

Sam Houston State University
A Member of The Texas State University System

Finance & Operations Human Resources Policy HR-12
Employee Development

SUBJECT: Staff Employee Professional Development

PURPOSE: To provide for the development of employees job-related professional abilities and skills and to enhance capacity to perform assigned job duties.

POLICY: Sam Houston State University (University) is committed to supporting and providing professional development training to promote professional growth in support of life-long learning, Further, it is also the policy of the University that no person shall be discriminated against in opportunities for professional development activities on the bases of race, creed, ancestry, marital status, citizenship, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. Personnel actions are reviewed to ensure Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) compliance.

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1. Requirements

Annual professional development is required of all staff employees, including administrators. Non-supervisory staff employees must complete eight (8) hours of training and all supervisors, managers, and other executives (administrators) must complete twelve (12) hours of professional development job-related training annually. Training to meet this requirement may be accomplished through online learning, instructor-led training, college courses, CEU courses, external workshops, conferences or seminars.

Completion and documentation of the required hours of professional development will be included as part of the employee's **Annual Performance Appraisal (APA)**. Completion of hours above those required will also be recognized and recorded on the APA. Supervisors are responsible for monitoring their employee's professional development progress.

Employees are responsible for keeping their professional development records current. Documentation of professional development progress is maintained utilizing the University's learning management database application, **Talent Management**. Employees' professional development hours are tracked through their **Talent Management** transcript. Supervisors will monitor professional development progress of their employees using **Talent Management**.

2. Eligibility

All employees are eligible, with supervisor approval, to attend professional development training applicable to individual professional development needs. Educational training and development programs are frequently offered during an employee's regularly scheduled work hours. To the extent possible and practical, supervisors and managers are encouraged to allow their employees time away to participate in professional development programs.

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Deans or Directors may approve in-house training and the Divisional Vice President may approve outside training requests.

3. In-House Professional Development

The University offers in-house training in several areas on a regular basis and in special areas on an as-needed basis. The Training Calendar and registration are available in Talent Management.

Purposes that may be served by in-house professional development include, but are not limited to, learning about new technological and legal development, developing additional work capabilities, increasing the number of qualified employees in areas designated by the University as having an acute shortage, and increasing the level of competence for current and prospective duty assignments.

Examples Include:

- a. Work safety training provided by the Division of Facilities Management.
- b. Software training provided by the Division of Information Technology.
- c. Policy, procedures, benefits, and related training provided by the Human Resources Department on an as-needed basis.
- d. Equal Employment Opportunity/Affirmative Action Plan training for supervisors provided by the Human Resources Department.
- e. New Employee and other required compliance training provided online, as required by State law.
- f. The University courses are used as a method of training. Flextime (variations in assigned work schedules) for one four (4) hour course per long semester may be granted when it does not interfere with work assignments and is properly approved. Refer to the university catalogue for admission/registration process.
- g. Special need training is used to convey information about changes related to the terms and conditions of employment. Notices are sent to employees who need to attend.

4. Outside Professional Development

The University encourages employees to attend outside training when inside training is not available to satisfy the need. Requests for outside training should be directed to the administrative supervisor with paperwork such as travel requests, registration forms, etc. being prepared and approved through regular procedures. The supervisor may also require an employee to attend training when it is necessary to achieve the ability to perform the job duties.

Examples include:

- a. Training provided by State agencies used to gain specialized knowledge and abilities required to perform their job duties.
- b. Professional seminars.

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- c. Professional organization meetings offer a source of specialized training, attendance at these meetings is considered a method of development.
- d. Continuing education classes offered by civic organizations, community colleges, public schools, etc.

5. Employee Education Assistance Program

This program is for full-time (1.0 FTE) benefits-eligible staff and faculty employees, through the rank of Professor, who desire to enroll in university credit courses at the University. Applicants must have a minimum of six months, full-time continuous employment at the University by the first class day.

- a. Coursework must relate directly to the employee's current or prospective job duties within their department. Work release time related to the *Employee Education Assistance Program* requires department head approval (see below).
- b. Undergraduate and graduate participants may take up to nine (9) credit hours per semester. **Participants are responsible for the payment of statutory tuition only, with other tuition and fees waived by the University. Waiver is based on successful completion of all coursework (grade of C or better). Participants are required to repay the University the full cost of tuition and fees for course results of less than C or incomplete (please contact the Bursar's Office for repayment instructions).** Unpaid repayments may be subject to the University's normal collections activities.
- c. Each semester, staff employees seeking release time must submit an [Employee Development Participation & Teaching Request Form](#) to their department head for consideration. Department heads will complete the approval section and retain the form in department files. Submission deadlines are as follows:

Fall Semester – August 1st
Spring Semester – December 1st
Summer Semester – May 1st

- d. The University may release full-time regular staff employees to take one course during regular work hours (department head approval required). Department heads are encouraged to promote professional growth of employees. Accordingly, approval is required from the AVP of Human Resources to **decline** eligibility for release time. Under this provision, the department will release a full-time staff employee for up to three (3) hours per week during each semester. Employees participating in this program and who take advantage of release time may not use time away from work for other activities, i.e. wellness programs.
- e. Staff employees also may, with the approval of their supervisor, utilize a flex-time work schedule if it does not interfere with job assignments or department activities for one course each semester.
- f. Employees may take courses outside regular working hours provided that attendance does not interfere with successful completion of assigned University duties.
- g. Participants must meet all admission and registration requirements and maintain a minimum 2.0 grade point average (GPA) for undergraduate courses. Graduate students must maintain a 3.0 GPA.

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- h. The University's Employee Education Assistance Program will be administered in a manner that ensures compliance with IRS code. A portion of the fees waived under this benefit may represent taxable income to the recipient. Please consult IRS Publication 970 or your tax advisor for more information.

- i. Any employee participating in the Employee Education Assistance Program who terminates employment with the University prior to the end of the semester for which tuition and fees were waived must reimburse the University for all waived tuition and fees. For purposes of this policy, the semester ends on the last day of all scheduled finals.

- j. Terminating employees must contact the Bursar's Office to make arrangements for repayment of amounts owed. Outstanding tuition and fees are subject to the University's normal collections activities where applicable. Please see the Bursar's website for details.

Reviewed by: Rhonda Beassie, Associate VP for Human Resources & Diversity – June 2022