

Originally Approved: 10/05/1990 Last Amended: 04/29/2013 Last Reviewed: 04/29/2013

Page: 1 of 4

#### STAFF EMPLOYEES ATTENDING ACADEMIC COURSES DURING THE WORKDAY

#### A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for attendance of undergraduate and graduate level academic courses during the workday.

## B. Persons Affected

This policy applies to full-time regular staff employees of The University of Texas-Pan American. It does not apply to faculty employees or employees in positions that require student status as a condition of employment.

## C. Policy

The policy of The University of Texas-Pan American is to:

- 1. Encourage full-time regular staff employees to pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees through course enrollment after the workday.
- 2. Permit full-time regular staff employees to enroll in academic courses during the workday, whenever possible, with the University's needs being the foremost and controlling consideration as determined by the employee's department head.
- 3. Require advance written approval of the department head prior to an employee enrolling in an academic course during the workday.
- 4. Permit regular staff employees to enroll in up to two (2) academic courses during their respective work schedules each fall or spring semester with the approval of the employee's department head.
- 5. Permit regular staff employees to enroll in one (1) academic course during their respective work schedules each summer session with the approval of the employee's department head.
- 6. Not permit regular staff employees to enroll in any academic course during their respective work schedules each miniterm session due to the time constraints required of this academic session.

## **D.** Definitions

1. *Academic Course*. A college or university course taken in pursuit of an undergraduate or graduate degree.



Originally Approved: 10/05/1990 Last Amended: 04/29/2013 Last Reviewed: 04/29/2013

Page: 2 of 4

#### STAFF EMPLOYEES ATTENDING ACADEMIC COURSES DURING THE WORKDAY

- 2. Fair Labor Standards Act. The federal law (29 U.S.C. §§ 201-219) that establishes overtime standards for employees.
- 3. Full-time Equivalent (FTE). Refers to the numerical representation of a position in terms of hours worked per workweek. Example: 1.0 FTE indicates a 40 hours per workweek employee/position or 100 percent time.
- 4. Full-time Regular Staff Employee. Includes any non-faculty employee hired for a period of at least 4 ½ months and at 100% full-time equivalent and who is benefitseligible employee.
- 5. Workday. Refers to the approved work schedule of each employee as defined by Handbook of Operating Procedures Section 7.6.14.

## E. Responsibilities

- 1. The employee is responsible for:
  - a. Requesting advance written approval of the department head to attend an academic course during the workday.
  - b. Ensuring his/her work performance or the conduct of University business is not impacted if permitted to attend an academic course during the workday.
  - c. Ensuring that any missed work time is made up as directed by department head.
  - d. Ensuring that course work and job duties are clearly separated.
  - e. Providing proof of enrollment and completion of the approved academic course upon request by the department head.
- 2. The department head is responsible for:
  - a. Ensuring that the employee requests the department head's advance written approval to attend an academic course during the workday.
  - b. Ensuring that official University business is not disrupted due to the employee's absence while attending an academic course during the workday.
  - c. Ensuring that any missed work time is made up or paid leave is charged accordingly as required.



Originally Approved: 10/05/1990 Last Amended: 04/29/2013 Last Reviewed: 04/29/2013

Page: 3 of 4

#### STAFF EMPLOYEES ATTENDING ACADEMIC COURSES DURING THE WORKDAY

d. Requiring proof of the employee's enrollment and completion of the approved academic course at his/her discretion.

e. Ensuring both the department and the employee are in compliance with this policy in the accurate reporting of work and course attendance time on the timecard.

# F. Procedures

# 1. Approval Process

- a. Each employee must first complete the *Application for Academic Course Attendance During Work Time* and also, if applicable as per Subsection F.2.a. below, the *Request for University Academic Course Credit as Work Time* and submit them to the department head for approval prior to attending an academic course.
- b. The forms should preferably be submitted no later than thirty (30) days prior to the start of each academic session and will be kept in the personnel file at the employing department.
- c. Approval from the employee's department head is not necessary for courses taken on the employee's own time provided that, as with any other outside activity, taking courses does not interfere with the employee's ability to fulfill his or her employment commitment to the University.
- d. Enrolling in an academic online course does not require approval of the department head unless the course requires online course time during the workday. Provisions of this policy will apply accordingly to online courses.

# 2. Accounting for Course Attendance and Work Time

- a. If the academic course enrolled in directly applies to the employee's primary job function, the department head will determine whether to treat the employee's course attendance time as work time. This provision applies **only** to UTPA academic courses.
- b. If the academic course does not apply to the employee's primary job function, the department head will advise the employee of the adjusted work schedule to make up the work time needed for course attendance. The employee may use accrued vacation leave, holiday leave, or other compensatory time to make up missed work



Originally Approved: 10/05/1990 Last Amended: 04/29/2013 Last Reviewed: 04/29/2013

Page: 4 of 4

## STAFF EMPLOYEES ATTENDING ACADEMIC COURSES DURING THE WORKDAY

time. Arrangements to make up time must provide for adequate supervision and must comply with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act.

c. If the University is requiring the employee to participate in education and training programs, as part of their duties, this shall be handled in accordance with *Handbook of Operating Procedures* Section 7.5.3 Employee Education and Training.

# G. Review

The Divisional Head for this policy is the Vice President for Business Affairs and this policy shall be reviewed every five years or sooner by the following stakeholders:

- 1. Assistant Vice President for Business Affairs/Director of Human Resources-Senior Reviewer
- 2. Staff Senate Chair