms of the contract.

8.3 An EA or GSA may accumulate a maximum of twelve day's sick leave in a year.

8.4 Accumulated sick-leave may not be transferred from one contract to another contract.

8.5 An employer must pay an EA or GSA sick pay on the Education Assistants' usual payday.

8.6 Before paying sick day, an employer may require an EA or GSA to produce a certificate stating that the EA or GSA was unable to work on account of sickness or injury if the EA or GSA is-

8.6.1 Absent from work for more than two consecutive days: or

8.6.2 Absent from work on more than two occasions in any eight-week period.

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8.7 A medical certificate must be issued and signed by medical practitioner, a qualified nurse or s clinic staff member authorised to issue medical certificates indicating the duration and reason for incapacity.

8.8 An EA or GSA is not entitled to paid sick-leave for a work related injury or

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occupational disease for which the EA or GSA can claim compensation under the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, No 130 of 1993 (COIDA).

**9. FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY LEAVE**

9.1 EAs or GSAs who work at least four days per week, are entitled to three days paid family responsibility leave each year in the following circumstances-

9.1.1 When the employees 's child is born;

9.1.2 When the employees' child is sick;

9.1.3 In the event of a death of-

9.1.3.1 The employees parent spouse or life partner

9.1.3.2 The employee's parent, adoptive parent, grandparent, child, adopted child, grandchild or sibling.

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## 10. STATEMENT OF CONDITIONS

10.1 An employer must give an EA or GSA this document containing the conditions of employment and a statement containing the following details at the start of employment –

10.1.1 The employers 'name and address;

10.1.2 The task or job that the EA or GSA is to perform; and

10.1.3 The period for which the Education Assistant is hired or, if this is not certain, the expected duration of the contract;

10.1.4 The EA or GSA 's rate of pay and how this is to be calculated;

10.1.5 The training that the EA or GSA will receive.

## 11. KEEPING RECORDS

11.1 Every employer and school principal must keep written records of at least the following –

11.1.1 the EA or GSA 's name and position;

11.1.2 copy of an acceptable EA or GSA identification

11.1.3 Payments made to each EA or GSA .

11.2 The employer must keep this record for period of at least three years after termination of contract

## 12. PAYMENT

12.1 An employer must pay all stipends at least monthly by cheque or into a bank

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account.

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- 1.1 An EA or GSA may not be paid less than the minimum stipend stated in the contract of employment. This will be adjusted annually.
  - 1.2 Payment must be directly deposited into a bank account designated by the EA or GSA .
  - 1.3 An employer must give the EA or GSA the following information in writing
    - 1.3.1 The period which payment is made;
    - 1.3.2 The numbers of tasks completed or hours worked;
    - 1.3.3 The Education Assistants' earnings;
    - 1.3.4 Any money deducted from payment;
    - 1.3.5 The actual amount to be paid to the EA or GSA .

## 2. Deductions

- 2.1 An employer may not deduct money from an Education Assistant/General School Assistant's payment unless the deduction is required in terms of the law.
- 2.2 An employer must deduct and pay to the SA Revenue Service any income tax that the Education Assistant/General School Assistant is required to pay.
- 2.3 An employer who deduct money from Education Assistant/General School Assistant 's pay for payment to another person must pay the money to that person within the time frame period and other requirements specified in the agreement law, court order or arbitration award concerned.
- 2.4 An Employer may not require or allow an Education Assistant/General School Assistant to –



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- 2.4.1 repay any payment except an overpayment previously made by mistake;
  - 2.4.2 state the Education Assistant receives a greater amount of money than the employer actually paid the Education Assistant/General School Assistant; or
  - 2.4.3 Pay the employer or any person for having been employed.

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### **3. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

- 3.1 Employers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment is healthy and safe.
- 3.2 A Education Assistant must-
- 3.3 Work in a way that does not endanger his /her health safety or that of any other person;
- 3.4 Obey any health and safety instruction;
- 3.5 Obey all health and safety rules of the employer;
- 3.6 Use any personal protective equipment or clothing issued by the employer; and
- 3.7 Report any accident near –miss incident or dangerous behaviour by another person to their employer or manager.

### **4. COMPENSATION FOR INJURIES AND DISEASES**

- 4.1 It is the responsibility of the employers to arrange for all persons employed to be covered in terms of the Compensation for Occupational Injuries and Diseases Act, 130 of 1994.

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- 4.2 An Education Assistant/General School Assistant must report any work –related injury or occupational disease to their employer or manager.
  - 4.3 The employer must report the accident or disease to the compensation commissioner.
  - 4.4 An employer must pay an Education Assistant/General School Assistant who is unable to work because of an injury caused by an accident at work 75% of their earnings for up to three months. The employer will be refunded this amount by the compensation commissioner. This does not apply to injuries caused by accidents outside the workplace such as road accidents or accidents at home.

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## 5. TERMINATION

- 5.1 The employer may terminate the employment of an Education Assistant/General School Assistant for good cause after the following a fair procedure.
- 5.2 An Education Assistant will not receive a severance pay on termination.
- 5.3 An Education Assistant will not require to give notice to terminate employment. However, an Education Assistant/General School Assistant who wishes to resign

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should advise the employer in advance to allow the employer to find a replacement.

5.4 An Education Assistant/General School Assistant who is absent for more than three consecutive days without informing the employer of an intention to return to work will have terminated the contract. However, the Education Assistant/General School Assistant may be re-engaged if a position becomes available.

5.5 An Education Assistant who does not attend required training events, without good reason, will have terminated the contract. However, the Education Assistant/General School Assistant may be re-engaged if a position becomes available.

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## 6. CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

- 6.1 On termination of employment, an Education Assistant/General School Assistant is entitled to a certificate stating –
- 6.2 the Education Assistant/General School Assistant's full name;
  - 6.3 the name and address of the employer;
  - 6.4 Project which the Education Assistant/General School Assistant worked;
  - 6.5 The work performed by the Education Assistant/General School Assistant;
  - 6.6 Any training received by the Education Assistant/General School Assistant as part of the project;
  - 6.7 The period for which the Education Assistant/General School Assistant worked on the project;
  - 6.8 Any other information agreed on between the employer and Education Assistant/General School Assistant.

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**Activity 2.1: Once you have completed orientation, complete the checklist below:**

<b>Human Resources legislation and policies</b>	<b>Response True/False</b>	<b>My understanding of the Act</b>
Education Assistants/General School Assistants are appointed in accordance with the <b>PUBLIC SERVICE</b> Act No. 103 of 1994.		
Education Assistants/General School Assistants are appointed in accordance with the <b>EMPLOYMENT OF EDUCATORS ACT</b> , No. 76 of 1998		

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### TOPIC 3: SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

A school has two (2) critical layers that are linked to its day to day operation over and above the Provincial Education Department, District and Circuit. These are:

- a) **School Governing Bodies (SGBs)**- responsible for School Governance including appointment of staff;
- b) **School Management Teams (SMTs)**: are responsible for quality of teaching and learning. For them to improve the quality of teaching and learning effectively and efficiently, they should be able to manage their roles and functioning successfully. The SMTs are led by the Principals as a senior managers of curriculum delivery at the school. They are the Accounting Officers, officially appointed by the Department. They also advise SGBs on governance issues but take decisions on instructional matters (curriculum delivery).

**Activity 3.1: Once you have completed orientation, complete the checklist below:**

Indicator on roles of the following structures	My understanding of their roles	My idea(s) for managing their roles
SGBs		
SMTs		

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#### TOPIC 4: COMMUNICATION LINES/PROTOCOL

Each Educator Assistant/General School Assistant will be allocated an experienced teacher. This teacher must be the first point of communication and be central in guiding an Education Assistant/General School Assistant to correct channels of communication. If this teacher is not at school, there should be a dedicated second in charge teacher. Learning Communities will also be established by the school and their roles must be well defined to assist Education Assistants/General School Assistants to adapt and learn.

**Activity 4.1:** Describe the protocols to be followed when communicating.

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## TOPIC 5: SCHOOL SAFETY

- Education Assistants/General School Assistants must read the school safety policy and plan. At all times, strive to uphold the safety requirements as stipulated in the school safety plan.
- Employers must take all reasonable steps to ensure that the working environment is healthy and safe.
- An Education Assistant/General School Assistant must-
  - ✓ Work in a way that does not endanger his /her health safety or that of any other person;
  - ✓ Obey any health and safety instruction;
  - ✓ Obey all health and safety rules of the employer;
  - ✓ Use any personal protective equipment or clothing issued by the employer; and
  - ✓ Report any accident near –miss incident or dangerous behaviour by another person to their employer or manager.

**Activity 5.1:** Once you have completed orientation, complete the checklist below:

An Education Assistant/General School Assistant must:	Response Yes/ No	Comment
Work in a way that does not endanger his /her health safety or that of any other person	Yes No	
Obey any health and safety instruction	Yes No	
Obey all health and safety rules of the employer	Yes No	
Use any personal protective equipment or clothing issued by the employer	Yes No	

An Education Assistant/General School Assistant must:	Response Yes/ No	Comment
Report any accident near –miss incident or dangerous behaviour by another person to their employer or manager	Yes  No	

## TOPIC 6: RESOURCES FOR CONDUCTIVE WORKING AND SCHOOL RESOURCES

- The school shall provide work resources to Education Assistants/General School Assistants;
- The Education Assistants/General School Assistants must take care of school resources;
- The resources registers must be signed off by the Mentor teacher and the Education Assistant/General School Assistant;
- Any damage to school resources must be immediately reported; and
- Such resources such as non-consumables must be returned to the school when the employment term ends or an Education Assistants/General School Assistants terminate service.

**Activity 6.1: Once you have completed orientation, complete the checklist below:**

Issue/ Aspect Covered	Response Yes/ No	Comment
The school shall provide work resources to Education Assistants/General School Assistants	Yes  No	
The Education Assistants/General School Assistants must take care of school resources	Yes  No	
The resources registers must be signed off by the Mentor teacher and the Education Assistant/General School	Yes  No	

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Issue/ Aspect Covered	Response Yes/ No	Comment
Assistant		
Any damage to school resources must be immediately reported	Yes No	
Such resources such as non-consumables must be returned to the school when the employment term ends or an Education Assistants/General School Assistants terminate service.	Yes No	

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## TOPIC 7: PROFESSIONALISM AND CODE OF CONDUCT

Professionalism and Code of Conduct relies amongst other pillars on the following:

- Behaviour,
- Task confidence;
- Motivation;
- Work attendance;
- Discipline;
- Disruptiveness;
- Independence;
- Relationships with teachers;
- Completion of assigned work; and
- Following instructions from other teachers.
- The effective use of Education Assistants under everyday classroom conditions.
- The effective use of Education Assistants in delivering structured interventions out of class (What is the benefit of using Education Assistants/General School Assistants in one-to-one or small group structured interventions?)
- Integrating learning from work led by teachers and Education Assistants
- What evidence is there on the use of Education Assistants/General School Assistant in everyday school contexts?
- How well does the Educator Assistant/General School Assistant adhere to the school Code of Conduct?

**Activity 7.1: Complete the following sentence with 3 conclusions.**

**Should I fail to maintain Professionalism and good conduct, this may lead to:**

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## TOPIC 8: PERFORMANCE REVIEWS

The school will be expected to conduct performance review every term. The performance review framework must be followed. Areas to be covered during performance reviews at the end of each school term are:

- a) Attendance
- b) Thoroughness and Accuracy
- c) Willingness to Learn
- d) Conduct
- e) Friendliness and Helpfulness
- f) Language efficiency – measured in the school context and job requirement
- g) Flexibility
- h) Cooperation with colleagues
- i) Reliability
- j) General progress
- k) Completion of assigned work; and
- l) Following instructions from teachers and SMT.

**Activities 8.1: Indicate additional areas for performance review as well as objection on the mentioned areas and provide reasons for both additions and objections.**

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