Professional Development Leave Program Procedures for In-Unit Faculty and A&P Employees

Purpose
Professional development leaves are granted to increase an employee's value to the University through opportunities for research, writing, professional renewal, further education, or other experiences of professional value. While such leaves may be provided in relation to an employee's years of service, they are not primarily a reward for service. Professional development leaves are taken at either full-pay for one (1) semester or term or at three-fourths pay for one (1) academic year and are subject to the terms and conditions set forth below as per the current Article 22 in the UCF-BOT/UFF Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Eligibility for Professional Development Leave
1. In-unit faculty and A&P employees with six (6) or more years of full-time continuous service with UCF shall be eligible for professional development leaves, except those employees who are serving in tenure-earning or tenured positions.
2. No paid leave(s) or family and medical, parental, administrative, or military leave(s) will be considered a break in continuous employment.
3. An employee who is compensated through a contract or grant may receive a professional development leave only if the contract or grant allows for such leaves and the employee meets all other eligibility requirements.

Application and Selection
1. Application for professional development leave shall contain an appropriate outline of the project or work to be accomplished during the leave.
2. The employee’s immediate supervisor shall be given a copy of the application when it is submitted for review by the University Professional Development Leaves committee.
3. An in-unit University Professional Development Leaves committee of at least five (5) members shall be elected by and from the in-unit employees eligible for professional development leave. The committee shall equitably represent the units of eligible employees.
4. Employees who indicate they plan to apply for the leave are not eligible to serve on the committee.
5. A committee chairperson shall be elected by and from the University Professional Development Leaves committee.
6. The University committee shall review professional development leave applications and shall submit a ranked list of recommended employees to the president or president’s representative.
7. In ranking the applicants, committee members shall consider the merits of the proposal; the benefits of the proposed program to the employee, the University, the college/unit, and the job function of which the employee is a part; and length of service since previous professional development leave. In ranking the applicants, committee members shall not disadvantage an applicant due to the academic discipline, function, or profession of the applicant.
8. Absent a legitimate business reason other than staffing or fiscal considerations, the president or president’s representative shall make professional development leave appointments from the list and consult with the committee prior to an appointment that does not follow the committee’s list. In the event that the president or president’s representative decides not to make a professional development leave appointment to an employee on the list, he or she shall consult with the affected employee.
9. No more than one (1) employee for each fifteen (15) employees in each department or unit need be granted professional development leave for the same semester.
10. Leaves shall be granted contingent upon the availability of staff and unit funds. If staffing or fiscal considerations preclude a professional development leave from being granted, the employee shall be provided the professional development leave the following year, or at a later time as agreed to by the employee and the college/unit. The period of postponement shall be credited for eligibility for a subsequent professional development leave.

Terms of Professional Development Leave
1. The employee must return to University employment for at least one (1) academic year following the conclusion of such leave.
2. An employee who fails to return to the University for at least one (1) academic year following professional development leave must return the salary received during his/her professional development leave to the University.
3. An employee who fails to spend the time as stated in the application shall reimburse the University for the salary received during such leave.
4. Within thirty (30) days after returning from a professional development leave, the employee must provide a brief written report to the supervisor that relates accomplishments during the professional development leave to the proposal submitted for that leave.
5. Employees shall be eligible for another professional development leave after six (6) years of continuous service at UCF are completed following the end date of the previous professional development leave.
6. University contributions normally made to retirement and Social Security programs shall be continued during the professional development leave on a basis proportional to the salary received.
7. University contributions normally made to employee insurance programs and any other employee benefit programs shall be continued during the professional development leave.
8. Eligible employees shall continue to accrue annual and sick leave on a full-time basis during the professional development leave.
9. While on leave, an employee shall be permitted to receive funds for travel and living expenses, and other professional development leave-related expenses, from sources other than the University such as fellowships, grants-in-aid, and contracts and grants, to assist in accomplishing the purposes of the professional development leave. Receipt of funds for such purposes shall not result in reduction of the employee's University salary. Grants for such financial assistance from other sources may, but need not, be administered through the University. If financial assistance is received in the form of salary, the University salary may be reduced by the amount necessary to bring the total income of the professional development leave period to a level comparable to the employee's current year salary rate.

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