The purpose of educational leave is to provide classified staff *within one year of completing their degree*, with the opportunity for continued professional growth and new or renewed intellectual achievement. This may be accomplished through study leading to completion of a degree, *whether associate, undergraduate, graduate or Ph.D.*, so that career effectiveness may be enhanced, occupational usefulness increased, and the institution’s personnel skills strengthened. The program requires a commitment from both the employee and the university to be effective. The Educational Leave Program is designed to represent the shared responsibility and mutual benefit reflected in these goals.

**Benefit**

The Employee receiving an educational leave is required to work 50% full-time equivalent (FTE) while receiving salary equivalent to 75% FTE. There may not be more than 2 percent of the full-time classified employees on campus receiving an educational leave at one time.

An annual report of educational leaves awarded will be prepared by Human Resources for the Vice President for Administration and Finance to be submitted through the Chancellor to the Board of Examiners by September 1st of each year.

This program is based on the Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS 284.343) and the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC 284.514 – 284.522).

**Eligibility**

1. Any classified staff member who has served full-time for five or more continuous or cumulative years at the University of Nevada, Reno without previous educational leave is eligible to apply.
2. Eligibility commences at the end of the semester in which the fifth full year of service at the University of Nevada, Reno is completed without an educational leave having been previously awarded.
3. Individuals applying for an educational leave must have successfully completed no less than three-fourths of the credits required for the program.

**Applications**

1. Application is made on a Classified Staff Educational Leave Application available from the Staff Employees’ Council (SEC) website (www.unr.edu/sec/) or the Human Resources website. All information and supporting documentation requested on the form is furnished by the applicant, whose responsibility it is to see that a complete application is submitted to their immediate supervisor.
2. The completed application and all supporting materials called for in the application form must be completely prepared and filed with the immediate supervisor. Once the supervisor has signed, the form is forwarded to the appointing authority. Once signed by the appointing authority, the application is forwarded to the Educational Leave Committee of the Staff Employees’ Council. If the supervisor and/or appointing authority do not approve the leave, a written explanation for the denial should be forwarded with the application to the Educational Leave Committee.
3. The Educational Leave Committee sends to each applicant, within five working days after the deadline date for applications, a confirmation of receipt, and if applicable, a checklist indicating any items missing from the application. Deadlines are: June 15 for Fall semester; Nov 15 for Spring semester.

4. The applicant has five working days to supply any missing items to the Educational Leave Committee.

5. The Educational Leave Committee makes recommendations to the Vice President for Administration and Finance who forwards approved applications to the President for final approval.

**Rights of Classified Staff on Educational Leave**

The taking of educational leave in no way interferes with the continuing employment of an individual with the university or with any other rights normally associated with employment at the university. Health insurance continues as long as there is no break between the end of the educational leave and returning to work. The classified fee waiver benefit is still available. Annual and sick leave accrual and charges are prorated based on 75% FTE. Retirement service credits are also pro-rated based on 75% FTE. Eligibility for longevity pay and merit salary increases are pro-rated based on 75% FTE.

**NOTE:** Once approved, the employee’s department must submit a PAF reducing FTE to 75%. The department continues to pay all salary and fringe from their own accounts. The 25% FTE salary savings from the position may be available or not, contingent upon existing budget procedures and the university’s strategic plan.

**Obligations of Classified Staff Who Take Educational Leave**

1. The most important obligation of an educational leave recipient is to complete the course of study with sufficient grades resulting in the awarding of the degree. If circumstances before or during an educational leave occur which preclude completing the course of study, the recipient is expected to relinquish the awarded leave and return to normal duties during that year.

2. Upon completion of the educational leave, the recipient must return to university duties for the period of one year for each nine months of leave taken. This can be pro-rated if employee uses this program for only one semester. The employee may be required to reimburse the university for the 25% FTE salary if the employee separates from the university before completion of this requirement.

3. Upon completion of the Educational Leave the employee must submit to Human Resources transcripts showing completion of the degree.

4. If the employee drops classes and cannot complete the program the employee must immediately notify the supervisor and Human Resources. The employee would be expected to resume working 100% FTE. Signing the Educational Leave Application shall constitute acceptance of these obligations.

5. A recipient who fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the Educational Leave Program and the Nevada Administrative Code (NAC) 284.514 through 284.518 may be required to repay the entire 25% salary received during the leave period.

6. When classes are not in session the employee is expected to work at least 75% FTE. The employee may be required to work up to 100% FTE. The employee must be paid for any hours worked above 75% FTE.

**Educational Leave Committee**

The Educational Leave Committee consists of Staff Employees’ Council members and a representative from Human Resources. Vacancies on the committees are filled by selection by the Staff Employees’ Council.
**Procedures of Educational Leave Committee**

1. The committee holds its first meeting to discuss committee procedures before the deadline for receipt of applications.
2. All deliberations of the committee are confidential.
3. The committee holds as many meetings as needed, but its deliberations are completed so that recommendations for educational leave are submitted to the President no later than one month after the deadline.
4. The committee may seek technical information from qualified consultants but does not interview applicants.
5. The committee, after thorough deliberations during which all applications are reviewed in detail, forwards to the Vice President for Administration and Finance a ranked list of recommended applicants for all available educational leaves, along with a ranked list of alternates, if applicable.
6. Upon request of the applicant, the committee chair provides information describing the reasons or rationale underlying a negative recommendation on an educational leave proposal.

**Criteria to Be Used in Reviewing Educational Leave**

Recommendations for an educational leave are based on the ability of the applicant to complete the course of study and return to the university for potential opportunities to advance his/her career and strengthen the university’s personnel. The criteria used to evaluate this potential include:

1. Completed application form with all required supporting materials.
2. Ability to complete the course of study.
3. Years of Service.
4. Grade Point Average. Additional consideration will be given to those with a GPA of 3.0 or above.
5. Relevant Honors and Activities.
6. The applicant’s future career goals and the potential for an educational leave to contribute to the applicant’s professional growth.
7. Review of application by employee’s academic advisor. The advisor must make a written statement that the applicant will be able to complete the degree during the requested leave period.
8. The degree to which the educational leave will benefit the university.
9. Other related factors.

The course of study must meet the definition of job related. The university defines job related as those courses needed to enable the employee to meet the standards of performance for the current position; those which update the employee’s skills, knowledge, and techniques in the current position; courses which are beneficial to the department’s and/or university’s operation. Courses must apply toward the completion of a degree.

**Responsibilities of the President**

1. The President is responsible for approving educational leave recommendations from the Educational Leave Committee.
2. Whenever the President’s recommendations deviate from those of the Committee, the changes are communicated to the Committee and the Vice President for Administration and Finance.
3. Human Resources notifies applicants of status once the President signs the applications. Official announcement is made at the annual Staff Employees’ Council luncheon.
Responsibilities of the Staff Employees’ Council Concerning Educational Leave

The Staff Employees’ Council selects new members for the Educational Leave Committee from the Council at large. The committee chair is appointed by the committee each year. The Human Resources Staff Employees Council representative meets with the Educational Leave Committee during the initial orientation meeting of the Committee to explain the educational leave policy and procedures and to answer any questions members may have about the operation of the Committee.

The Staff Employees’ Council is not involved in the deliberations of the Committee, but does serve as a depository for recommendations of the committee. In the event that a problem arises regarding this program, the Staff Employees’ Council discusses the matter with the Vice President for Administration and Finance and if warranted, the President.

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