

Professional Development Guidelines

June 2022

Professional Development Philosophy

All FAS staff should have the opportunity to grow professionally in their current roles and in their long-term careers. The following guidelines are intended to provide FAS managers and staff with a transparent and equitable approach to planning, budgeting, and allocating professional development opportunities.

Definition of Professional Development (PD)

PD refers to specific training and education opportunities not covered by the Harvard University Tuition Reimbursement policy. It is defined as opportunities for learning and training undertaken by employees to maintain and advance their skills, knowledge, and competencies in a way that supports their career path **at Harvard**, adds value to their role and to the workplace.

Why is External Professional Development Important?

PD provides staff with the opportunity to network and learn from others in their chosen profession, stay up to date with their professional knowledge and helps the University keep pace with other institutions. Individual staff members gain new ideas, find role models, and stay abreast of relevant trends that they might otherwise miss by relying solely on finding professional development opportunities inside the Harvard sphere.

Audience

- All regular benefits-eligible FAS full time or part time staff who have successfully completed their **Orientation and Review** period.

Examples of Professional Development

- Professional licensing and certifications
- Conferences, webinars, seminars, training
- Memberships to professional organizations

Professional Development Administration

Establish a Professional Development Budget

Planning for PD begins by establishing a budget to be allocated to groups for providing individuals with PD opportunities in an *equitable and inclusive manner* across departments.

Budgeting:

- Departments should plan for a pool of funds equivalent to \$500 per FTE for professional development.
- As with all departmental expenses, on an ongoing basis, Department Administrators should monitor, track and report on all professional development expenses. Reports should be available to decisionmakers upon request.

Allocate Professional Development Funds to Staff

- Near the start of a fiscal year, for planning purposes department administrators should **collect requests for PD to be used throughout the year and paid for from the pool of funds**, including requests for appropriate professional memberships, programs, trainings, and/or classes.
- As part of performance management, in conjunction with the **goal setting process**, staff should work with their managers to actively identify PD opportunities that align with their positions and career path.
- Department administrators should **keep track** of which staff members participate in PD opportunities including monitoring that the same employees don't continually get the chance to learn and grow, while others are not afforded that opportunity. Tracking should be done both during and across fiscal years.
- As a best practice, departments might consider establishing a **PD request review committee** that is reflective of the composition of the group submitting requests for PD. This might include the department administrator, a manager, and a staff member. This group could convene quarterly and *review requests in aggregate as much as possible*, instead of one-by-one, for greater fairness.
- PD requests that are approved should be shared with the entire group for **full transparency**. Transparency may prompt some reluctant staff to participate more fully in their own professional development as well as safeguard that these opportunities are distributed fairly.

Keep in Mind

- **Requests may be denied.** Not everyone will necessarily be able to participate in all programs or trainings that may be requested during the year. Requests may need to be denied based on the relevance to the staff member's career path at Harvard, availability of funds, staff availability, costs, timing, and fairness.
- **Manager follow-up.** Managers should follow-up both with staff members who participate in a PD opportunity as well as those who *did not* participate in a planned PD activity, to determine next steps.
- **Share learning.** Staff who take part in professional development should be encouraged to share their learnings with their teams and department. This expands the knowledge of staff overall and encourages others to consider their own professional development.
- **Take advantage of professional development opportunities internally.** From the FAS Mentoring program and manager trainings to leadership cohorts to tuition coverage, FAS and Harvard offer many professional development opportunities through Harvard Benefits, FAS Programs and CWD, often at low or no cost.