

**SOUTH FLORIDA STATE COLLEGE
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

PROCEDURE NO. 5012

TITLE: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDING FOR EDUCATION COURSEWORK

BASED ON POLICY: 5.01 STAFF AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

OFFICE OF PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY: VICE PRESIDENT FOR ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES/HUMAN RESOURCES

I. Purpose:

To describe the process for full-time employees to request educational coursework funding for educational degree/certificate plans, college credit courses, certificate programs or courses, and vocational clock-hour programs or courses that relate to or enhance an employee's current or future employment with the College.

II. Definitions:

- A. Degree – includes a graduate, graduate, career certificate, or certification – does not include Corporate and Community Education (CCE) or Community Workforce Education (CWE) programs or courses.
- B. Educational Program Plan (EPP) - Multiyear, long-range educational plans for degrees or certificate programs that will enhance an employee's knowledge and skills

III. Procedure:

- A. The director, human resources will be responsible for administering and tracking a budget for education coursework.
- B. The director, human resources has the authority to act on all educational coursework requests.
- C. Guidelines for evaluating requests for educational funds
 - 1. Funding will be provided as available on a first-come, first-served basis as requests are submitted. The following guidelines will be used when reviewing educational coursework requests when funding is limited:
 - a. The degree to which funds are available
 - b. The degree must be from a regionally accredited institution
 - c. The degree to which the planned outcomes directly support the

institutional vision of the College

- d. The degree to which the planned outcomes are related to the program, departmental, and division goals and objectives
- e. The degree of positive impact upon the College (immediate and long-range) of the planned outcomes, especially in relation to its projected cost
- f. The degree to which the planned outcomes are educationally sound, measurable, and achievable
- g. The degree to which the planned outcomes will enhance employee job performance and skills

D. Eligibility

- 1. All full-time employees of the College who have successfully completed the 90-day probationary period are eligible to receive SPD funding. Exceptions may be granted by the appropriate vice president or president upon the supervisors' written request to allow probationary employees to participate in special job-related courses.
- 2. Part-time employees, dual enrollment instructors, and volunteers may be authorized to participate in and benefit from funded activities only when participation is requested in writing by the appropriate supervisor to the appropriate vice president or president documenting the course's importance to the department, program, accreditation, or outside agency approval.
- 3. An employee of the College who is 100% funded through a contract or a grant program shall not be eligible for SPD funding. However, funding for coursework may be provided through the contract or grant.

E. General provisions

- 1. All reimbursement requests, final grades, and textbook worksheets shall be completed and submitted no later than 60 days after course completion or the class end date (Requests for payment made more than 60 days after the end of the course will require the appropriate approval).
- 2. Periodic checks will be made by the director, human resources and supervisory personnel to determine the progress in an approved educational activity. If insufficient progress is being made or if the funds allocated have been too generous or insufficient, funds allocated may be appropriately adjusted after review with the appropriate approval.
- 3. Approved SPD funds not used or reimbursed by the end of the fiscal

year shall not be counted in that fiscal year but will be counted in the new fiscal year toward the individual's maximum grant amount.

4. Once approved, all courses and expenditures must be consistent with the original application. Variations in excess of 10% of the approved application must be requested in writing and be approved by the director, human resources prior to implementation. Amounts will not exceed the maximum allowance for the program or course.
5. Any materials or equipment purchased with SPD funds are the property of the College.
6. For proposed multiple-year programs, allocation of funds must be requested and approved each term an individual intends to take courses and the individual must receive satisfactory annual evaluations to be eligible.
7. All payments to employees are subject to applicable deductions.
8. The president may approve reallocation of SPD funds.

F. Applying for education funds for coursework

Coursework funds may be awarded to employees to enroll in an approved course or program. All applications for education funds must be completed and submitted with all the appropriate signatures and documentation to the director, human resources. An Educational Grant information packet with forms may be obtained on Panther Central.

1. Full-time employees seeking a degree or professional certification **must** have an Educational Program Plan (EPP) approved in advance by their immediate supervisor and administrative supervisor (if immediate supervisor is not an administrator).
 - a. To be eligible for funding, the EPP must be submitted to the appropriate vice president on an SPD Educational Program Plan form along with a copy of the proposed program description and course listing.
 - b. Multiyear, long-range educational plans may be proposed, but funding will be on a term by term basis and subject to the availability of funds.
 - c. Each term a new Request for Educational Grant must be completed and approved prior to registering for courses.
 - d. Approved original EPP's will be forwarded to the director, human resources for tracking toward completion.

2. Employees are encouraged to apply for funding and enroll in courses which are directly related to their present or future employment at the College.
 - a. An EPP is not required for courses taken that do not apply toward the individual earning a degree or certification but that are job-related courses that will increase knowledge at his/her current position.
 - b. The Request for Educational Grant form must be completed and submitted with a copy of the student registration/receipt showing proposed costs each term to the director, human resources for processing, tracking and review of funding availability.
 - c. To ensure consideration for funding, employees must apply for educational coursework funding **prior** to starting a course or program.
3. After the EPP is received by the director, human resources it will be reviewed for initial funding availability and a copy of the EPP will be forwarded to the employee. After the copy is received by the employee, they will then complete the Request for Educational Grant form and register for courses. The Request for Educational Grant form and a copy of the student bill/course receipt will be sent to the director, human resources for processing of funds availability.
4. Individuals requesting funding through the Educational Grant form but receive funding through other public sources such as Pell grants or scholarships will only be eligible for funding not covered by those sources.
5. Full-time employees may take up to a maximum of 18 credits per fiscal year (6 credits per term) or up to 192 contact hours (12 contact hours/week) per term.
 - a. Individuals may receive up to \$1,750 per fiscal year in funding for course tuition and related expenses while working on associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, certificates, and certifications.
 - b. Individuals may receive up to \$2,500 per fiscal year for graduate and post-graduate programs.
 - c. Requests for more credits will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the appropriate vice president and director, human resources and may be approved if funding is available.

6. Funding will not be approved for courses to be taken at other institutions when equivalent courses are available at SFSC, unless scheduling conflicts make it impossible to complete the needed courses at SFSC. In such cases, the other educational institution(s) must be accredited by a regional accrediting agency. If not sure if institution(s) are regionally accredited, the individual should contact the director, human resources who can verify the status of the institution.
7. Employees who use funds to earn baccalaureate or higher degrees or to complete multiyear, long-range professional development projects must agree to remain at the College for at least two complete fiscal years after the fiscal year in which the program was completed or to return funds under the following guidelines:
 - a. Individuals that use any education grants will notify the College when a degree is awarded.
 - b. If the employee elects to terminate employment during the fiscal year (July 1 through June 30) in which the educational program or degree is completed, all funds expended by the College during the current fiscal year, as well as those funds expended during the previous two fiscal years, shall be returned.
 - c. If the employee elects to terminate employment during the fiscal year immediately following the fiscal year in which the educational program or degree was completed, all funds expended by the College during the previous two fiscal years shall be returned.
 - d. If the employee elects to terminate employment during the second fiscal year following the year in which the educational program or degree was completed, all funds expended by the College during the last fiscal year of the educational program shall be returned.
 - e. Expenditures for textbooks used in South Florida State College (SFSC) courses do not require reimbursement as outlined below if they are returned to the library within 30 days of course completion date.
 - f. All funds due to the College based on the above guidelines shall be repaid prior to the employee receiving a final paycheck. The Office of Human Resources will verify this requirement prior to separation.

G. Guidelines for education grant covered expenses:

1. Application, matriculation, tuition, student activity, technology, transportation access, health, and laboratory fees may be approved for funding.

2. Consumable texts, workbooks, and other course-required supplies may be approved for funding.
 3. Textbooks - the following options are available for obtaining textbooks under an approved education grant:
 - a. For SFSC courses, the employee must first check the library inventory for availability of textbooks. If available, the employee may borrow the textbook until completion of the course, then return it to the library. If not available, the employee may secure the textbook, either by rental, purchase, or other electronic method through the College bookstore where it will be charged to the education grant fund. If the textbook is available for rental or other electronic method, employees are strongly encouraged to use these options.
 - b. For courses other than those offered by SFSC, the employee may purchase textbooks and receive reimbursement from the education grant fund. Requests for reimbursement should be made to the director, human resources. Such textbooks purchased must be turned in to the library upon completion of the course or the cost must be reimbursed.
 - c. At the discretion of the director, human resources, textbooks purchased with education grant funds that are maintained in the library's inventory may be checked out on a long-term basis. Requests for long-term loans will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis to maximize the value and use of the textbook.
 4. Travel and per diem expenses related to education grant funded courses will not be reimbursed.
- H. Funding of approved course expenses, as defined in "G" above, will be provided as follows:
1. For courses taken at SFSC, an approved Request for Educational Grant form must be submitted to the Cashier's Office prior to course start date and to purchase books a copy must be submitted to the College bookstore when acquiring approved materials. Expenses may be charged directly to the assigned education grant account upon approval of the director, human resources.
 2. Fees for courses taken at educational institutions other than SFSC may be paid by education grant funds through one of the following arrangements:
 - a. Employee shall provide the director, human resources with an invoice from the institution the employee is attending stating the actual cost of the course. The invoice is approved for direct payment to the institution that the employee will be attending up to the maximum allowable for the degree; or

- b. Employee shall provide proof of payment of the educational costs and a copy of the final grade(s) to the director, human resources. Upon receiving the required documentation, the director, human resources will review and approve or deny reimbursement for the employee up to the maximum allowable for the degree.
3. To be eligible for funding, employees must successfully complete all courses by earning a grade of C or better for undergraduate course(s), a grade of B or better for graduate courses, or by providing other evidence of satisfactory course completion.
4. Withdrawal from any course, registering under audit status, or receiving an incomplete grade, which is not resolved within six weeks of course completion date, is not considered successful completion.
5. Employees who do not successfully complete courses must reimburse the College for all funds received for those courses.
6. Employees repeating a course previously funded by the education grant will not be eligible for additional funds for the repeat.
7. Employees on approved professional leave, with or without pay, are eligible with proper approval to receive funding for coursework.
8. Approval of an EPP by a supervisor or of an education grant by the appropriate vice president does not represent an authorized change in the employee's current or future employment, title, or position at the College.
9. It is the responsibility of each employee to obtain approval in advance from supervisory and administrative staff for necessary work schedule modifications on a term-by-term basis to participate in professional development activities, courses, or programs.
10. It is expected that coursework will be taken and completed at times other than during the employee's normal work day. If no other alternative is available, a supervisor may approve a revised work schedule for the employee. However, all required work hours must be completed each week and departmental needs must be met.

HISTORY: Adopted: 10/6/20

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Reviewed: -

Revised: -