

Memo To: All UH-Downtown/PS Holders
From: Max Castillo, President
Subject: Employee Training and Development Program

UH-Downtown/PS 02.B.12
Issue No. 3
Effective date: 09/29/08
Page 1 of 6

1. PURPOSE

This PS establishes the policy for implementing, monitoring and participating in training and development programs, including the College Release Program, at the University of Houston-Downtown, in accordance with Texas Government Code, Chapter 656.041, Subchapter C, referred to as the State Employees Training Act, and the UH System Administrative Memorandum 02.A.26.

2. DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 College Release Program (CRP): An educational benefit that allows full-time, benefits-eligible staff to attend college courses of up to three (3) hours per week, per regular semester (fall and spring), at the University of Houston-Downtown or other institutions of higher education.
- 2.2 Fitness Release Time: Full-time, benefits-eligible staff may be approved to receive up to three (3) hours per week of Fitness Release Time (FRT) to participate in a fitness activity as described in PS 02.B.13.
- 2.3 Full-time, benefits-eligible staff: University employee who is employed for 40 hours per week for a period of at least four and one-half continuous months, excluding students employed in positions for which student status is required as a condition of employment, and employees holding a teaching and/or research position, classified as faculty.
- 2.4 Staff Education Reimbursement: An educational benefit that reimburses tuition and course-related fees to full-time, benefits-eligible staff attending University of Houston-Downtown classes in the regular semesters (fall or spring).
- 2.5 State Employees Training Act (SETA): Texas Government Code, Chapter 656.041, Subchapter C, referred to as the State Employees Training Act (SETA), authorizes state employers to use public funds to provide training and education to its employees. This training or education must be related to the duties or prospective duties of the employee.

3. POLICY

- 3.1 The University of Houston-Downtown (UHD) encourages supervisors, managers and employees to identify educational and development opportunities and training that will

improve job performance and develop employee potential in current and prospective positions.

- 3.2 Purposes that may be served by training and development opportunities include the following:
 - a. Enhanced leadership skills;
 - b. Preparation of employees to deal with new technologies and legal developments;
 - c. Quality customer service skills necessary to improve internal services and support student recruitment and retention initiatives;
 - d. Increasing the employee's opportunities for promotion within the university; and
 - e. Increased employee competence and productivity.
- 3.3 Training and development opportunities include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. Training opportunities offered by various departments at UHD and held on campus during work hours;
 - b. Campus Relations training on mandated compliance issues such as equal opportunity and sexual harassment;
 - c. Seminars, workshops and conferences held off campus or out of the city, and
 - d. College Release Program.

3.4 State Employees Training Act (SETA)

3.4.1 Texas Government Code, Chapter 656.041, Subchapter C, referred to as the State Employees Training Act (SETA), allows UHD to use public funds for development programs related to either current or prospective duty assignments. Funds may be expended from departmental accounts for employees to participate in development programs with supervisor and departmental approval. Appropriate expenses may include salary, registration fees, travel expenses, and training materials. Any reimbursement for travel expenses associated with seminars, workshops or similar training events must meet all applicable policies, rules and statutory provisions regarding travel of state employees.

3.5 Eligibility

- 3.5.1 All university employees may participate in training and development opportunities, subject to:
 - a. supervisor's approval;
 - b. eligibility restrictions for the individual courses or programs; and,
 - c. availability of funds (where costs are involved).
- 3.5.2 Only non-probationary full-time, benefits-eligible staff are eligible to participate in the College Release Program and/or receive staff education reimbursement, subject to the same restrictions as in 3.5.1.
- 3.5.3 Employees may participate in either the College Release Program or the Fitness Release Time Program each semester. Details regarding the Fitness Release Time Program may be found in PS 02.B.13.

- 3.6 Normally, training and development programs are offered during an employee's regularly scheduled work hours. Employees are encouraged to participate in training at times that accommodate the departmental work schedule when appropriate. To the extent that it is possible and practical, supervisors and managers are encouraged to allow their employees to participate in training and development programs.
- 3.6.1 Supervisors may require attendance at certain training programs as part of the employee's position and/or duties and responsibilities.
- 3.6.2 Employees attending training and development programs with the supervisor's approval are not required to make up time spent in training and development sessions.
- 3.7 It is the employee's responsibility to provide to their supervisor certificates or other proof of completion of training and/or attendance at seminars, workshops and conferences held off campus, and to include this information in his/her Performance Journal in the eAppraisal performance management system. It is the supervisor's responsibility to request from ESO verification of all on-campus training completed by their direct reports for inclusion in the Manager's Performance Journal in the eAppraisal performance management system.
- 3.8 College Release Program:
- 3.8.1 The College Release Program provides non-probationary full-time, benefits-eligible staff up to three (3) hours per week release time from normal duties to take credit-bearing courses toward a degree plan at an institution of higher learning. This release time may be treated as hours worked for overtime pay or shift differential where applicable.
- 3.8.2 The College Release Program is available during regular semesters (fall and spring) only.
- 3.8.3 Classroom time and travel to and from class may not exceed three hours per week.
- 3.8.4 The employee is required to go through the regular admission process and meet the relevant admissions requirements of the institution.
- 3.8.5 The employee must complete his/her probationary period before the semester begins.
- 3.8.6 The employee's primary responsibilities are to his/her job. An approved [College Release Program and Staff Education Reimbursement Request](#) represents a department's commitment of release time for class attendance. The employee is obligated to his/her job responsibilities during work hours when the class is not in session.
- 3.8.7 Employees must reflect College Release Program release time on their timesheets. The classroom time required to complete a course approved on the

College Release Program and Staff Education Reimbursement Request may not be charged against any employee leave or reflect deductions in salary.

3.8.8 The costs of tuition, fees, and books are the responsibility of the employee.

3.9 Staff Education Reimbursement:

3.9.1 Employees will be eligible to receive 100% of tuition and course-related fees for one class and 50% of tuition and course-related fees for a second class provided they meet the following criteria:

- a. employed at UHD in a non-probationary capacity prior to the beginning of the semester for which they are seeking reimbursement;
- b. employed in a full-time (40 hours per week), benefits-eligible position;
- c. enrolled at UHD in credit-bearing classes leading to a degree or professional development courses applicable to their job;
- d. employed at UHD through the official close of the term (as shown in the official semester class schedule) for a specified semester;
- e. earned a “C” grade or better in the specified semester;
- f. have no financial obligations to UHD or other components of the UH System; and
- g. received the President’s Scholarship and it did not cover employee’s tuition and course-related fees in full

3.10 Employees who did not earn a “C” or better for the specified semester, or who dropped/withdrew from classes approved under the College Release Program, will not be eligible for College Release Time nor the Staff Education Reimbursement the following semester.

4. PROCEDURES

4.1 Prior to the official beginning of the semester and before registering for classes, employee will complete Section A of the College Release Program and Staff Education Reimbursement Request and forward it to supervisor (Exhibit A).

4.2 Supervisor will review Request and approve or deny three (3) hours a week release time in Section B of the Request and return to employee.

4.3 Employee will register for class and forward the approved Request with a copy of his/her registration and fee statement to ESO prior to the official beginning of the semester.

4.4 At the close of the semester, ESO will review the participant’s grade and complete the certification section (Section C) of the Request.

4.5 Employees taking a class at another college or university must provide proof of a final grade to ESO within 15 days of the official close of the term. This verification is necessary to comply with the requirements of the College Release Program but doesn’t entitle the employee to reimbursement of tuition and course-related fees for courses taken at other institutions of higher education.

- 4.6 Once ESO certifies the final course grade, the Request will be sent to Business Affairs.
- 4.7 Business Affairs will verify that the student does not owe any money to UHD or other component of the UH System.
- 4.8 If student owes money for anything other than the semester being reimbursed, reimbursement will be denied. "Reimbursement Denied" will be checked on the Request, and the form signed and returned to ESO to be scanned into the employee's personnel record.
- 4.9 If student does not owe money or only owes for the reimbursement semester, the reimbursement will be approved to go forward to Student Accounting. Student Accounting will determine what the net reimbursement will be and process accordingly.
- 4.10 The amount of reimbursement will be computed by verifying how many classes were completed with a grade of "C" or better. Employees will be eligible to receive 100% of tuition and course-related fees for one class and 50% of tuition and course-related fees for a second class. No reimbursement will be issued for more than two classes in one long semester (fall or spring).
- 4.11 Before posting the amount of the reimbursement to the student account, Business Affairs will check for any UHD-funded grants or scholarships and the reimbursement will be reduced by the amount of any such scholarships.
- 4.12 "Reimbursement Approved" will be checked on the Request, and the form signed and returned to ESO.
- 4.13 The reimbursement will be processed by Student Accounting as a student refund in the next refund run. If student owes for the semester being processed, the amount will offset what is owed.
- 4.14 ESO will process tax withholding based on the reimbursement amount approved on the Request.
- 4.15 ESO will scan the Request into the employee's personnel record.

5. EXHIBITS

Exhibit A: College Release Program/Staff Education Reimbursement Request

6. REVIEW PROCESS

Responsible Party: (Reviewer): Vice President for Employment Services and Operations

Review: Every three years on or before August 1st.

Signed original on file in Employment Services and Operations.

7. POLICY HISTORY

Issue #1: 01/09/08

Issue # 2: 04/28/08

8. REFERENCES

UH System Administrative Memorandum 02.A.26

UH System Administrative Memorandum 03.A.26

Texas Government Code 656.041

**COLLEGE RELEASE PROGRAM
AND
STAFF EDUCATION REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST**

Employee Information

Employee Name: _____ Employee ID: _____
Student ID: _____
Position: _____ Department: _____

A. Application

In accordance with the provisions of the State Employees Training Act and PS 02.B.12, I wish to apply for permission to enroll in and for the necessary time off to attend the class stated below.

Course Information

Semester Fall Spring Year _____
Course Title: _____ Course # _____
Days: Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Time: _____
Total Hours: _____ Name of Institution, if not UHD: _____

B. Supervisor Action

- Approve
 Disapprove (Complete the comments section below)

Supervisor Signature Date

Comments:

Employee must forward all pages of this request and proof of registration to the ESO Training Section for audit. This form becomes part of the employee's permanent personnel file.

C. Reimbursement

Indicate whether you are seeking reimbursement for one or two classes at the end of the semester. 1 Class 2 Classes

I grant university officials permission to check my academic and financial records for the purposes of reimbursing tuition and course-related fees as required by this program and defined in PS 02.B.12

Employee Signature Date

D. ESO Certification at End of Semester (check all that apply)

- Employee meets requirements for tuition/course-related fees reimbursement.
 - Employee completed course(s) at UHD with a "C" grade or better.
 - Personnel documents verify full-time employment at UHD during period specified on this request.
- Employee completed course with a "C" grade or better at another institution of higher education.
(By policy, employee is not eligible for tuition reimbursement.)
- Employee does not meet requirements for tuition/course-related fees reimbursement.
 - Employee failed to earn a "C" or better in course(s) taken at UHD.
 - Personnel documents do not verify full-time employment at UHD during period specified on this request.

ESO Signature

Date

E. Business Affairs Certification

- Reimbursement Approved Amount of reimbursement: \$ _____
- Reimbursement Denied due to financial obligations to the University or UH System.

F. Payroll

- Taxes Withheld

Payroll Signature

Date

G. ESO Records

- Scan into employee's personnel file.