

**VII-3.10 – POLICY ON EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT FOR NONEXEMPT
AND EXEMPT STAFF EMPLOYEES**

(Approved by the USM Board of Regents October 9, 2015; Technical amendments by the Board on June 19, 2020.)

I. PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY

A. Purpose

This Policy establishes a framework for employee development programs at institutions of the University System of Maryland (USM). Such programs are designed to support improvements in an employee’s knowledge and skills to contribute both to the employee’s professional growth and the institution’s welfare, subject to the availability of funds.

B. Applicability

This policy applies to Regular status Nonexempt and Exempt Staff employees and other staff employees designated by the institution.

II. TUITION REMISSION AND REIMBURSEMENT

Institutions may foster professional development by making financial support for employees’ continuing education as follows:

- A. Tuition Remission – See BOR VII – 4.10 Policy on Tuition Remission and Tuition Reimbursement for Faculty and Staff; and
- B. Tuition Reimbursement – See BOR VII – 4.10 Policy on Tuition Remission and Tuition Reimbursement for Faculty and Staff, Section IV.

III. TIME AWAY FROM WORK FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A. General Terms. Professional development opportunities involving paid time may be available to eligible employees as follows:

- 1. Such programs are intended for employees who are expected to continue employment at the institution for a period that will justify the cost to the institution.
- 2. Participation in employee development programs will not be denied to eligible persons because they are employed in programs supported by funds derived from contracts or grants.
- 3. The availability of time to participate in a professional development opportunity is within the discretion of the institution.

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4. While actively participating in such a program, employees are entitled to full salary, continued participation in the appropriate retirement system, and receipt of all other employee benefits for which they are eligible. Holidays will be observed consistent with institution policy.
 5. If the appropriate employee development program is available within the USM, the employee shall pursue the program at the USM institution. If it is not available within the USM, prior approval is needed from the institution CHRO before the employee may be permitted to utilize paid work release under this policy at a non- USM institution.
 6. Whenever a mid-term or semester break in the employee's professional development program exceeds 10 work days, the employee may be required to report for duty at their department or unit.
- B. Leave of Absence for Professional Development for Exempt Staff Employees**
1. The President or designee may approve a leave of absence with pay for an exempt employee to pursue advanced instruction or other approved plan of development for a period of up to six (6) months.
 - a) An approved leave will assure the employee of return to the position.
 - b) Tuition, travel and all other costs for the professional development plan will be paid by the participant.
 2. An employee who requests leave with pay for professional development must sign a written agreement in which the employee agrees to return to the institution immediately upon completion of the leave and serve as a full-time employee for twelve (12) months thereafter.
 3. To be eligible for a professional leave of absence, the employee must have been employed at the institution in a full-time, Regular status position for no less than six years.
- C. Work Release for Nonexempt Staff Employees**
- Work release may be available to nonexempt staff employees to develop added skills and job proficiency in their present positions or acquire minimum qualifications for a higher classification as part of an approved career development plan, as follows:
1. Short Term, Full-Time Work Release
 - a) These programs are for the purpose of assisting employees to acquire skills

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necessary in the use of new or modified methods and equipment, and/or skills and knowledge required to meet changes in the employee's present position.

- b) The employee must be employed in a Regular status, full-time position at the USM institution.
 - c) Programs cannot exceed a period of 30 working days.
 - d) Tuition or registration fees and related expenses are authorized allowances that may be paid by the institution department or unit where the participating employee is employed.
2. Long-Term, Full-Time Work Release
- a) Long-term, full-time work release programs must be part of an approved career development program designed to assist participants in acquiring minimum qualifications for a higher classification or specified additional levels of responsibility.
 - i. Such programs are limited to employees pursuing advanced instruction at the graduate level and certified by the institution as full-time graduate students in each semester.
 - ii. Upon request of the department or unit head, the President or designee may waive the graduate education requirement upon a determination that the program is vital to the operation of the department or unit and in the best interests of the institution.
 - iii. The department or unit head is authorized to withdraw approval for continued participation by an employee in the program upon evidence that the employee is not making satisfactory progress.
 - b) To be eligible to participate, an employee must be employed for at least one year in a Regular status, full-time position at the institution.
 - c) Tuition, travel and all other costs will be paid by the participant.
 - d) Employees participating in programs of this type will be required to enter into a written agreement with the institution providing:
 - i. The total amount of salary to be paid to the participant while on long-term, full-time work release status.
 - ii. Acknowledgement that this amount constitutes a loan by the institution to the employee, subject to the following conditions:

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- 1) The loan will be reduced at the rate of one month for each three months of service completed after satisfactory completion of the program.
- 2) If the employee resigns from his/her position prior to the completion of the obligated service, the unpaid balance of the loan will be due and paid to the institution.
- 3) If the employee is involuntarily separated, or if in the judgment of the President or designee the separation of an employee is the result of adverse, unforeseen, or extenuating circumstances that impose undue personal hardship, the President or designee may release the employee from the balance due on the loan.

IV. INSTITUTION PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

An institution periodically may offer professional development training programs to employees for which part-time work release is permitted, as follows:

- A. The institution's Human Resources Office, when resources permit, will make available appropriate professional development workshops, courses, seminars and other opportunities of general benefit to employees;
- B. With the assistance of the Human Resources Office, each unit or department may also provide professional development programs, the subject matter of which is unique to the needs and operations of the department.
- C. During instructional periods of these programs, participating employees will be on full pay and benefit status.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Each President shall identify his/her designee(s) as appropriate for this policy; develop procedures as necessary to implement this policy; communicate this policy and applicable procedures to his/her institutional community; and post it on its institutional website.

REPLACEMENT FOR:

UM Personnel Policies and Rules for Classified Employees, Section XI, Pages 1-10. UM Personnel Policies and Rules for Associate Staff Employees, Pages 33-37.