

Chapter 4: Professional Development Program

Key Terms You Need to Know for this Chapter

- **Annual Professional Development Day** – one day of the year when a campus decides to hold training events for faculty and staff.
- **Trip Report** – a short report is prepared by the employee whose travel was funded under the professional development program, noting expected outcomes met and recommendations for improvements.
- **Activity Assessment Report** – a summary of assessment of individual and annual professional development events organized under and/or funded under the professional development program. Report prepared by HR staff, representative or chair of the committee that coordinates such events at respective campus.
- **Educational Leave** – paid or unpaid leave from work to study for an approved degree program.
- **Sabbatical Leave** – paid or unpaid leave from work for approved professional endeavors.
- **Cabinet** – the president’s management team made up of vice presidents, a representative from the SBA, and the president of Staff Senate.
- **Travel Authorization (TA)** – business office form that is used to implement approved college travel including recruitment, repatriation, and professional development.
- **Estimated Cost of Program** – Total sum and detailed breakdown cost of a requested professional development program.

Frequently Asked Questions	
✓ Who is eligible for professional development funds?	✓ An employee with a Cabinet-approved professional development plan.
✓ What is a professional development contract?	✓ It is a legal contract that details the obligation of the college for the duration of the program and the requirements and expectations the approved employee is to follow during and after the contract is completed.
✓ Will I continue to accrue sick or annual leave when I am on professional development leave?	✓ No. Sick and annual leave will not be accrued while you are away from actual duties and work site. When you return to duty, applicable leave accrual will resume.
✓ Where do I send my application for professional development form?	✓ Your Appendix D form shall be sent to your relevant vice president through your immediate supervisor (s).
✓ How will I know if my request for professional development is approved?	✓ Your supervisor will notify you after the vice president communicates Cabinet’s decision to that supervisor.
✓ Will my salary change if I complete an approved professional degree program?	✓ If you are a faculty, yes. Currently, only faculty salaries are affected by an advanced degree.

Opportunities for Professional Development

The College of Micronesia-FSM provides opportunities for professional and personal growth by:

1. *Allowing participation in professional activities which not only serve to develop or revitalize the employee but also provide benefits to the college;*
2. *Providing opportunities for staff to remain current in their fields, improve their technique/ skill, and maintain intellectual vigor;*
3. *Encouraging individual personal growth. Such activities focus on improving the individual personally with the assumption that a better person makes a better employee;*
4. *Fostering organizational development. Such activities focus on increasing management effectiveness, developing better understanding of the college's mission and goals among all staff, and increasing effectiveness in the day-to-day operation of the college; and*
5. *Continuing training of indigenous staff/faculty towards an advanced degree.*

Restrictions

Since professional development may be taken in many forms, depending on the job of the applicant, restrictions as to use may be flexible. They should include but not be limited to conferences, workshops, short courses, licensing activities, and degree programs. See procedures for application and details.

If the employee has received full funding for the requested activity from other sources, then the employee is not eligible for professional development funds.

Source: COM-FSM BP6015

Committee Appointment and Responsibilities

At the beginning of each fiscal year, an ad hoc committee is formed to serve as the Professional Development Committee to organize and implement professional initiatives for each campus. Term of appointment is limited to one year. However, members who wish to serve consecutively may be allowed to do so.

At the National Campus, the director of human resources is responsible for appointing members to serve on the ad hoc committee. Members of this committee will assist the office in coordinating and implementing professional initiatives for campus wide events. The director of human resources will serve as chair and lead all related functions.

At the state campus level, the dean/director is responsible for appointing members to serve on the ad hoc committee. Members of this committee will assist the HR representative in coordinating and implementing professional initiatives for campus wide events. The HR specialist or HR representative will serve as chair and lead all related campus functions.

Membership

The committee membership may vary from campus to campus to fit campus need and to represent, as much as possible, the different departments and employee groups. Membership number of each committee is based on campus need.

At the end of each term, appointing authorities will confirm membership of the current committee before appointing any new members. If current members wish to remain and, if the number is deemed sufficient to the campus, no additional members will be appointed.

For each term, the appointing authority will issue a memorandum addressed to all members to certify their reappointment or new term. A copy of the memo will be added to personnel file of each member at HRO.

At the beginning of each term after members have been confirmed and appointed, the appointing officer will issue a certificate of appreciation to each continuing member and provide a copy to HRO for the personnel file.

Assessments

All activities coordinated by the committee or HRO Office will be assessed and a summary report will be prepared. At the National Campus, the director of human resources will prepare/oversee the process and provide VPAS and Cabinet a report following each campus and college-wide activity. At the state campuses, the HR specialist/HR representative will prepare/oversee the process and provide campus dean/director and the director of human resources a report of campus-wide activity.

Report & Commitment

The chair of the committee will provide event and annual reports of the professional initiatives held during the fiscal year to the campus dean/director and the director of human resources. The report will include the following information:

- ✓ List and date of activity held
- ✓ List of participants
- ✓ Name of presenter
- ✓ Associated costs
- ✓ Assessment summary of each individual activity by participants
- ✓ Summary report of event by committee chair/HR representative (2-3 paragraphs)

Employees who travel under this program and spend funds as part of the program will provide a report of the trip to the chair of the committee within two weeks after returning to work. The same employee will provide a presentation or share information to a relevant audience within the year trip was taken or within six months from date of travel. The supervisor of the employee who traveled will inform the committee chair when the commitment is met.

An employee who received support for an approved degree program will provide official college transcripts to HRO when they complete that degree program. The same employee will comply with the reporting responsibility included in their staff development agreement.

How to Apply for Funding for an Individual Initiative

Individual employees who wish to apply for financial assistance from the campus budget for professional initiatives will provide their request to appropriate offices following these steps.

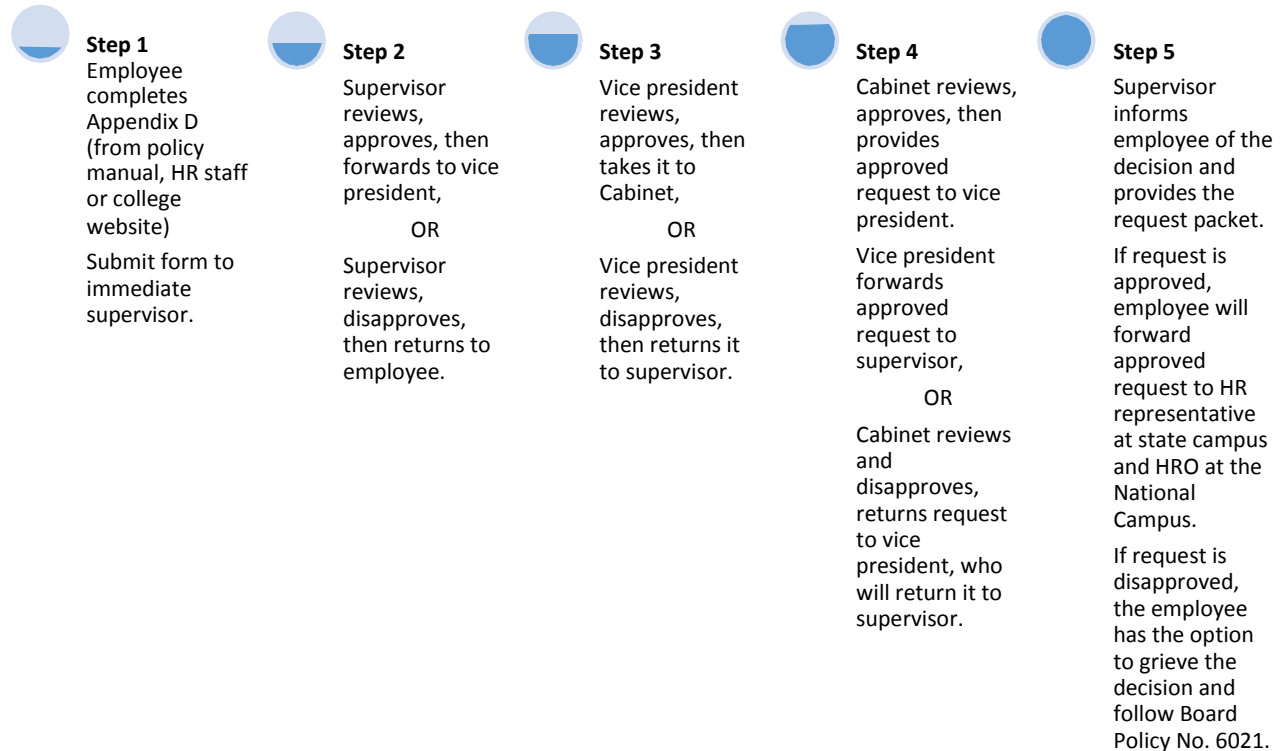


Figure 4.1. The Process for Applying for Professional Development Funding

How to Apply for Funding for a Group Initiative

Group initiative refers to office or department planned professional activities to support common priorities in their IEMP or Tracdat or continuous improvement. The supervisor will complete and forward the form (Appendix D) to the cabinet for approval.

At the state campus, the supervisor will complete the form and forward it to the campus dean for endorsement.

- If the campus dean supports the request, it will be signed to indicate endorsement and forwarded to VPIA for approval.
- If VPIA approves, the form will be signed to indicate approval and returned to the campus dean for implementation. To implement, the approved request will be provided to the campus committee through the chair to coordinate.

At the National Campus, the supervisor will complete the form and forward it to the vice president for endorsement.

- If endorsing the request, the vice president will sign the form to indicate endorsement and take it to the Cabinet for approval.

- If Cabinet approves, vice president will inform supervisor who will provide the approved packet to the supervisor to coordinate the event. The supervisor will provide HRO a copy of approved packet to use to support signatures on the budget used for the event.

Paper Processing for Approved Requests

At the State Campus, the committee or HRO staff will prepare internal documents to implement the approved initiatives. The use of approved funds to purchase food and gifts will require a purchase order (PO). The usual college approval process for purchase orders will be used. For payment of presenters, a written MOU, memorandum, PO, TA, or Special Contract will be used. For finance-related matters, the Business Office will advise on the appropriate form to use for payment or purchase of service or goods.

At the National Campus, a supervisor will prepare the internal documents to implement the approved initiatives and will follow current college-approved process for payment of services and goods. The supervisor or designee will provide to the director of human resources the prepared forms for account signature. HRO will receive all copies of forms the director signs after the rest of the signatures are obtained on the form.

If additional personnel assistance is needed to carry out tasks for larger events, members of the ad hoc committee may be assigned to help. Such a request from the supervisor is to be made to the director of human resources in writing or verbally.

For payment of presenters, written MOU, memorandum, PO, TA, or Special Contract will be used. For finance-related matters, the person preparing the documents will seek advice from the Business Office for the appropriate form to use for payment or purchase of services or goods.

How to Apply for Funding for Degree Program

When possible, the college provides funding support to individuals approved to gain an additional degree, to meet new job requirements or to meet current job requirements. The college will not fund programs at schools that are not US accredited as defined in Board Policy No. 6009 *Compensation*. The college may consider foreign schools whose programs completed by previous or current staff have been equated to meet US accreditation requirements. However, at the completion of the degree requirements, the employee is required at their own expense to have the credential equated through college-approved evaluating agency within three months from the date degree is awarded.

Online Degree While Working

Employees may take online courses to achieve a required degree while working full time in their current job. After completing the probationary period, employees approved to take courses online while on the job will follow these steps to initiate the process. *An employee who is approved to seek an additional degree to meet new job requirement will follow the same steps below.*

The employee will apply at least one semester (fall or spring) prior to commencement of the degree program to allow preparation of work functions, careful review of request, and paperwork processing.

1. Complete Appendix D from HRO, policy manual, or college website.
2. Provide the completed Appendix D to the immediate supervisor for review and endorsement.
3. If endorsing the request, the supervisor will forward the form to the appropriate vice president. At the state campus, a supervisor will send the form through the campus dean to the vice president. At the National Campus, if the vice president endorses the request, he or she will take the form to Cabinet
4. Cabinet will review and, if endorsing, will return form to the vice president to communicate the decision to the supervisor/dean.
5. The vice president will communicate via email/skype/telephone/face to face meeting with the supervisor/dean to inform of the cabinet's decision. If the request was approved, the VP will forward the form to HRO and supervisor/dean. Then, HRO will develop staff development agreement and gain signatures from both employee and president and monitor payment responsibility and employee's obligation. HRO will give a copy of agreement to employee, supervisor and Business Office and maintain the original copy.

Appeal Process for Disapproved Request

If an employee finds his/her request to be *a violation, misinterpretation or inequitable application of policies of the board of regents, or existing laws, or administrative directives and procedures, or of the right to fair treatment*, he/she may proceed to Board Policy No.6021 *Grievance* to file a complaint and initiate the grievance process.

Educational Leave

Employees may take educational leave away from work to achieve a required degree.

Reimbursement for Employees on Education Leave

- ✓ If an employee receives full funding from another source outside of the college, the employee is not eligible for funding of the same activity from the college.
- ✓ If an employee receives partial funding from another source outside of the college, the employee will receive from the college the calculated unmet needs from the outside source and college funds will be the last resort. The external funding source will apply first to the degree program (approved items to finance) and the college's funds after.

After completing the probationary period, employees approved to take educational leave from work will follow these steps to initiate the process. An employee approved to seek additional degree to meet new job requirements will follow the same steps below

The employee will apply at least one semester (fall or spring) prior to commencement of degree program to allow preparation of work functions, careful review of request, and paperwork processing.

1. Complete Appendix D from HRO, policy manual, or college website.

2. Provide the completed Appendix D to the immediate supervisor for review and endorsement.
3. If endorsing the request, the supervisor will forward the form to the appropriate vice president. At the state campus, a supervisor will send the form through the campus dean to the vice president. At the National Campus, if the vice president endorses the request, he or she will take the form to Cabinet
4. Cabinet will review and, if endorsing, will return form to the vice president to communicate the decision to the supervisor/dean.
5. The vice president will communicate via email/skype/telephone/face to face meeting with the supervisor/dean to inform of the cabinet's decision. If the request was approved, the VP will forward the form to HRO and supervisor/dean. Then, HRO will develop staff development agreement and gain signatures from both employee and president and monitor payment responsibility and employee's obligation. HRO will give a copy of agreement to employee, supervisor and Business Office and maintain the original copy.

Hybrid Degree Programs

There will be instances where a degree program is a combination of both online and educational leave from work for a period of time in the course of the program. In this instance, employee will follow either of the processes described above.

In such cases the employee will explain clearly the nature of the program and define the specific periods covered under online and educational leave from work.

HRO will include all applicable terms and conditions on the staff development agreement.

Sabbatical Leave

The college provides for leave to management and faculty members to carry out programs that contribute to the improvements necessary at the college, including benefits to students and the requesting individual that may also consider future responsibilities of the individual.

How to Apply for Sabbatical

To apply for sabbatical leave, an employee must follow these steps.

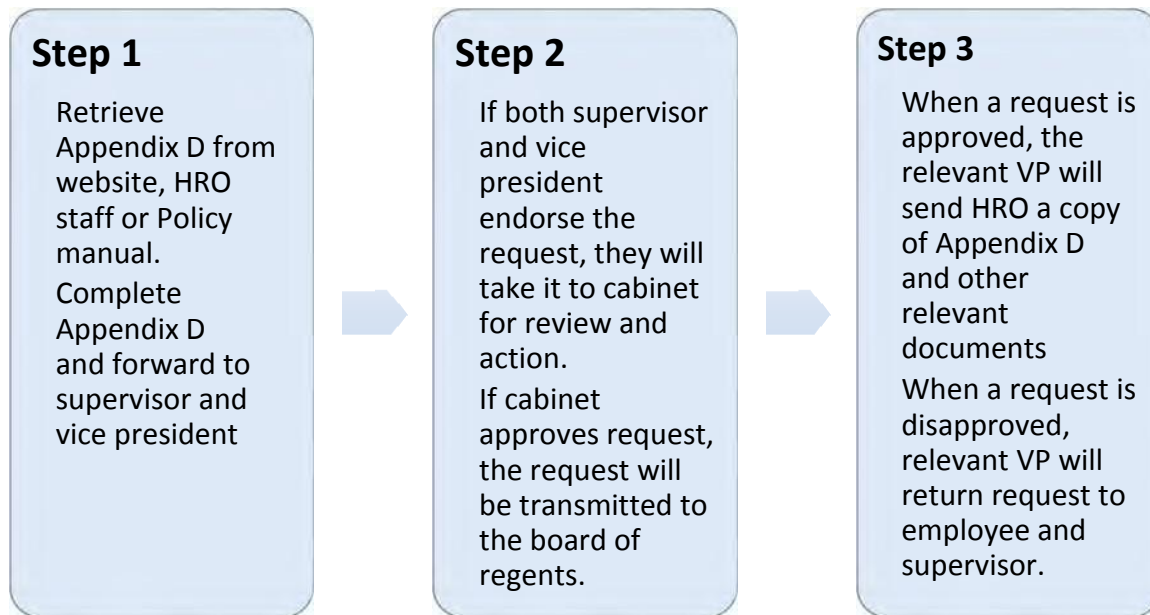


Figure 4.2. The Process for Applying for a Sabbatical

HRO staff will prepare a contract between employee and the college. This contract stipulates starting and ending dates of the program, obligations of the college, benefits to the employee, funding, conditions and expectations. The contract will be signed by president and the employee, and a copy will be given to employee to take with them. Another copy goes to the employee's supervisor, and the original copy will be maintained in the employee's personnel file. HRO staff will also process associated personnel action and related others.

Budgeting and Funding

Funding for the professional development program is planned into the budget one year in advance following the college budget process. At the National Campus, the line item is under HRO and is managed by the director of human resources. While at the state campuses, the line item is under the campus and managed by the HR Representative.

Account number **8651** is the line item budget for professional programs.

Each department or office unit may plan additional development activities under their own budget for travel, subscriptions to professional journals and membership in organizations, degree programs and such. During the fiscal year when these funds are available in department or office budgets, the department or unit will not seek funding assistance from the campus/HRO line item budget.

Restrictions

Educational Leave

There are restrictions that apply to Educational Leave and travel off island for professional development. Educational Leave away from work with pay will not exceed a maximum of four years for a bachelor's degree program for colleges that provide a four-year bachelor's degree as part of program offerings. If additional time is needed to complete a degree program, the employee will do so without a salary from the college. An employee who needs additional time to complete a degree program beyond the maximum of four-year period must gain approval from the president one semester before current approved leave ends. Failure to gain approval of extended leave, paid or unpaid, will be considered a cause for disciplinary action including termination.

Employees requesting additional time to complete a degree program beyond the initial approved period must proceed as follows.

1. Forward the request to the supervisor.
2. The supervisor will forward the request to the vice president for endorsement.
3. If endorsing the request, the vice president forwards it to the president for approval.
4. The president will return the request to vice president to communicate a decision to supervisor/employee. The vice president will provide a copy of approved or disapproved request to HRO to implement necessary paperwork processing.

Processing of an approved request will follow the same steps under previous sections in this chapter. Processing of disciplinary action will follow established policies and procedures.

Appeal for Disapproved Educational Leave Request

If an employee finds a disapproved educational leave request to be *a violation, misinterpretation or inequitable application of policies of the board of regents, or existing laws, or administrative directives and procedures, or of the right to fair treatment*, he/she may proceed to Board Policy No.6021 Grievance to file a complaint and initiate the grievance process.

Travel off Island for Professional Development

Funding for travel will be limited to approved specific items and to regular full-time employees. Processing of TA and associated forms will follow current college established policies and procedures. Funding will not cover programs employee completed or started prior to approval.