

Professional Development Leave Program at Montgomery College

Purpose

In accordance with Procedure 35003CP, section J, paragraph 3.a:

“A professional development leave may be requested for any purpose which will further the professional development of a staff employee or enhance the reputation of Montgomery College. Leave may be requested to engage in a program of scholarly or academic pursuit which will enhance the individual's professional development in his or her role as an employee at Montgomery College, such as a program of professional renewal or development, scholarly or academic study, preparation of a text or other major literary work, or completion of a degree, certificate, or program of study.”

Eligibility

To be eligible for professional development leave an administrator or staff member must be a regular full-time employee who has completed three consecutive years of employment without paid professional leave by the time the requested leave is taken. A staff member who works as a regular part-time employee (20 hours per week) must have completed six years of consecutive employment by the time the requested leave is taken is also eligible. An employee who has been a temporary with benefits, full- or part-time, will be credited with the amount of time worked in that role. Temps and temps with benefits are not eligible for professional development leave.

- **Pay and Benefits:** Full-time administrators or staff members are eligible for full pay while on professional development leave and part-time staff members are eligible for part-time pay while on professional development leave. Participation in College benefits continues during the leave period; annual and sick leave may not be used or earned.
- **Frequency and Length of Leave:** Leave may only be granted once every three years and is for a time period of up to three months or a maximum of one semester. While on leave, awardees must adhere to the terms in their acknowledgment agreement. Awardees are expected to carry out their approved project plan as originally submitted, and cannot engage in other employment or in Montgomery College work-related activities, including returning for meetings or special projects.

Obligations:

- **Continued Employment:** The administrator or staff member agrees in writing to return to work immediately following the leave period for four months for each month of approved leave.
- **Report on Outcomes:** All awardees are expected to provide a brief report within 30 calendar days of returning to work at the College. The report contains an overview of the activities completed, correlating them to the plans and objectives outlined in the project plan. If there have been major variations from the approved plan and its objectives, the report should explain the reason and the results of the modification. The report should be submitted to the awardee's supervisor, the administrator, and the CPOD coordinator and it will be considered by the supervisor in the individual's evaluation. Transcripts or a certificate of completion are required for any coursework.
- **Changes in Project Plans:** An awardee who has a need to make changes or modifications to his or her approved professional development project plan must notify his or her supervisor and the CPOD coordinator in advance of the changing circumstance(s). The awardee then must submit a written

justification that is approved by both the supervisor and the CPOD program coordinator. Examples of changes include: changes in courses, reduction or increase in credit hours to be attempted, adjustments to a research project, or changes in timelines.

- **Deferments:** An administrator or staff member may request a deferment to a future time period up to a maximum of one calendar year from the original date of awarded leave. The employee makes the written request through his or her supervisor who forwards it with a note of approval to the CPOD program coordinator. If the deferment is for later than one calendar year, the administrator or staff member needs to reapply during the next or future application period.
- **Unmet Obligations:** If the administrator or staff member fails to return from leave for the period required, fails to submit a report, or submits a report that is unsatisfactory and rejected by the college administration, he or she is required to reimburse the College for all any funds paid directly to the staff member or paid on his or her behalf.

Institutional Financial Support

Successful applicants are entitled to the same travel funding (allowance) that is provided to all other administrators and staff members. The same policies and procedures apply for all travel requests, including those that support professional development leave activities.

Any request for travel funds during professional development leave, including travel which supports the purpose and objectives of the leave outside of commuting to classes, must be communicated at the time the application is submitted. Such travel requests are subject to the College's policies and administrative procedures, at the time of the request. That is, if there is a restriction on distance travel, requests for travel funds during leave will not be approved. Likewise, if a travel restriction is instituted after a request for travel was approved, the College will honor its commitment to cover the travel expenses.

Applicants may utilize support services or experiences from external agencies or institutions. Letters of support from external organizations should address the intended support services as outlined in the project plan. Any letters of support and related documentation from external organizations should be attached to the proposal and noted in the appropriate section of the application form.