



HUMAN RESOURCES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Area: Learning and Development

Subject: Learning / Professional Development

Applies To: Staff

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Purpose

It is the goal of the University to provide assistance and support to employees to increase the effectiveness of their performance in their present University positions, as well as to encourage employees to obtain knowledge, skills and abilities, which may improve their opportunities for career advancement within the University.

Professional development and continuous learning are necessary to: 1. maintain the quality of the University staff and their continued readiness and ability to contribute effectively to the mission and goals of the University; and, 2. to establish a learning culture in which all employees are encouraged to develop their professional skills and enhance their performance, both in their current position and for possible future University career opportunities.

Policy

All university staff are encouraged to participate in a minimum of twenty (20) hours of professional development per evaluation year. This development most times should occur during regularly scheduled work time, and must be approved by the appropriate supervisor and entered in the Georgia Southern University's learning management online system. All employees are expected to have a "Learning Goal" established in their annual performance evaluation discussion with their immediate supervisor.

Professional development can take the form of attendance at in-house learning programs provided by the Department of Human Resources- Organization Development & Learning, participation in external workshops and conferences, other department-specific learning opportunities, or on-line workshops/classes approved by the employee's supervisor.

Included in the expected twenty (20) hours of professional development are any programs that may be required by the University, such as the new Onboarding/Orientation program, Performance Management System training, Eagle Leadership Academy, the Supervisory Management Program, ADP training, ethics training, and others. Attendance in programs for professional certifications, licensures, etc., will also count toward the twenty (20) hours of professional development.

Procedure

An employee must seek prior approval from their supervisor or manager prior to attending a professional development course or workshop. The employee does not need to take Annual Leave to attend a professional development learning opportunity.

Scope

Professional development programs and activities may include, but are not limited to: opportunities for on-the-job training, cross-training, coaching, internships, attendance at courses, seminars, conferences, institutes, lectures, meetings, workshops, and participation in professional and technical associations.

Definitions

Programs shall be classified as position- or job-related, career-related, or educationally enrichment based on the judgment of the supervisor.

Position- or job-related programs are directly correlated or associated with the work assignments or conditions of the employee's current position. For example, training in quality service skills is a position-related program for an employee whose current position includes customer service responsibilities.

Career-related programs are associated with the development of skills, knowledge, and other qualifications which prepare an employee for additional assignments or positions within the University for which the employee, in the judgment of the department head, has some reasonable chance of attainment. For example, training in quality service skills is a career-related program for an employee whose current position does not include customer service responsibilities but who is interested in competing for future University job openings, which require customer service skills and knowledge.

Educational enrichment programs are associated with an employee's avocation or career talents outside the University and are not related to University positions, for which an employee might, in the judgment of the department head, be an effective competitor.

PROCEDURES

The employee and supervisor should jointly discuss professional development goals and review available opportunities. Discussions about professional development goals may occur at any time during the performance review cycle and should occur as part of the annual performance appraisal.

The supervisor and employee may jointly formulate a plan to work collaboratively to build on the employee's effectiveness in performing the current University position and/or prepare the employee for future positions.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Employees should:

Have the primary responsibility for his/her own professional development;

Make professional development interests known to their supervisors;

Initiate requests to participate in programs relevant to the development goals identified jointly with their supervisors; and/or

Attend and participate in development activities as approved or required by their supervisors/department heads.

Send the professional development verification form to the ODL Office.

Department Management should:

In consultation with Human Resources as appropriate, assess employee professional development needs;

Approve/deny development requests of employees in consultation with supervisors;

Consider employee development in budgetary planning; and/or

Ensure performance appraisals of employees include a discussion of educational and development objectives as appropriate.

Encourage employees achieve twenty (20) hours of professional development each year.

Human Resources will:

Assess campus wide development needs, and based on availability of resources, sponsor appropriate development programs.

The Department of Human Resources, Organization, Development and Learning (ODL) Office will be able to monitor and track attendance of employees who attend courses offered through ODL. Courses offered by the ODL Office are located on the University Training Website. Employees will only get credit when they sign in and attend the professional development session. ODL can provide training transcripts by request.

An employee will get credit for the number of hours of the actual course.

Other On-Campus Professional Development/Training:

There are many professional development opportunities available throughout the Georgia Southern campus. Subsequently, some of these opportunities are available on the University Training Website. If an employee attends a workshop that is not offered by the ODL Office, then the instructor will send the course roster to the ODL Office. The ODL office will enter the course information and attendees into the Learning Management System.

An employee will get credit for the number of hours of the actual course.

Professional Development through eLearning:

For those employees who decide to take a course through the new eLearning program, the eLearning system will be able to track the course completion. In order to receive full credit for the eLearning course (s), individuals must complete the training and module quiz. Individuals will receive two (2) hours for eLearning courses, not the number of hours it takes an individual to complete the training.

Non-exempt employees may only take eLearning courses during the workday after prior approval from their supervisor. Therefore, non-exempt employees should not request comp-time or overtime for completing a training module online outside their normal work hours. However, if the employee is required to take a development program, then program hours must be counted as "hours worked" for Fair Labor Standards Act purposes.

Exempt employees may take a professional development course or workshop after prior approval from their supervisor.

Off campus conferences:

An employee will receive professional development credits for attending a conference. Only the hours spent in a professional development workshop, course, or re-certification will be counted.

After completing a professional development program, course, or workshop, the employee must submit to the ODL Office verification that they attended the conference.

An employee's travel time or hotel stay will not count toward the professional development hours.

Off-campus professional development courses or workshops:

An employee will receive professional development credits for attending training off campus. After completing a professional development program, course, or workshop, the employee must submit to the ODL Office verification that they completed the course or training. An employee's travel time will not count toward the professional development hours.