

PROCEDURE

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Related Policy: 3.4.2
Title: Faculty/Staff Development Procedure
Responsibility: Vice President, Human Resources and Employee Relations

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President

DISCLAIMER

PURSUANT TO SECTION 41-1-110 OF THE CODE OF LAWS OF SC, AS AMENDED, THE LANGUAGE USED IN THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT BETWEEN THE EMPLOYEE AND THE AGENCY.

I. PURPOSE

Horry-Georgetown Technical College recognizes that faculty and staff development is necessary to ensure the growth of employees and the organization, as well as to further improve the accomplishment of our mission. Faculty and staff development should be implemented in a manner that supports the College's mission and encourages employee growth and should be associated with an institutional, departmental or personal objective. The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines for faculty and staff development when public funds are used.

II. GOAL

The primary goal of the faculty and staff development program (FSD) is to implement a program, which supports faculty and staff development activities by:

- A. Providing opportunities to participate in seminars, workshops, and other professional activities to upgrade job knowledge and skills and to improve the effectiveness of the College;
- B. Providing opportunities to "return to college" to increase expertise in the professional field;
- C. Providing opportunities to "return to industry" to gain state-of-the-art experiences by working on site in business and industry.

III. APPLICATION GUIDELINES

- A. Each Vice President allocates available funds directly or through an appointed Divisional Faculty Staff Development committee.
- B. Request must be submitted prior to the faculty and staff development event.
- C. When considering approval of a request the following criteria will be considered:
 - 1. Relative value of course(s) to the agency
 - 2. Length of service of the requestor
 - 3. History of course completions by the requestor
 - 4. Amount of tuition assistance already approved in the past for the requestor
 - 5. Amount of funds available for the upcoming fiscal year
 - 6. Workload or staffing
- D. All FSD applications must have the immediate supervisor's and/or the Appropriate Associate Vice President's signatures with the final approval by the appropriate Vice President or designee or when applicable, the President.
- E. Maximum allowable amount to be awarded per person per fiscal year is \$1,200 (with the exception of required courses). Maximum allowable amounts established may be less than \$1,200 within each Vice President or President's unit based upon number of requests and/or financial constraints. If department funds are not available to assist with additional divisional needed monies, the applicant may appeal the decision by sending in writing to the FSD Chair or appropriate Vice President, or when applicable, the President a financial justification for additional funding.
- F. Request must be justified with outcomes expected resulting from faculty/staff development activity.
- G. Request must adhere to institutional travel guidelines.
- H. No funds will be awarded unless the Divisional FSD Committee and the appropriate Vice President, or when applicable, the President have approved the application.
- I. Evaluation forms must be completed and returned to the FSD Chair or appropriate Vice President, or the when applicable, the President within a two-week completion of the faculty/staff development activity.
- J. All purchase requisitions and/or travel reimbursement forms are to be signed by the Divisional FSD Chair or appropriate Vice President, or when applicable, the President

before submission. Employees pay the cost up front and if all criteria are met, the employee is reimbursed.

- K. A purchase order should be submitted prior to the beginning of the course(s) to be taken.
- L. College FSD application and evaluation forms will be available in each Vice President's office.

IV. REQUIRED COURSES

Reasonable costs must be maintained for required courses; therefore, prior to determining that the employee will be required to take a course, a thorough investigation must be conducted of the college in which the employee wishes to enroll, its accreditation and cost. Required courses for College employees (faculty staff, probationary, temporary or temporary grant, temporary grant must be fully loaded by the grant) may be necessary to help employees improve his/her performance in his/her present position or to acquire skills necessary to meet business needs. "Required" should be defined as courses, which, upon being hired, were not necessary for the employee, but are now being required by the College, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, or any other accrediting body recognized by the College. When an employee, with the approval of the appropriate College Administrator, is directed to take such courses, academic-related costs will be paid for by the employer,⁽¹⁴⁾ including tuition, fees and books. Approved requests must be submitted prior to registration of required course(s).

V. RETURN TO BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, OR PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT

The purpose of the program is to provide opportunities for full-time equivalents (FTE) to enter business and industry, as well as enhance his/her professional expertise in current technical trends, changes, and work skill requirements relating to his/her teaching or functional areas.

A. Compensation of Employees

1. The participating employee will remain in an employment status with the College and will:
 - a) Receive normal salary and benefits while "in industry."
 - b) Retain eligibility for any normal salary adjustments.
 - c) Not be subsidized in any way by the business, industry, or outside professional enhancement organization.

⁽¹⁴⁾ *The same applies for employees in temporary grant positions only if funds are available in the grant.*

2. The outside organization may reimburse the College for the services of the employee.
3. Employees who are on summer break and not working for the College may be employed directly by an outside organization and will not come under this policy and procedure.

B. Administrative Responsibilities

1. The employee's immediate supervisor will continue to have supervisory responsibility concerning the employee's field training experience.
2. Additional FTE employee(s) may not be hired as replacements for participants in these programs.
3. All cooperative arrangements with outside organizations must be in writing and agreed to by the participating organizations.

C. Equal Employment Opportunity Requirements

1. The organization accepting the employee for training purposes will indicate, in the cooperative agreement referenced above, their non-discrimination policy regarding race, sex, religion, age, national origin, or disability.
2. The College will ensure that no employee is denied participation in the program because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, or disability.

VI. NATIONAL PROFESSIONAL CERTIFICATION

National Professional Certification(s) provide opportunities for faculty and staff to increase their knowledge and skills in their subject area and improve professional job duties. Full time permanent and full time probationary employees may participate in such programs. Expense associated with these activities may be prepaid or reimbursed if preapproved by immediate supervisor, Associative Vice President and Vice President.

VII. SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

Seminars, workshops and conferences provide opportunities for employees (faculty and staff) to include part-time employees with the approval of the appropriate College Administrator, to increase his/her job knowledge and skills. All employees may participate in such programs, provided sufficient funding is available. Expenses associated with these activities may be prepaid or reimbursed.

VIII. LEAVE WITHOUT PAY FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Leave without pay for professional development is defined as full or part-time leave in non-pay status requested by FTE employees to participate in staff development activities or further educational attainment not required by the College. Such requests for leave without pay must be in writing and approved in advance by the employee's supervisor(s) and/or Associate Vice President, Vice President, and the College President. Employees may apply for educational leave without pay under the following conditions:

A. Employment Status

Employees on leave without pay retain all rights and privileges of employment with the state of South Carolina with the following exceptions:

1. Appropriate salary adjustments will only be made upon the employee's return to work.
2. An employee while on full-time leave without pay shall not accrue annual leave, sick leave, or holidays. However, accrued annual and sick leave shall be carried over until the employee returns to work.
3. Employees on leave without pay will pay both the employer and the employee share of premiums for his/her medical and dental insurance, as well as retirement contributions if he/she wishes to continue coverage or eligibility.
4. Employees on continuous leave without pay will be considered to have a break in service after twelve consecutive months unless an extended period of time up to 12 months is approved by the College President.

B. Approval

Consideration for approval shall include, but not be limited to: workloads, work distribution, relationship of development activity to position responsibilities, time duration and satisfactory job performance reviews. Approval may be made only when the development activity is shown to be beneficial to the employee and the College.

C. Maximum Length

Leave without pay may be generally approved for the length of the academic term or terms requested, but no more than twelve (12) consecutive months. If requested by the employee, the College President may only approve one additional period not to exceed twelve (12) months.

IX. TUITION ASSISTANCE

A. Purpose

Tuition assistance may be given to permanent employees who desire to obtain academic degrees, to take individual credit courses for career advancement, or increase key job knowledge or skills.

B. Tuition Assistance Limits

Tuition assistance may be provided for no more than six (6) credit hours per academic term per employee, not to exceed 18 hours in an academic year. However, the College/System Office may limit the credit hours for which an employee may receive tuition assistance based on its business needs.

C. Eligibility

1. Employees in FTE positions, temporary grant positions, and time-limited project positions, with a minimum of six (6) months of state service may be eligible for tuition assistance. Employees in temporary grant positions may receive tuition assistance at the discretion of the College if funds are available in the grant.
2. Employees must work at least thirty (30) hours per week to be eligible for the program.
3. Employees are required to work the normal number of hours in his/her regular workweek. However, managers may adjust a normal schedule to let him/her make-up work time, and/or allow use of annual leave to accommodate class schedules.
4. Tuition assistance may be approved for employees who attend accredited institutions of higher learning offering courses within South Carolina and for employees who take on-line courses from accredited institutions of higher learning. Exceptions must be approved by the Human Resources Division on a case-by-case basis.
5. Courses must be taken for academic credit but do not have to be taken toward the completion of a degree.
6. If an employee is receiving other assistance that does not require repayment, i.e. scholarships, the College may reimburse the employee for eligible costs incurred while participating in the program as long as the reimbursement and other funds received does not exceed the total cost of the course(s) taken. If the employee is receiving other assistance that must be repaid, i.e. student loans, the College may allow an employee to receive tuition assistance.

7. Applications for tuition assistance will only be considered if coursework is directly related to an employee's current position description, job duties, or teaching discipline.

D. Reimbursement

1. Employees must successfully complete the course(s) requirements to have tuition cost reimbursed. Employees who do not successfully complete the course(s) will not be reimbursed. The minimum success criteria for undergraduate courses is a grade of "C." A minimum success criteria for graduate courses is a grade of "B."
2. Upon satisfactorily completing the course a signed copy of the purchase order should be submitted to Accounts Payable along with an official documentation of the grade achieved for the course from the college or university attended indicating a grade of a "C" or better for undergraduate course work and a grade of a "B" or better for graduate course work.
3. Tuition and lab fees may be reimbursed in full or in part as determined by the College. Reimbursement schedules will be communicated to employees at the beginning of the fiscal year in which any change will be effective. If there is no reimbursement schedule change, no communication is necessary.
4. Books and any fees other than tuition and laboratory fees will not be paid, except for required courses (See IV).

X. TUITION REMISSION

- A. All permanent full time College employees shall be entitled to enroll in up to four (4) credit hours per semester not to exceed twelve (12) credit hours per year, or up to six (6) continuing education units (CEU's) per term (CEU's: one CEU equals ten contact hours) with a maximum tuition remission per term of \$300 not to exceed eighteen (18) CEU's per year with a maximum tuition remission per year of \$900.
- B. Employees must complete the appropriate Tuition Remission Credit Voucher, (Continuing Education or Curriculum) and obtain the signatures of their immediate supervisor and/or Associate Vice President, Vice President approval and President's approval, if applicable. The Tuition Remission Credit voucher forms are available in the Human Resources Office.

Prior to submitting your CEU Tuition Remission Credit Voucher request to your immediate supervisor, appropriate Associate Vice President and if applicable to the appropriate Vice President, please complete the CEU Tuition Remission Credit Voucher form and submit it to the Vice President for Workforce Development to determine if your request qualifies for the benefit. If it does, the Vice President for Workforce Development will approve it via a signature and return the Tuition Remission Credit Voucher form to you to obtain the other necessary approvals as outlined above.

- C. Following the approval by your immediate supervisor, appropriate Associate Vice President and if applicable, the appropriate Vice President, please submit the Tuition Remission Credit voucher form to the Human Resources Department for verification of your full-time employment.
- D. Employees in a FTE position may take a course during their normal work hours with the prior written approval of an adjusted work schedule by the immediate supervisor.
- E. In addition to the above, the Foundation Board established an Employee Scholarship Fund to enhance the current tuition assistance policy of the College (and the State) by allowing permanent HGTC employees to be reimbursed for those costs beyond the four credit hours per semester currently allowed. The Employee Scholarship Fund is to enhance the current tuition assistance program for permanent full-time Horry-Georgetown Technical College faculty and staff members. The Employee Scholarship Fund allows those eligible employees to be reimbursed for those costs beyond the four credit hours per semester currently allowed, not to exceed two total courses per semester. Application forms are available in the Foundation Office.
- F. Upon completion of the appropriate Tuition Remission Credit voucher, the employee follows the normal registration process.

XI. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES EXCLUDED FROM FACULTY/STAFF DEVELOPMENT REIMBURSEMENT

- A. Employees may participate in professional development activities for personal growth, career advancement, and to increase job skills. When employees pursue such professional development activities that are not reimbursable, he/she will attend at his/her own expense. No approval is necessary to participate in such activities as long as they are scheduled during off-duty hours and do not interfere with the employees' job duties and/or performance.
- B. Employees are encouraged to schedule activities during off-duty hours whenever possible. When a desired activity cannot be scheduled during off-duty hours, the employee's immediate supervisor and employee may elect to adjust the employee's normal work schedule as long as it does not interfere with their normal efficient operation. With an adjusted work schedule, the employee must continue to work their required number of hours per week.
- C. When a desired activity cannot be scheduled during off-duty hours, and it is not feasible to adjust work schedules, FTE employees may be allowed to take annual leave or may be granted leave without pay.

XII. FSD REPAYMENT BY EMPLOYEES

If the funded employee voluntarily terminates with the College, within one calendar year of the date of reimbursement is awarded, the employee will be required to reimburse the College upon the date of termination.

XIII. OTHER COURSE WORK

Employees may take courses independent of the tuition assistance program for personal growth, career advancement, and to increase job skill. When employees pursue such courses outside of the tuition assistance program, he/she will attend his/her own expense. No approval is necessary to take such courses as long as they are taken on off-duty hours and do not interfere with the employees' job duties and/or performance.

- A. Employees are encouraged to schedule classes during off-duty hours whenever possible. When a desired class cannot be scheduled during off-duty, the college may elect to adjust the employee's normal work schedule as long as it does not interfere with normal efficient operation.
- B. When a desired class cannot be scheduled during off-duty hours and it is not feasible to adjust work schedules, employees in FTE positions may be allowed to take annual leave or may be granted leave without pay.
- C. Tuition or fees for courses taken by employees in FTE positions at the college where he/she is employed may be remitted at the discretion of the college.