Support Staff Training and Development (SSPD) Policy

Department Policy Number

110 005

Effective Date

Revised April 1, 2005
Revised November 22, 2004
April 1, 1999

Purpose

This policy confirms Athabasca University's support of training and development for support staff, outlines the conditions under which support staff can access funding, and outlines the roles and responsibilities of Human Resources and the SSPD Committee for administering the fund and this policy.

Definitions

SSPD   Support Staff Professional Development

AUPE   Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, Local 69

Fiscal Year   April 1 to March 31

Policy

Athabasca University has mandated that support staff training and development is a high priority and has dedicated a fund that provides support staff with training and development opportunities. The Support Staff Training and Development Program is based on the following:

a. Recognition that both the staff member and the University have the responsibility to encourage the pursuit of professional growth and development.

b. Response to the organizational needs of the University to offer the choice of professional growth and development opportunities for staff members.

Regulation

N/A

Procedure

1. Eligibility

    1.1 Permanent and temporary AUPE support staff are eligible to apply for funding as follows:

        a. Permanent support staff who have not yet successfully completed their probationary periods are eligible for funding under Section 4.1 only.

        b. Permanent support staff who have completed their probationary period are eligible to apply for funding under Sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3.

        c. Temporary support staff who have successfully completed a three-month trial period are eligible to apply for funding under Section 4.1 only.

        d. Temporary staff with continuous service of one year or more are eligible to apply for funding under Sections 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3.

    1.2 All requests for funding will be considered on a first come first served basis. Each staff member will be permitted to access the fund once per fiscal year, with the following exceptions:

        a. purchases under Section 4.3

        b. new applicants to the fund will take precedence

        c. subsequent applications from previous applicants will be placed in a queue pending fund availability at the quarter end.

    1.3 Eligibility for funding is based on the following criteria:

        a. The staff member has not accessed the fund in the current fiscal year.

        b. The relevance of funding request to the staff member's professional growth and development.

        c. Recommendation of the appropriate supervisor, with the approval of the department head, for time off to attend training. Such approval shall not be unreasonably denied.

2. Process

    2.1   Requests for funding must be submitted on the form entitled "Support Staff Training and Development Application" and forwarded, together with supporting documentation to the appropriate Staff Development officer in Human Resources. Application forms are available on the web at http://intra.athabascau.ca/forms or from Human Resources. For training activities, supporting documentation must include a copy of the course outline and complete registration information.

    2.2   Purchasing can provide staff members with information concerning types of equipment and current prices.

    2.3   The SSPD administrator will refer unusual applications to the SSPD Committee. Appeals of the SSPD Committee funding decisions shall be decided by the Director, Human Resources.

3. Budget and Allocation

    3.1   The annual budget for support staff training and development is divided equally into four quarters as follows:

        April 1st to June 30th
        July 1st to September 30th
        October 1st to December 31st
        January 1st to March 31st

    3.2   The staff member must submit an application for approval of funds prior to the activity or purchase. For training and development activities, it is recommended that a request be made at least one month in advance. Requests will be considered as long as funding is available for the applicable quarter. Any funding remaining at the end of the quarter will be added to the next. Unspent fund balances will normally carry over at year-end.

    3.3   GST and Other Taxes and Charges

        The full cost of the activity or purchase including taxes and other charges (e.g., shipping/handling) will be included when determining a staff member's eligibility for funding.

4. Funding Options

    4.1   Training and Development Activities

        The SSPD fund supports activities that are related to a staff member's professional development. Department or position specific activities that are geared towards keeping staff current in their positions are not funded through the SSPD fund.

An amount of up to $450.00 per fiscal year per staff member may be awarded for expenses for training and development activities. Staff members may apply only once for training and development funding during the fiscal year.

In addition to the above allocations, staff members may apply their allocations under section 4.2 Computer Hardware/Software and 4.3 Training and Development Materials towards training and development activities, up to a Training and Development Activities application maximum of $1025.00.

Funding is provided to cover staff member costs for registrations and course fees, related travel costs, or course material purchases.

Travel advances must be in accordance with the Athabasca University Travel and Expense Claim Policy.

4.2 Computer Hardware/Software

Computer software and/or hardware may be purchased up to a maximum of $425.00 per fiscal year per staff member.

4.3 Training and Development Materials

Staff members may be reimbursed for professional development material such as books or multimedia to a maximum of $150.00 per fiscal year per staff member. Such purchases will not prevent further application to the fund during the fiscal year.

5. Reimbursement

5.1   Human Resources is responsible to review and approve applications (in consultation with SSPD committee members as required) and notify staff of approvals.

5.2   Once a request has been approved, the staff member completes an expense claim form attaching proof of completion of the activity and original receipts for registration, travel, or purchases. If the purchase will be made through Purchasing, use a Purchasing/Stores Requisition Form. Completed expense claims or Purchasing/Stores Requisition forms should be forwarded to the appropriate Staff Development Coordinator in Human Resources together with the application form for coding and approval.

5.3   Some purchased items may be considered taxable benefits under 110 001 Professional Development Reimbursement Policy.

Note: Tuition fees for professional development courses are not normally considered a taxable benefit.

6. SSPD Committee Structure and Responsibilities

6.1 Every effort will be made to ensure equitable distribution of funds among support staff and departments and ensure that support staff are aware of the benefit. This will be accomplished by:

   a. The Support Staff Training and Development Committee, composed of two AUPE representatives and two Human Resources representatives, will annually review SSPD fund activity for the past year and make recommendations with respect to policy changes and funding levels.

   b. The Committee will jointly look at ways of encouraging high participation in training activities.

   c. Training and development fund information will be included in the Orientation Package for new staff.

Approved by

President

Amended Date/Motion No.

Revised April 1, 2005
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Revised December 1, 2001

Related References, Policies, and Procedures

N/A

Applicable Legislation/Regulation

AUPE/The Governors of Athabasca University (The Board) Collective Agreement

Responsible Position/Department

This policy is maintained and administered by Human Resources. For further information, please contact the Administrative Assistant or Coordinator in Staff Relations and Development. Contact information is available at http://intra.athabascau.ca/depts/human-resources

Keywords

Support staff, training and development, SSPD