

Shawnee State University

POLICY TITLE:	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DEGREE AND NON-DEGREE)
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RESPONSIBLE OFFICER(S):	COO
APPROVED BY:	BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide administrative employees (administrators , and administrative technical support staff) with degree and non-degree professional development opportunities that encourage employees to pursue knowledge and skill enhancements important to career aspirations and that are vital to the success of the University. These programs are consistent with higher education industry standards and are an important component of the University's overall employee-benefit program.

2.0 UNIVERSITY APPROVED OR REQUIRED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 The university supports both career and job-related professional development activities. It is expected that employees and supervisors will discuss professional development needs and opportunities.
- 2.2 When an employee is required to attend a University-approved development program, training or other educational activity, the time spent in attendance will be counted as time worked, and the associated fees and costs, (i.e., materials, travel and per diem, etc.) will be paid by their department.

3.0 LEAVE FOR ELECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The University will consider a request for unpaid leave to attend an elective (not required) training or professional development program. The time attending such training or program will be non-compensable and any related expenditures will not be reimbursable (i.e., materials, travel and per diem, etc.) unless otherwise specified in this policy.
- 3.2 Full-time administrative employees with two (2) years of continuous full-time service with the University and whose professional development program can be demonstrated to benefit the University, may request a one-time unpaid professional development leave for a period not to exceed one (1) year.

- 3.3 For consideration of such leave request, the employee must develop and submit a written plan through the applicable supervisory and management levels, including the President, requesting approval for the leave. In addition to providing the information prescribed in this section, approval will be subject to scheduling, staffing, and budget considerations. The written plan must include the following:
 - 3.3.1 A description of the program and a concise explanation of the necessity for the requested leave from active employment status;
 - 3.3.2 The requested period of time;
 - 3.3.3 The relation of the program to the employee's current job responsibilities, how the program enhances the employee's department and the University; how the program will assist the employee's transition into career-related positions at the University;
 - 3.3.4 The quality of the particular training as compared to similar programs that do not require leave time and an assessment of the reliability of the institution, organization, or other sponsor providing the training; and
 - 3.3.5 The impact on the employee's workload and the workload of colleagues within the department.
- 3.4 An employee requesting a leave of absence must utilize accrued paid leave balances before entering an unpaid (inactive) status.
- 3.5 If an unpaid leave of absence is approved and the employee's status is changed to inactive, the following benefits will be impacted as follows:
 - 3.5.1 University-provided health insurance continues only while an employee is in active paid status. Coverage during an unpaid leave of absence may be continued by the employee by paying the total employee and employer monthly premiums pursuant to COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act). Arrangements for such coverage should be made with the Department of Human Resources prior to an approved leave of absence.
 - 3.5.2 An employee on unpaid leave of absence will not receive pay for holidays falling within the dates of the leave of absence, excluding the week of closure for winter break.
 - 3.5.3 During an unpaid leave of absence, both the employer and the employee contributions to state retirement (OPERS, STRS or Alternative Retirement Plan) are discontinued. Additional information relative to accrued benefits,

purchase of service credits, and related matters may be obtained by contacting the applicable state retirement system.

- 3.5.4 An employee on unpaid leave of absence does not earn vacation or sick leave. However, the time spent on authorized leave of absence will count toward the employee's length of service for vacation accrual purposes.

4.0 WAIVER OF ON-CAMPUS TUITION (UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE)

- 4.1 The University waives certain Shawnee State on-campus education costs for undergraduate and graduate courses as a means of encouraging administrative employees and their eligible dependents as defined in this policy to further their education.
- 4.2 The on-campus education benefit waives instructional, technology, and general fees for courses including those delivered online as outlined in this policy. Where applicable, out-of-state surcharge fees are waived.
- 4.3 The on-campus education benefit does not cover the costs of special fees including but not limited to: course fees, program fees, bond fees, late payment fees, books or supply fees. These costs, including those incurred by eligible dependent(s), are the responsibility of the employee.

5.0 UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

- 5.1 Full-time Administrative Employees (Actively employed)
- 5.1.1 Upon completion of the new-hire probationary period, full-time administrative employees may take two (2) courses per semester (including main campus courses delivered online). Those who are enrolled in an e-campus program are permitted to take one (1) course per sub-session within a semester.
- 5.1.2 Administrative employees who are actively enrolled in a course of study prior to the commencement of an approved leave of absence (does not include involuntary administrative leave), temporary layoff or furlough status may continue that course of study.
- 5.1.3 Administrative employees are expected to register for classes that meet outside of their regular work schedules. In situations in which the course must be taken during the employee's regular work schedule, with written approval from his/her supervisor, an administrative employee may arrange for a flexible schedule in order to complete the required course. In no case will a schedule that would result in the employee being in overtime work status be approved.

- 5.1.4 The maximum benefit for a full-time administrative employee is 160 attempted credit hours.
- 5.2 Dependents of Actively-Employed Full-Time Administrative Employees
 - 5.2.1 As used in this policy, an eligible dependent is defined as the spouse, or child 25 years of age or younger, and dependent as defined under IRS rulings, of full-time actively-employed administrative employees. Dependents may enroll in as many hours per semester as allowed under the University's academic policies.
 - 5.2.2 The maximum benefit for each dependent under this policy is 160 attempted credit hours.
- 5.3 Retired Full-Time Administrative Employees and Dependents
 - 5.3.1 A full-time administrative employee who has formally retired (disability or service) under an Ohio state pension system or approved alternative retirement system (ARP), receiving a pension benefit payment, not actively working as a re-employed retiree, and who has served at Shawnee State University for ten (10) continuous years or more in full-time status ("eligible retiree"), is eligible to receive undergraduate fee waiver benefits on a space-available basis not to exceed 160 attempted credit hours.
 - 5.3.2 A dependent of an eligible retiree who is enrolled in an undergraduate degree program at the time of the eligible retiree's retirement may continue to receive waivers for instructional, general, and technology fees and out of state surcharge where applicable in order to complete the current course of study, not to exceed a total of 160 attempted credit hours.
 - 5.3.3 Re-employed retirees will be eligible for undergraduate fee waiver benefits based upon full or part-time status as defined in this policy.
- 5.4 Dependents of Full-Time Employees Deceased While In Active Status
 - 5.4.1 A widow or widower and/or dependent child of a deceased full-time administrative employee with ten (10) years of continuous service is eligible to receive on-campus education benefits, as follows:
 - 5.4.1.1 Must be enrolled in an undergraduate degree program within one year of the active employee's date of death;
 - 5.4.1.2 Will be registered on a space-available basis; and

5.4.1.3 Maximum tuition waiver is not to exceed 160 attempted credit hours.

5.5 Part-time Administrative Employees and Eligible Dependents

5.5.1 Upon completion of the new-hire probationary period, actively-employed part-time administrative employees regularly working at least 20 hours and their eligible dependents may take one (1) course per semester (including main campus courses delivered online). Those who are enrolled in an e-campus program are permitted to take one (1) course during the semester (one of the sub sessions). No special provisions will be made in employees' work schedules to accommodate taking the class. The maximum tuition waiver is 160 attempted credit hours.

6.0 ON-CAMPUS GRADUATE COURSES

6.1 Actively-employed full-time administrative employees (but not dependents) with at least two (2) years of continuous service with the University are eligible to receive a waiver of instructional, general, and technology fees and out-of-state surcharge fees where applicable for the successful completion of a Shawnee State on-campus graduate program, as follows:

6.1.1 Prior written approval of the degree program is required by all levels of respective employee's supervision up to and including the vice president;

6.1.2 The employee must apply following the same application and selection criteria as all students;

6.1.3 Class space must be available, preference will not be given to Shawnee employees;

6.1.4 The employee may take two (2) courses per semester (including main campus courses delivered online). Those who are enrolled in an e-campus program are permitted to take one (1) course per sub-session within a semester;

6.1.5 Administrative employees may complete one (1) graduate degree program under this policy;

6.1.6 Prior approval by the respective employee's supervisor to flex work or modify work schedules (including using earned vacation or comp time) is required in order to maintain a full-time workload; and

6.1.7 Income tax will be applied as required by IRS regulations.

7.0 CRITERIA FOR ON-CAMPUS TUITION WAIVER (UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE)

- 7.1 Administrative employees, spouses and dependents shall enroll during the regular registration processes.
- 7.2 Programs or classes which have special admission requirements or limited class sizes will be available for enrollment in the same manner as made available to the general student body; and administrative employees, spouses and dependents will be required to compete for admission into these programs or courses with other student applicants.
- 7.3 Administrative employees, spouses and dependents must remit payment for special fees and charges as defined in this policy in accordance with University student payment deadlines.
- 7.4 The administrative employee, spouse or dependent may be required to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and complete the verification process if determined necessary by the Financial Aid office.
- 7.5 All necessary and required forms must be completed according to University policies and timetables. Forms are available on the [Financial Aid](#) webpage.
- 7.6 No employee or his/her dependent will be entitled to on-campus education benefits, nor will the University be required to pay, for any classes that have already been taken by the employee or dependent and failed or otherwise not successfully completed by the employee or dependent.

8.0 OFF-CAMPUS GRADUATE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

- 8.1 The University supports full-time administrative employees taking graduate courses at other institutions of higher education when the graduate program will increase the skills necessary in their present positions and enhances their contribution to the University.
- 8.2 Any graduate program offered by Shawnee State University (on-campus or online through E-campus) is not eligible for tuition reimbursement at a different institution.
- 8.3 The off-campus education benefit allows full-time administrative employees to apply for Master's and Doctoral program tuition and fee reimbursement as specified herein after two years of continuous full-time service with the University.
- 8.4 The graduate degree, including online degrees, must be provided by an accredited institution of higher education.

- 8.5 To ensure the proposed course of study meets conditions outlined in this policy, prior approvals by the employee's supervisor, the department budget manager, and concurrence of the appropriate vice president are required.
- 8.6 Reimbursement is provided for approved courses with a grade of B or higher. Should the program not provide a grade, the employee must submit evidence of satisfactory progress (e.g. dissertation credits as PR, etc.) Documentation from the institution granting the grade and/or progress report must be attached to the reimbursement request.
- 8.7 The maximum reimbursement tuition rate for employees who commence their graduate study after the effective date of this policy will be at Shawnee State's Master's or Doctoral in-state tuition rate. The rare exception to this maximum rate requires approval of the vice president of the employee's division.
- 8.8 In the case of employees whose course of study commenced prior to the effective date of this policy, reimbursement will be calculated based upon the average credit hour cost from all Ohio public universities' relevant or related Master's or Doctoral programs, whichever is applicable to the approved program. This rate will be determined at the start of each academic year and will apply for that full year.
- 8.9 Only courses required for the attainment of the degree as identified in the initially approved course of study are eligible for reimbursement.
- 8.10 Reimbursement is limited to one graduate-level program.
- 8.11 An employee awarded this off-campus education benefit will agree in writing to remain employed at the University for at least two (2) years from the end date of the term of the approved coursework. If not, the employee agrees to repay the tuition reimbursement amount received. The repayment amount will be pro-rated based on the employee's length of service.
- 8.12 Repayment requirements set forth in Section 8.11 shall not apply in cases of: 1) the elimination of the employee's position, or 2) a workforce reduction in which the employee is laid off for at least 21 months duration.

History

Effective: 01/19/1991

Revised: 06/21/2024; 03/13/2020 (Replaced Policies 4.58, 4.66 and 4.67. Policies 4.58, 4.66 and 4.67 rescinded); 03/15/2008; 02/08/2002