

SUL ROSS STATE UNIVERSITY

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SRSU Policy: Staff/Employee Professional Development

SRSU Policy ID: APM 5.14

Policy Reviewed By: Director of Human Resources

Approval Authority: Vice President for Finance and Operation

Approval Date: January 13, 2025

Next Review Date: January 13, 2030

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: Sul Ross State University (University) is committed to supporting and providing professional development training to promote professional growth in support of life-long learning. 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, continuing education units (CEU) courses, external workshops, conferences or seminars.

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. 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 through the Pack First webpage.

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 in house 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, but are not limited to:

- 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 for SRSU Employees

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

- a. Coursework must relate to the employee's current or prospective job duties within their department.
- b. Undergraduate and graduate (limited to master level programs) 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, withdrawal or incomplete (please contact the Cashier's Office for repayment instructions). Unpaid repayments may be subject to the University's normal collections activities.
- c. Doctoral level programs are NOT included in this policy.
- d. 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.
- e. Employees may take courses outside regular working hours provided that attendance does not interfere with successful completion of assigned University duties.
- f. The Program is 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.
- g. Any SRSU employee participating in the Employee Education Assistance Program who terminates employment 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.
- h. Separating employees must contact the Cashier's Office 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.

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- i. Additional options and requirements for SRSU Employees.
 - i. SRSU may release full-time regular staff employees to take one course during regular work hours (department head and vice president approval required). Department heads are encouraged to promote professional growth of employees. 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.
 - ii. Each semester, SRSU 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 a copy of the form in department files.

Submission deadlines are as follows:

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

- iii. SRSU 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.

6. Staff Employee Teaching an Academic Course

- a. SRSU may release full-time regular staff employees to teach one course during regular work hours (department head and vice president approval required). Department heads are encouraged to promote professional growth of employees. 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.
- b. Each semester, SRSU 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 a copy of the form in department files.
- c. SRSU 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.

Employee Development Participation & Teaching Request Form

This form is to be completed by employees requesting to participate in Employee Educational Assistant Program or Staff Teaching an Academic Course at Sul Ross State University.

Section 1: Employee Information

Name: _____ Banner ID: _____ Email: _____

Job Title: _____ Dept.: _____ Division: _____

Section 2: Selection of Program. Participation during work hours is only permitted in **ONE** of the following programs:

Employee Education Assistance Program. See APM 5.14, *Staff/Employee Professional Development* for details. Please check box if you are requesting permission for educational release for one class during working hours or to attend a M-F graduation in the semester of your graduation.

Submission Deadlines: August 1st (fall semester), December 1st (spring semester), or May 1st (summer semester).

Seeking Degree: _____ If Yes, Degree Program (Major): _____

Semester: _____ Year: _____ Circle one: Staff Faculty

I will graduate in the semester listed above and request up to 8 hours of educational release to attend my graduation ceremony if scheduled on a M-F workday.

I confirm that this request is for coursework which relates to my current or prospective job duties. I understand that if I am a financial aid recipient, reimbursement of fees could affect my financial aid eligibility. It is my responsibility to notify Financial Aid and Scholarships immediately that I will be receiving this reimbursement so any appropriate adjustments to my aid can be completed. I request paid time off for class release not to exceed policy limits. Please initial box to indicate that you are requesting Employee Educational Assistance Program benefits.

Teaching an Academic Course. See-APM 5.14, *Staff/Employee Professional Development*. Please check box if you are requesting permission for educational release for one class during working hours. Department Head and VP approval is required for all teaching release time.

Employee (Signature)

Date

Section 3: Approval.

Department Head and Vice President:

I concur with the employee's request and approve:

Department Head (Print)

Department Head (Signature)

Date

Vice President (Print)

Vice President (Signature)

Date

Human Resources:

Answer questions below to verify dependent and employee meet requirement.

Full-time Benefits eligible Yes No

Twelve months continuous employment Yes No

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Human Resources Office (Signature)

Date

Registrar Office (signature not necessary for teaching staff):
Answer questions below to verify dependent and employee meet requirement.

Enrolled in degree seeking plan Yes No
Balance less than \$500 Yes No

Registrar Office (Signature)

Date