

**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

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I. Purpose:

To describe the process for regular full-time and part-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, undergraduate, 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 submitted education program plans and coursework requests.
- B. The director, human resources has the authority to act on all eligible educational coursework requests.
- C. Guidelines for evaluating requests for educational funds

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:

- 1. The degree must be from a nationally accredited institution
- 2. The extent to which funds are available
- 3. The extent to which the planned outcomes directly support the institutional vision of the College
- 4. The extent to which the planned outcomes are related to the program, departmental, and division goals and objectives
- 5. The amount of positive impact upon the College (immediate and long-

range) of the planned outcomes, especially in relation to its projected cost

6. The extent to which the planned outcomes are educationally sound, measurable, and achievable
7. The extent to which the planned outcomes will enhance employee job performance and skills

#### D. Eligibility

1. All regular full-time and part-time employees of the College who have successfully completed the 90-day probationary period are eligible to receive SPD funding.
  - a. Full-time regular employees are eligible for up to 100% coverage of tuition and fees; part-time regular employees qualify for up to 50% coverage of tuition and fees.
  - b. 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 long-term employees and dual enrollment instructors 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 for approval documenting the course's importance to the department, program, accreditation, or outside agency.
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 and final grades 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 administrator's approval).
2. Periodic checks may 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, funds allocated may be appropriately adjusted after review with the appropriate approval.
3. Employees who do not successfully complete course(s) must reimburse the College for all funds received for those course(s).
4. Approved SPD funds not used or reimbursed by the end of the calendar year shall not be counted in that calendar year but will be counted in the new calendar year toward the individual's maximum grant amount.
5. Funding will be on a term-by-term basis and subject to the availability of funds. Each term an individual intends to take courses, he/she must have received a satisfactory evaluation to be eligible.

6. All payments to employees are subject to applicable deductions.
7. The president may approve the 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 educational funds must be completed and submitted with all the appropriate signatures and documentation to the director, human resources. An Educational Grant information packet with necessary forms may be obtained on Panther Central under the Forms section.

1. Full-time employees seeking a degree or professional certification **must** have an SPD Educational Program Plan (EPP) approved in advance by their immediate supervisor and administrative supervisor (if the immediate supervisor is not an administrator) prior to requesting funding.
  - a. To be eligible for funding, the EPP form must be submitted to the appropriate vice president along with a copy of the school's current 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. Approved original EPP forms will be forwarded to the director, human resources for tracking toward completion.
  - d. After the EPP is received by the director, human resources it will be reviewed for completeness and a copy of the approved EPP will be forwarded to the employee. After the copy is received by the employee, they can 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.
  - e. Employees, upon completion of course(s) each term, must submit a grade report showing successful completion 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.
2. Employees are encouraged to apply for funding and enroll in courses that are directly related to their present or future employment at the College.
  - a. Prior to requesting initial funding and each calendar year until completion, applicants are recommended to complete and submit a FAFSA application. (See Financial Aid Office for help.)

- b. An Educational Program Plan (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 their current position.
  - c. To ensure consideration for funding, employees must apply for educational coursework funding **prior** to starting a course or program. Late submissions will be reviewed and approved on a case-by-case basis as funding availability permits.
  - d. For non-EPP requests, the Request for Educational Grant form must be completed and submitted prior to the beginning of the term, with a copy of the student registration/receipt showing proposed costs to the director, human resources for processing and tracking.
3. When applying funding payments, SFSC Educational Grant funds will be applied first to tuition and fee costs for eligible employees. Any additional balance amount will be the responsibility of the employee.
4. Full-time employees may take up to a maximum of 18 credits per calendar year (6 credits per term) or up to 192 contact hours (12 contact hours/week) per term (maximum amount for non-SFSC tuition and fees is based on IRS regulation Publication 15-b and current USF Tampa Campus in-state graduate and undergraduate tuition rates).
  - a. Individuals may receive up to \$5,250 per calendar year in funding for SFSC course tuition and related fees while working on associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, certificates, and certifications.
  - b. Individuals may receive up to \$5,250 per calendar year for non-SFSC course tuition and related fees while working on associate degrees, baccalaureate degrees, certificates and certifications, and 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.
5. Funding will not be approved for courses to be taken at another institution 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 must be accredited by a national accrediting agency. If not sure if the institution is nationally accredited, the individual should contact the director, human resources who can verify the status of the institution.
6. Individuals that use any education grants will notify the College when a degree is awarded.

G. Guidelines for education grant-covered expenses:

1. Application, matriculation, tuition, student activity, technology, transportation access, health, laboratory, and other associated fees, may be approved for funding, up to the maximum per calendar year.
2. Travel and per diem expenses related to education grant-funded courses will not be reimbursed.
3. For courses taken at SFSC, an approved Request for Educational Grant form must be submitted by the director, human resources or designee to the Cashier's Office prior to the course start date. Expenses then may be charged directly to the assigned education grant account.
4. Fees for courses taken at educational institutions other than SFSC, approved expenses may be paid by education grant funds through one of the following arrangements:
  - a. Employee shall provide the director, human resources with a completed Request for Educational Grant form and copy of the invoice from the institution the employee is attending stating the actual cost of the course(s). If approved, direct payment will be made via check or ACH transfer to the institution up to the maximum allowable amount; 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.
5. To be eligible for funding, employees must successfully complete all courses by earning a grade of C or better for an undergraduate course(s), a grade of B or better for graduate course(s), or by providing other evidence of satisfactory course completion.
6. Withdrawal from any course, registering under audit status, or receiving an incomplete grade, which is not resolved within six weeks of the course completion date, is not considered successful completion.
7. Employees repeating a course for the third time that was previously funded by the education grant will only be reimbursed at the in-state rate. All other costs will be borne by the employee.
8. Employees on approved professional leave, with or without pay, are eligible with proper approval to receive funding for coursework.
9. 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.
10. 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.

11. Coursework is expected to 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: Revised: 3/1/23**

**Adopted: 10/6/20**

**Reviewed: -**

**Revised: 3/8/22, 3/1/23**