

STATE BOARD FOR TECHNICAL AND COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION

PROCEDURE

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TITLE: EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT

**POLICY
REFERENCE NUMBER:** 8-10-100

**DIVISION OF
RESPONSIBILITY:** Human Resource Services

DATE OF LAST REVISION: June 12, 2014

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 SC STATE BOARD FOR TECHNICAL AND COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION / THE SC TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM. THE STATE BOARD FOR TECHNICAL AND COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION/THE SC TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVISE THE CONTENT OF THIS DOCUMENT, IN WHOLE OR IN PART. NO PROMISES OR ASSURANCES, WHETHER WRITTEN OR ORAL, WHICH ARE CONTRARY TO OR INCONSISTENT WITH THE TERMS OF THIS PARAGRAPH CREATE ANY CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT.

I. PURPOSE

The State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education (SBTCE) recognizes that faculty and staff development is necessary to ensure the growth of both employees and the organization, as well as, further improve the accomplishment of our mission. Such faculty and staff development should be implemented in a manner that supports the agency's mission and encourages employee growth and should be made a part of any employee professional development plans used by the System Office/college. The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines for such faculty and staff development when public funds are used. The System/ College President or designee will develop and publish a policy outlining the details of the program and how it will be administered.

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As part of this policy, a formal agreement will be developed for use between the recipient of employee development programs outlining the limits, requirements and responsibilities of both parties.

II. SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS AND CONFERENCES

Seminars, workshops and conferences provide opportunities for employees (faculty and staff) to increase 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.

III. REQUIRED COURSES

Required courses for any employees (faculty, staff, probationary, temporary or temporary 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. When an employee is directed to take such courses, academic-related costs will be paid for the employee¹, including tuition, fees and books. Additionally, assignment of such courses should be made in accordance with policies, procedures, state guidelines as well as institutional plans for faculty and staff development, whenever possible.

IV. RETURN TO BUSINESS, INDUSTRY, OR PROFESSIONAL ENHANCEMENT

The purpose of the program is to provide opportunities for employees in full time equivalent (FTE) positions 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 employment status of the college and will:
 - a. receive normal salary and benefits.
 - b. retain eligibility for any normal salary adjustments.

¹ For employees in temporary grant positions, this applies only if funds are available in the grant.

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- c. not be subsidized in any way by the business, industry, or outside professional enhancement organization.
 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 employee(s) in FTE positions 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 in B.3. above, their nondiscrimination 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, color, sex, religion, age, national origin, or disability.

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V. 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 System Office/college. Such requests for leave without pay must be in writing and approved in advance by the employee's supervisor and the System/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 may pay both the employer and employee share of premiums for his/her medical, dental, and vision 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 approved by the System/College President for an additional twelve months.

B. Approval

Consideration for approval shall include, but not be limited to: workloads, work distribution, relationship of development activity to position responsibilities and time duration. Approval may be made only when the development activity is shown to be beneficial to the employee and the college or the System Office.

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C. Maximum Length

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

VI. TUITION ASSISTANCE

A. Purpose

Tuition assistance may be given to employees who desire to obtain academic degrees or to take individual credit courses for career advancement, to 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. However, the System Office/college 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 System Office/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 generally required to work the normal number of hours in his/her regular work week. However, managers may adjust an employee's normal schedule to let him/her make-up work time and/or allow use of annual leave to accommodate class schedules.

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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.
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 System Office/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 System Office/college may allow an employee to receive tuition assistance.

D. Reimbursement

1. Employees must successfully complete the course(s) requirements to have tuition costs reimbursed. Employees who do not successfully complete the course(s) will not be reimbursed. The minimum success criterion for undergraduate courses is a grade of "C." For graduate courses and/or doctoral courses, it is a grade of "B." Individual colleges may impose more stringent requirements.
2. Tuition and laboratory fees may be reimbursed in full or in part as determined by SBTCE or college procedure.
3. 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 III).

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E. Funding

1. Participation in the tuition assistance program will be determined by each institution.
2. Tuition assistance reimbursement must be provided from existing institution funds to the extent funds are available.

F. Administration

1. Eligible employees must submit a tuition assistance request/agreement form to the Human Resources Office or other designated tuition assistance administrator in accordance with deadlines and procedures determined by the institution and communicated to all employees.
2. When considering approval of a request the following criteria should be considered:
 - a. Relative value of course(s) to the agency
 - b. Length of service of the requestor
 - c. History of course completions by the requestor
 - d. Amount of tuition assistance already approved in the past for the requestor
 - e. Amount of funds available for the upcoming fiscal year
 - f. Workload or staffing
3. The System/College President or designee must concur in writing with any requests to be disapproved.
4. Employees requesting tuition assistance will be notified of approval/disapproval as soon as possible before the class start date. Decisions are final with no appeal process.
5. To be reimbursed, the participating employee must present official documentation of the grade achieved for the course from the college or university attended indicating successful completion.

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6. If educational activities interfere unreasonably with the employee's work, the System/College President may decide to remove the employee from the tuition assistance program. In such cases the employee will not be reimbursed for courses in progress.
7. Institutions may develop a local procedure.

VII. 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 at 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 System Office/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.