

UC Riverside, School of Medicine Policies and Procedures	
Policy Title: Professional Development for Staff	
Policy Number: 950-01-008	

Responsible Officer:	Director of Human Resources
Responsible Office:	Human Resources
Origination Date:	05/01/2022
Date of Revision:	08/21/2024
Scope:	Section III B, III C, V A, V B, Addendum A sec E

I. Policy Summary

The UCR School of Medicine (SOM) staff professional development program supports both career-related and job-related professional development activities. It provides eligible SOM staff employees the opportunity to enhance their job skills and professional development through pre-approved degree programs, certifications, workshops, memberships to professional associations, and conferences. The UCR SOM recognizes that professional development and continuous learning are necessary to maintain the quality of the staff and their ability to effectively contribute to the SOM mission and goals.

II. Policy Text

It is the policy of the University to provide assistance and support to staff employees to increase the effectiveness of their performance in their current position as well as to encourage staff to obtain skills, knowledge and abilities to support career advancement within the SOM.

A. Employee Eligibility Guidelines

Staff in the following employee classes with a 50% or greater appointment and that meet the following criteria are eligible:

1. Staff: Career (non-represented by a union)
2. Staff: Career (represented by a union, refer to union contract, if allowed)
3. Staff Contract as applicable (refer to employment contract for information relating to professional development)
4. Staff Limited (only eligible for position-related required professional development)
5. Completion of probationary period, if required
6. No disciplinary action within 6 months immediately preceding the application
7. Satisfactory or better rating on most recent performance appraisal
8. Current on all mandated LMS compliance training
9. Employees must be actively employed at the time of the reimbursement processing

B. Approval Guidelines

Employees must meet the employee eligibility criteria in this policy to be considered for professional development reimbursement. The professional development activity must relate to a performance or career goal/objective as part of the employee’s individual development plan, support strategic goals of the department/division, and/or supports the strategic mission of the SOM. Awards are given based on relevance to SOM mission and funding availability.

SOM gives consideration to the following factors:

1. The course of study leads to a degree from an accredited college or university. Nationally recognized accreditations are those from the U.S. Department of Education and/or those acknowledged by the American Council on Education.
2. The course of study leads to a certification or additional training, which is related to the employee's job and/or career at SOM. The certification program must satisfy the following criteria:
 - a. The certification is national in scope
 - b. The certification exam relies on generally accepted test development principles and the assessment administration environment is standardized and follows industry standard for security.
 - c. A credential is issued to the individuals who successfully complete a certification assessment.
 - d. The certification may not be a minimum job requirement of the employee's job.
3. The professional development program may cover licenses and license renewals, certification and certification courses, continuing education courses, entrance exams or prep/review courses that are recommended for career goals and objectives.
4. Final approval is determined by and based on a review of all relevant criteria, and qualifications stipulated in this Policy.
5. Approval of a course of study for one school term does not guarantee approval for that course of study in a future school term.

C. Reimbursement Guidelines

The amount of professional development reimbursement is:

1. Up to \$1,500 per fiscal year for eligible employees in a .5 FTE and above appointment
2. Additional department/divisional funds, if available and approved by supervisor and unit head/FAO/budget owner (all sources of educational reimbursement are not to exceed, IRS FY max of \$5,250).

Reimbursement will be applied to the pool of funds in the fiscal year in which the reimbursement was submitted. For example, a course starting in March 2024 (FY24) and ending in June 2024 (FY24), if the reimbursement request for this course is sent in July 2024 (FY25), the expense is applied to FY25 pool of funds, with the exception of classes with grades.

D. Professional Development Leave Time

Up to 40 work hours of paid professional leave per fiscal year will be allowed for completion on the activity. The hours must not conflict with priority work tasks or commitments, specifically with relation to patient care. All professional development activities during work hours must be pre-approved by supervisor and documented on the Time and Attendance Reporting System (TARS). Professional development paid leave may be used to attend conferences, preparation courses for certification exams, certification exams, and other courses sponsored by the UCR campus, UC, and/or University Extension courses.

E. Professional Development for Degree Programs: There will be an annual call for this program every May. Recipients of the award are to use funds for programs/courses that begin in July or later each fiscal year. Policy for the Professional Development Degree Program is set forth in Addendum A.

F. Reimbursement Limits

The program does not allow employees to choose to receive cash or other benefits instead of educational assistance.

The following items are not eligible for reimbursement:

1. Books, magazines, and related subscriptions unless directly required for the professional development activity. These items may be purchased by department funds, if funding is available.
2. Fees not directly related to course work. Examples of such fees include: facility fees, student health fees or other insurance, general student fees, degree fees, etc.
3. The amount reimbursed will not include Scholarships, VA benefits, federal grants and Pell Grants. Employees may receive reimbursement for loans; however, employee must pay the loan first, prove that the loan was for the school tuition, and reimbursements are then made directly to employee.
4. The cost of a course or other education involving sports, games, or hobbies unless the course has a reasonable relationship to our business, or is required as part of a degree program.
5. The payment for or the provision of tools or supplies (other than books) which may be retained by the employee after completion of a course of instruction.

G. Miscellaneous

Any employee determined to have submitted falsified documents will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Failure to use tuition funds for their intended purpose is considered a misappropriation of funds and is also grounds for termination.

Applicable taxes (if any) will be deducted by UCR and remitted to the appropriate governmental agency.

III. Responsibilities

UCR SOM Professional Development is under the direction of UCR SOM Human Resource Department.

IV. Procedures

A. Standard Order of Procedure Post Activity Completion (Reimbursement Process)

1. Requestor must ensure they have funds available and mandatory LMS classes are current (if unsure check with FAO/ Budget Owner)
2. Take activity
3. Submit a reimbursement request via Business Operations ServiceNow or self service via Concur.
4. The employee must provide itemized receipts containing the following information:
 - a. Vendor name and Employee name
 - b. Grade for classes
 - c. Tuition cost by class (including books and materials)
 - d. Last 4 digits of the card used or bank statement showing the payment

- e. Payments made to a school loan can be reimbursed, but proof must be shown that the loan paid for the professional development activity
 - f. Credit hours associated with the class, if applicable
 - g. Class/term of class
5. See user guide for COA information
 6. Receipts must be submitted within 30 days of the completion of the activity.
 7. Business Operations and/or FAO / Budget Owner will check the master matrix for funds available, and LMS compliance located in TEAMS-Professional Development.
 8. If staff member is eligible, is current on LMS, has funds available in current fiscal year, the activity is allowable (policy section 3F), and all proper backup documents are attached, the FAO / Budget Owner will approve the concur reimbursement request.
 9. Professional development expenses that are approved on the professional development COA, but are found to be overages (spending above the funds available) will result in an NCT back to department funds.
 10. Professional development expenses that are approved on the professional development COA, but are found to be unallowable expenses, will result in an NCT back to department funds.

V. Forms/Instructions

Addendum A - Professional Development Degree Program for Staff

VI. Regulations

Payments under this plan are intended to qualify as tax-free payments for Educational Assistance under Internal Revenue Code Section 127. Employers are allowed to provide up to \$5,250 in educational expenses as a tax-free fringe benefit to their employees. This includes undergraduate and graduate-level courses. Anything above \$5,250 is generally considered as taxable income.

VII. References

1. UCOP Professional Development Policy: <https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4010408/PPSM-50>
2. UCR Policy for Prepayment Limits: <https://fboapps.ucr.edu/policies/index.php?path=viewPolicies.php&policy=750-63>
3. Internal Revenue Code Section 127: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/USCODE-2011-title26/pdf/USCODE-2011-title26-subtitleA-chap1-subchapB-partIII-sec127.pdf>
4. Types of Appointments: <https://policy.ucop.edu/doc/4010390/PPSM-3>

Approvals:

COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE (09/03/2024)

Signed by:

Paul Hackman

9/20/2024 | 10:59 PM PDT

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PAUL HACKMAN, J.D., L.L.M.

DATE

**CHIEF COMPLIANCE AND PRIVACY OFFICER,
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

Signed by:

Deborah Deas

9/21/2024 | 4:45 PM PDT

870C12B416E84CB...

DEBORAH DEAS, M.D., M.P.H

DATE

**VICE CHANCELLOR, HEALTH SCIENCES
DEAN, SCHOOL OF MEDICINE**

Addendum A

Professional Development Degree Program for Staff

There will be an annual call in May for the Degree Program Professional Development. This program will be announced annually and a link will be provided to submit applications electronically. Recipients of the award will be announced in June. The award may be used for programs/courses that begin in July or any month thereafter within the fiscal year. The Degree Program Criteria is *in addition to* the UCR SOM Professional Development Program Policy.

A. Approval Criteria

1. Employees must meet the employee eligibility criteria outlined in below
 - Staff: Career (non-represented by a union)
 - Staff: Career (represented by a union, refer to union contract, if allowed)
 - Completion of probationary period, if required
 - No disciplinary action within 6 months immediately preceding the application
 - Satisfactory or better rating on most recent performance appraisal
 - Current on all mandated LMS compliance training
 - Employees must be actively employed at the time of the reimbursement processing

B. Work Requirement and Repayment in the Event of Termination for degree programs

The employee must remain an active employee at SOM for a period of 1 year from the date of course completion. If the employee separates from service with SOM within 1 year of the date of course completion, the employee will be required to repay tuition reimbursement received during the 12 months prior to separation on a pro-rated basis.

The prorated amount will be based on the total amount of tuition reimbursed by the percentage of time left in months from one year that the employee did not continue working. For example, if the employee received the maximum of \$2,000 for an educational course and worked only nine months after completion of the course, employee will be required to re-pay 25% of the \$2,000 or \$500 (three months not served divided by 12 months equals 25%).

The tuition reimbursement repayment agreement creates no contract of employment between the employee and UCR SOM. Employees who are separated because of layoffs, reductions in force, military obligations, death or long-term disability will not be required to repay education benefits.

By submitting an application for degree tuition reimbursement, the employee acknowledges this process and will be required to complete the tuition reimbursement repayment agreement.

C. Reimbursement Limits

1. The program does not allow employees to choose to receive cash or other benefits instead of educational assistance.
2. This reimbursement type is limited to tuition for a degree program only.
3. The amount reimbursed will not include Scholarships, VA benefits, federal grants and Pell Grants. Employees may receive reimbursement for loans; however, employee must pay the loan first, prove that the loan was for the school tuition, and reimbursements are then made directly to employee.
4. This program does not allow reimbursement for the cost of a course involving sports, games, or hobbies unless the course is required as part of the degree program.
5. This program does not reimburse for tools, supplies, meal, transportation, or lodging

D. Miscellaneous

Any employee determined to have submitted falsified documents will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination. Failure to use tuition funds for their intended purpose is considered a misappropriation of funds and is also grounds for termination.

E. Degree Program Professional Development Procedure**Standard Order of Procedure Prior to Activity**

1. Submit a SOM Staff Professional Development Degree Program application in late May, early June, for classes that will be starting the next fiscal year.
 - Include with the application a supervisor or colleague letter of recommendation endorsement
2. The Professional Development Degree Program Committee will review all applications.
3. Recipients of the award will be announced in mid-June, and will receive their application back with final HR approval authorization.
4. Once approved, the application will remain in a PENDING status until the courses for the degree program have ended.