

Utah Tech University Policy

358: Staff Professional Development



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I. Purpose

- 1.1 To outline available Professional Development opportunities to Employees and establish guidelines for funds to provide exempt and non-exempt staff members with Professional Development opportunities that will enhance both the ability to contribute to Utah Tech University (“the University”) and individual growth. The University is committed to, values, and prioritizes staff Professional Development as outlined in the University’s Strategic Plan.

II. Scope

- 2.1 Professional Development opportunities exist in several mediums, comprising on-campus conferences and events (including Staff Development Day), on-campus trainings, online/self-paced trainings and seminars sponsored and/or hosted by various University departments, and the Staff Professional Development Fund (SPDF) for external conferences and events. Faculty Professional Development is specifically outlined in University Policy 634.
- 2.2 The SPDF is reserved for Qualified Staff Employees. All other Professional Development is open to all Employees.

III. Definitions

- 3.1 **Employee:** A person who holds a position that is compensated with public funds at the University.
- 3.2 **Qualified Staff Employee:** An exempt or non-exempt Staff Employee who is full-time salaried (0.75 FTE or greater) or an hourly non-student Employee working an average of twenty (20) hours per week and without faculty appointment. A Qualified Staff Employee must have worked at the

University for a minimum of one full year continuously prior to applying for Staff Professional Development funding.

- 3.3 **Professional Development:** An activity that develops an Employee in areas directly related to their current job responsibilities. Professional Development includes conferences, workshops, trainings, seminars, webinars, etc. Professional Development does not include formal for-credit University courses that lead to a college or university degree, or certificate already covered or outlined in University Policy 344.

IV. Policy

- 4.1 The University is committed to providing Employees with Professional Development both within and outside the University. Knowing funding may limit certain departments and/or Employees from participating in external Professional Development opportunities, the University provides many internal opportunities for Employees to learn necessary skills and develop professionally.
- 4.2 The University will provide Employees with at least one annual full-day on-campus conference opportunity to attend, at no cost or charge to departments or Employees. Such a conference will consist of both keynote and breakout sessions centered on current topics and skills applicable to the University's Strategic Mission, Vision, and Plan.
- 4.3 The University will provide Employees with the opportunity to apply for and be selected to participate in an annual Leadership Development Program, used to develop leadership and management skills to grow future leaders at the University.
- 4.4 Throughout the year, the University will provide various in-person and/or virtual training opportunities to Employees through a combination of resources available from Human Resources, Center for Teaching & Learning, Faculty Affairs, Staff Association, Faculty Senate, Adult and Professional Education, etc. These trainings will be at no cost or charge to departments or Employees.
- 4.5 Professional Development will be tracked for Employees through University systems that are linked to Employee evaluations to show Employee Professional Development over time toward goals, performance standards, etc.
- 4.6 On-Campus Requests for Staff Professional Development Funds include activities targeting goals identified by departments and/or within annual staff evaluations. This may include University speakers, division-wide or

audience-specific (e.g., Academic Advisors, Custodians, Administrative Assistants, etc.) conferences or workshops, and electronically delivered trainings or seminars (webinars).

- 4.7 Off-Campus Requests for Staff Professional Development Funds include activities targeting goals identified by departments and/or within annual staff evaluations. This may include attending conferences or seminars, attending a national conference within one's field, attending training seminars, and continuing education that allows for maintenance of certification related to current job duties.
- 4.8 The SPDF supports Qualified Staff Employees as they develop professionally in areas directly related to their current employment responsibilities. Acceptable fund uses include:
 - 4.8.1 Registration fees to a conference or workshop.
 - 4.8.2 Training materials.
 - 4.8.3 Travel expenses associated with professional presentations or conference attendance.
 - 4.8.4 Electronically delivered trainings or seminars (webinars).
- 4.9 Unacceptable fund uses include:
 - 4.9.1 Expenses associated with activities that do not support the mission of the University.
 - 4.9.2 Expenses that do not relate directly to current job duties.
 - 4.9.3 Expenses for a person that would qualify for funding from the Faculty Professional Development Fund (see University Policy 634).
 - 4.9.4 Fees and travel associated with testing leading to elective certification or licensure, or re-certification or re-licensure.
 - 4.9.5 Elective certification, re-certification, licensure, or re-licensure fees.
- 4.10 A committee, co-chaired by a Staff Association leader and a member of Human Resources, will exist to govern Staff Professional Development Fund guidelines. This will include the application process, eligibility requirements, reviewing applications, and awarding of funds each year in designated timeframes. This committee will be known as the SPDF Committee.

- 4.10.1 SPDF Committee assignments are determined in June of each year in a meeting with the Staff Association President, President-Elect, and Past-President, and the Executive Director of Human Resources. The SPDF Committee will consist of four (4) staff members appointed by the Staff Association leaders (e.g., one co-chair and three other staff members, including both exempt and non-exempt staff Employees) and two members appointed by the Executive Director of Human Resources (e.g., one co-chair plus one other staff member serving in an advisory capacity to the committee, to assist in reviewing applications for eligibility requirements, website maintenance, timeline management, etc.).
- 4.11 The SPDF Committee's priorities to determine SPDF awarding of funds will be as follows:
 - 4.11.1 A higher priority will be given to areas of needed improvement identified in annual staff evaluations.
 - 4.11.2 First-time SPDF applicants.
 - 4.11.3 Evidence that the Professional Development will result in a direct benefit to the University, meaning how the experience will contribute to the ability of the applicant to perform their job and the applicability of the request to the Qualified Staff Member's role at the University.
 - 4.11.4 The practicality of the proposal in relation to available resources. A minimum department contribution of 25% is required as an indication of department endorsement. Financial contribution beyond the 25% is evidence of stronger support and will be prioritized accordingly by the SPDF Committee.
 - 4.11.5 The impact/exposure of the Qualified Staff Member attending the event as a representative of the University.
 - 4.11.6 Cumulative total of Professional Development funds previously awarded to individuals or departments may reduce eligibility priority.
 - 4.11.7 Available funding: Qualified Staff Employees may receive a maximum of \$750 from the fund every other fiscal year. There is no limit to the number of proposals that can be submitted per Qualified Staff Employee, but this total award may not be exceeded in the applicable two (2)-year period.

- 4.11.8 Professional Development started/completed prior to application of funds will not be considered.
- 4.12 If a member of the SDPF Committee has applied for funds, they will not take part in the application review/award process during the given application period.

V. References

- 5.1 Human Resources website with links to various Professional Development Resources for Employees:
<https://humanresources.utahtech.edu/employee-resources>
- 5.2 Staff Association website with links to SDPF information:
<https://sa.utahtech.edu/professional-development/funds>
- 5.3 University Mission, Core Themes & Values:
<https://about.utahtech.edu/core-themes-values/>
- 5.4 University Policy 344: Tuition Waivers for Employees, Retirees, and Dependents
- 5.5 University Policy 634: Faculty Professional Development
- 5.6 University Strategic Plan: <https://strategicplanning.utahtech.edu/>

VI. Procedures

- 6.1 Human Resources will maintain current resources for Professional Development available to Employees through its website, as well as emails throughout the year.
- 6.2 Staff Association will maintain current information for Staff Professional Development Funds and Professional Development opportunities available to exempt and non-exempt staff employees through its website, as well as emails throughout the year.
- 6.3 Instructors, training facilitators, and Staff Association leadership will provide Human Resources with attendance records of Professional Development trainings throughout the year if these groups wish for Employees to have this Professional Development tracked for staff evaluation purposes. Instructors, trained facilitators, and Staff Association leadership may also send this information to Faculty Affairs if they wish for said Employees to have this Professional Development tracked for faculty evaluation purposes under Policy 638.

- 6.4 To be considered for a Professional Development award, an applicant shall complete a Staff Professional Development Application, available on the Staff Association website. Individuals or groups of no more than four (4) Qualified Staff Employees within the same department may apply using the posted SPDF application. The first individual listed on group applications will be designated as the primary applicant/contact. The completed application form must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate supervisor(s).
- 6.5 SPDF Applications will be accepted throughout the year, with decision dates November 1 (for Spring Semester events), April 1 (for Summer Semester events), and July 1 (for Fall Semester events). The SPDF Committee will review and approve applications. Application submission deadlines will occur at least two (2) weeks prior to the decision dates outlined above.
- 6.6 Awards are dependent on availability, proper application, and appropriate approval. Application is not a guarantee of funding.
- 6.7 Following notification of approval, the SPDF Committee will notify the Budget Office to transfer funding to the awarded department, thus allowing the applicant to submit a completed Travel Authorization Form to Business Services. Due to the budget transfer, the travel authorization will be completed by the applicable department and does not require involvement of the SPDF Committee.
- 6.8 All recipients of Professional Development funds will be required to submit a Travel Reimbursement Form, with required receipts, to Business Services following the approved-funded event.
- 6.9 The award of funds is viewed as a contract between the staff member and the University. Any deviation from proposed use of funds requires committee approval.
- 6.10 Post-event questionnaire
 - 6.10.1 Employees who receive an award are required to submit a SPDF-sponsored post-event questionnaire.
 - 6.10.2 The questionnaire should be submitted to the SPDF Committee within sixty (60) days of the Professional Development activity.
 - 6.10.3 Employees who fail to complete the post-event questionnaire within sixty (60) days of the Professional Development activity may not be considered for future funds.

VII. Addenda – N/A

Policy Owner: Executive Director of Human Resources

Policy Steward: Staff Association Executive Board and Executive Director of Human Resources

History:

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