



TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF THE LOWCOUNTRY

PROCEDURE: Faculty and Staff Professional Development Number: 5.4.12.1

Responsibility: Human Resources
Last Updated: July 23, 2023
Related Policy: 5.4.12 Employee Development

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 SC STATE BOARD FOR TECHNICAL AND COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION / THE SC TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM OR THE TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF THE LOWCOUNTRY. THE STATE BOARD FOR TECHNICAL AND COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION/THE SC TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM AND THE TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF THE LOWCOUNTRY RESERVE 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.

Purpose:

The purpose of this procedure is to provide guidelines for Faculty and Staff Professional Development activities.

Procedure:

Faculty and Staff Professional Development Activities support the College mission and encourage employee growth. Faculty and Staff development is part of every employee's professional development plan. Providing many opportunities for employee development, the College encourages all eligible employees to participate in these activities and to take courses to improve themselves professionally and personally.

While the college's operating budget includes an allocation for professional development activities, the amount available may vary depending on the annual revenue and expenses.

Seminars, Workshops, and Conferences

Seminars, workshops, and conferences provide opportunities for faculty and staff to increase knowledge and skills in their subject area and for their professional job duties. All permanent employees may participate in these activities. Expenses associated with these activities are funded in departmental budgets and approved in advance by the supervisor and fund administrator. Registration, travel, and per diem in accordance with the State Travel regulations may be reimbursed.

Required Courses

The College may require an employee to take courses to improve his or her performance in the current position or to acquire new skills necessary to perform additional duties. When the College requires an employee to take any course, all costs will be paid for by the college, including tuition, fees, books and examinations.

The College will not pay or reimburse an employee for courses to attain or maintain a professional license.

Return to Business, Industry, or Professional Enhancement

The purpose of this activity is to provide opportunities for employees in permanent positions to enhance their professional expertise in current workplace technical trends, and skill requirements relating to their teaching or functional areas.

Employees participating in this type of development activity will remain in employment status with the College and will receive their normal salary to include any salary adjustments and benefits. The employee's immediate supervisor will continue to have supervisory responsibility concerning the employee's field training experience. Upon returning to the College, employees participating in these programs are expected to work a minimum period of twice the time period spent in the program.

The employee cannot be subsidized in any way by the business, industry, or outside professional enhancement organization. The outside organization may, however, reimburse the college for services of the employee.

All cooperative arrangements with outside organizations must be in writing and agreed upon by both the participating organizations and the college.

All outside organizations accepting the employee for training purposes will indicate, in their cooperative agreement, their non-discrimination policy regarding race, sex, religion, age, national origin, or certain legally defined disabilities. The college will ensure that no employee is denied participation in the program because of race, sex, religion, age, national origin, or certain legally defined disabilities.

Employees in a permanent position not working the Summer Term at the College (9- month

employees) may be employed directly during the summer term by an outside organization to gain professional expertise and will not come under this procedure.

Leave Without Pay for Professional Development

Professional Development Leave without pay is defined as full or part-time leave in non-pay status requested by permanent 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, Vice President of the area, and the President of the College.

Employees may apply for educational leave without pay by: submitting a letter of request to the immediate supervisor at least 60 days prior to the first day of the request. Faculty will not be granted leave during the academic term; the request must be made prior to the beginning of the term. The letter of request must state the purpose, the course of study, and duration of the leave. A copy of the official letter of acceptance from the college or university must be attached to the letter of request.

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. During the leave, the employee does not accrue annual leave, sick leave, or holidays. However, the employee carries accrued annual and sick leave (if applicable) until returning to work.
3. The employee may pay both the employer and employee share of premiums for medical and dental insurance, as well as retirement contributions, if he or she wishes to maintain coverage or eligibility.
4. The employee on continuous leave without pay will be considered to have a break in service after twelve months unless the President approves an additional twelve-month period of leave.

The College grants leave without pay only when the professional development activity is beneficial to the College. Consideration for approval shall include, but not be limited to: workloads, work distribution, relationship of development activity to the employee's work assignment and duration of the leave requested.

Leave without pay may be approved for the length of the school term or terms requested, but no more than twelve (12) consecutive months. The President may grant a one-time approval for an additional (12) month period; however, the total period cannot exceed (24) months.

Tuition Assistance for TCL Credit Courses

Tuition assistance for TCL delivered courses may be provided to eligible employees who wish to obtain academic degrees, to take individual credit courses for career advancement, to increase key job knowledge or skills, or for personal enrichment.

Tuition assistance may be provided for no more than six (6) credit hours per academic term per employee, not to exceed 12 credit hours per academic year.

TCL Employee Tuition Waiver

1. Eligibility

- a. Employees in permanent positions who work a minimum of 30 hours per week with at least six (6) months of TCL service and their dependent(s) are eligible for the waiver.
- b. Participants must meet all academic requirements of the course (prerequisites, test scores, program admission, etc.)
- c. Participants cannot take space from tuition-paying students – if a class is full, employees will be bumped to free up seats.
- d. Participants cannot “make” a class – if a class has fewer than the minimum threshold of paying students, it will be cancelled regardless of employee participation.
- e. Course attendance by eligible employees should occur during employee’s personal time. If class must be attended during normal working hours, employee’s work schedule should be temporarily adjusted to bring their total weekly hours (excluding class time) back to the correct amount. Advance approval by the employee’s supervisor is required.
- f. Courses must be taken for academic credit but do not have to be taken toward the completion of a degree.
- g. An eligible employees’ dependents are required to complete an online Application for Admission. A South Carolina Driver’s License, or South Carolina state identification card must be presented.
- h. An eligible employee’s dependent(s) may only be registered within the last week of open registration before the start of a semester. Registration must be completed by the Registrar’s Office.
- i. Upon completion of the registration and determination of eligibility by the Registrar’s Office, an eligible employee’s dependent(s) will have tuition waived and fees are assessed. There is no charge for tuition but college fees still apply. Books and other fees (test fees, equipment fees, etc.) will not be paid or reimbursed by the college.
- j. The eligible employee and their dependent(s) are responsible for purchasing textbooks and all other materials or supplies for the courses.
- k. Eligible employees and their dependent(s) choosing to pay as a regular student to reserve a class seat will not be granted a refund if they choose later to apply under this procedure.
- l. Participants may apply for financial aid at their discretion. If aid is awarded, the tuition and fee waiver will be reduced proportionately. Under no circumstances will any portion of the employee waiver be refundable to the participant.

2. Cost

- a. Tuition and standard fees (registration, tech, high cost) will be waived by the college.
- b. Participants are encouraged to do their best, but course performance has no impact on tuition waiver. All grades received are part of the employee’s permanent

academic transcript.

3. Administration

- a. Participation in either program must be approved by the employee's supervisor and Division VP. Employees may seek approval to participate anytime before the semester registration deadline. To apply, the employee should complete the appropriate form, available in the Personnel folder on the Y: drive.
- b. If educational activities interfere unreasonably with an employee's work, their supervisor may remove the employee from the tuition assistance program. In such cases, the employee will not be reimbursed for books or other ancillary expenses.

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 the tuition assistance program, they will attend at their 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.