



**POLICY: 6Hx28:3D-11**

**Responsible Executive:** Vice President,  
Organizational Development and Human  
Resources

**Policy Contacts:**

**Specific Authority:** 1001.64, F.S.

**Law Implemented:** 1001.64, F.S.

**Effective Date:** 05-23-2018

**Date of Last Policy Review:** 04-21-2021

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## **Total Rewards: Education and Professional Development Leave for Full Time Staff and Administrators**

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### **Policy Statement:**

- I. In order to attract, motivate, develop, and retain employees who contribute to student success, the college shall provide education and professional development leave for the primary purpose of offering learning opportunities for eligible non-instructional exempt and non-exempt staff employees and administrators to enhance the individual's future contributions to Valencia College. Education and Professional Development Leave granted in accordance with this policy and its implementing procedures is awarded to eligible staff and administrators not as a reward for past service but to acquire additional knowledge and competency in their respective fields to support the mission of the college.
  
- II. Education and Professional Development Leave is not deferred compensation and is not automatically granted. Education and Professional Development Leave may be granted based on established criteria and approval through the established procedure. In addition, consideration must be given to ensure continuity of services during any approved leave. The College President or designee shall establish procedures to implement this policy.

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### **Policy History:**

Adopted 5-23-18

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## Procedures:

### I. Eligibility

- A. Full-time exempt and non-exempt staff and administrators with at least five years of continuous full time qualifying Valencia service and not in the Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) are eligible for education/professional development leave. Eligible employees may apply for education/professional development leave upon completion of four years of continuous qualifying service but must complete five years of continuous qualifying service before the education/professional development leave can commence.
  - 1 For the purpose of determining five years of continuous qualifying service, service does not include time served on temporary, grant, or part-time positions or contracts. Any properly reported, approved, and documented leave taken in accordance with Valencia's policies and procedures shall not be considered an interruption of service, unless provided otherwise in the document approving the leave. Leave of absence without pay shall not be counted as service to Valencia for purposes of education/professional development leave.
  - 2 For the purpose of determining qualifying Valencia service, eligible employees must demonstrate satisfactory performance in the performance review period immediately preceding the education/professional development leave application. Qualifying Valencia service also includes a status where no formal discipline or performance improvement plan has been received during the 12-month period preceding the education/professional development leave application through the period leading up to the education/professional development leave.
- B. An employee who has taken a prior education/professional development leave may be eligible for another education/professional development leave as follows:
  - 1 After fulfillment of four additional years of continuous qualifying service from the successful completion of a prior education/professional development leave or sabbatical leave (if applicable), an eligible employee may apply for a new leave.
  - 2 If approved, the employee must complete five years of continuous qualifying service before the next education/professional leave can commence.

### II. Applications

- A. Education and professional development leave applications shall be

available on the College website. An individual must submit completed application materials as required by the deadline provided in the posting.

- B. Each applicant must initiate the education/professional development leave application process with his/her immediate supervisor for review and approval. In addition to the general criteria for award as outlined in these procedures, the granting of education/professional development leave should not create undue hardship or disruption for students or colleagues, and it should not unduly limit College functions, including without limitation, service to students and College operations.
- C. Applications must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor and forwarded to the respective Campus President or Vice President for consideration and approval prior to submission. Approvals by the supervisor(s) affirm(s) that the general criteria are met and there is a department plan for the individual's absence. Approved applications are forwarded to the Office of Employee Development in Organizational Development and Human Resources (ODHR) for eligibility validation.

### III. Education and Professional Development Leave Committee

- A. The Education and Professional Development Leave Committee membership shall consist of six staff members and two administrators. A member of Employee Development from ODHR shall serve as the non-voting chair of the education and professional development committee.
- B. The Staff Association shall appoint staff representatives for the Education and Professional Development Leave Committee. The College President or designee shall appoint the administrators. Members shall serve two year staggered terms that coincide with the fiscal year. In alternating years, half of the members shall be elected with the remaining members elected in the subsequent year.
- C. Applicants for education/professional development leave may not serve as members of the Education and Professional Development Leave Committee in the same year that the individual's application is being considered.

### IV. Education and Professional Development Leave Review Process

- A. Employee Development shall validate the years of continuous and qualifying Valencia service for each applicant in accordance with requirements.
- B. All education/professional development leave applications shall be reviewed by the Education and Professional Development Leave Committee to determine if the documents are complete and meet the education/professional development purpose and criteria.

- C. At the discretion of the Education and Professional Development Leave Committee, some applicants may be contacted to provide additional information before final recommendations are made to the College President or designee.
- D. All of the applications submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Education and Professional Development Leave policy shall initially be evaluated by the committee using the following criteria:
- 1 Evaluation of application information with respect to the principles and criteria stated in this policy and implementing procedures;
  - 2 Exceptional service to the college or community;
- E. Applications passing the initial evaluation shall be ranked by the committee using the following criteria:
- 1 The number of prior education/professional development leaves approved and taken by the applicant (lower number receives greater priority);
  - 2 Number of years of applicable Valencia service to the applicant. (Note: When two employees are equal based on criteria requirements, ranking shall be determined based on the content of the application and/or additional involvement and service to the College.)
- F. The Education and Professional Development Leave Committee's recommendations with regard to all applications shall be submitted to the College President or designee for review and action. The recommendations shall clearly state:
- 1 The reasons for the decision with reference to this policy and procedures;
  - 2 An assessment of the effect of the individual's absence from the College.
- G. The Office of Employee Development shall receive and share the College President or designee's decision on each application with the respective Campus President or Vice President.
- H. The Campus President or Vice President shall notify applicants who have been approved for education/professional development leave. The Campus President or Vice President shall send copies of the notification to the respective supervisor of the applicant and to other offices as deemed appropriate. The Education and Professional Development Leave Committee chair shall notify applicants whose applications have been denied with written reasons for denial and as deemed appropriate, any recommendations for improvement.

- I. Once an education or professional development leave has been approved, any substantive changes in the individual’s plans or term of award, including changes while the leave is underway, must be submitted in writing and approved by the individual’s supervisor, the Campus President or Vice President, and the Education and Professional Development Leave Chair on behalf of the Education and Professional Development Leave Committee. Changes to the term of the award that result in a modification to the fiscal year must be additionally approved by the Vice President of Organizational Development and Human Resources and the College President or designee.

V. Education and Professional Development Leave Period and Compensation

- A. Eligible employees may be granted education/professional development leave at full salary as follows:

<b>Total Years of Full-Time Service at the College</b>	<b>Time Awarded</b>
5 or more years	Up to 4 continuous weeks
10 or more years	Up to 5 continuous weeks
15 or more years	Up to 6 continuous weeks
20 or more years	Up to 8 continuous weeks

- B. The term “full salary” is understood to apply to the full-time scheduled hours, not including overtime or part time work at the College, and to include any adjustments that become effective for or during the leave period. During the actual education/professional development leave period, individuals are not eligible to perform work at the College through extra service contracts, stipends, or overtime.

VI. Grants and Other Employment

- A. An employee that is awarded education/professional development leave shall not accept other full time employment during the period of education/professional development leave, because he or she continues to be employed full-time in their current position by the College. An employee on education/professional development leave may accept a grant for study, research or travel from an institution of higher education or from a charitable, religious or educational corporation or foundation, from any business enterprise, or from any state, federal or local government, but may not accept employment of any kind except as may be specifically approved by the College President or designee. An individual, who receives other full time compensation without the approval of the President, as required by this procedure, shall be required to return all base salary compensation received from Valencia during the education/professional development period.

VII. Benefits

- A. An employee on education or professional development leave is an employee for purposes of participating in the program and of receiving the benefits made available by or through the College or state to employees. During the duration of the education/professional development leave, the College shall continue all payments and payroll deductions as required by law and as specified by the employee in accordance with applicable employee contracts of employment and College procedures.
- B. Although employee health insurance benefits may continue while an employee is on education/professional development leave, Valencia College shall not be responsible for the payment of emergency expenses incurred should an education/professional development leave recipient experience illness, accident, or injury during the period of education/professional development leave. If a recipient's education/professional development leave includes travel, it is recommended that the recipient purchase additional medical/trip insurance to cover unanticipated travel issues at his or her own expense.

#### VIII. Number of Education and Professional Development Leaves to be Granted

- A. The College President or designee shall determine the number of education/professional development leaves to be awarded in any given year based on criteria including, without limitation, the number of applications received, the recommendations of the Education and Professional Development Leave committee, and the resources available to support such activities.

#### IX. Expectation of Future Service

- A. Education and professional development leave is only awarded with the express provision that the recipient shall be expected to continue in full-time service at the College for at least one (1) full year after completion of the education/professional development leave. As part of the application process, each applicant shall confirm his/her intent to remain employed at the College for at least one (1) year after the completion of the education/professional development leave. Failure to return to and remain in Valencia College employment for all or part of the one-year period (excluding properly reported, approved, and documented leave taken in accordance with Valencia's policies and procedures) shall make the person liable to reimburse the College an amount of money equivalent to all, or part, of the salary paid to the recipient during the term of the education/professional development leave, calculated in proportion to the percentage of the year after the completion of the education/professional development the recipient was not an employee of Valencia. Each circumstance shall be evaluated on a case by case basis.
- B. The award of education and/or professional development leave to include

expectation of future service is not a guarantee of continued employment.

X. Additional Education and Professional Development Leave Requirements

- A. The education/professional development leave recipient must submit a certificate of absence for the education/professional development period within two (2) months prior to the scheduled professional development leave period. The recipient shall be granted a bank of hours equivalent to the education/professional development period to which the leave shall be charged. Any approved vacation and/or personal leave beyond the education/professional development leave shall be charged to the recipient's accrued vacation and/or personal leave hours.
- B. The education/professional development leave recipient is relieved of duties and responsibilities during the period of the leave. Recipients shall not serve on college committees, attend meetings, or accept other similar assignments during the time of education/professional development leave.
- C. The College's policies on intellectual property rights and educational work products apply to all persons on education/professional development leave to the same degree as to other employees of the college. (For additional information, see College Policy 6Hx28: 5-09.1 Copyright and Trademark Ownership). Any exception to these policies must be approved by the College President or designee prior to commencement of the education/professional development leave.
- D. Within four months following completion of the education/professional development leave, recipients must submit to the immediate supervisor and to the Office of Employee Development a report summarizing the benefits and/or achievements resulting from the education/professional development leave. A record of each recipient's application and summary shall be retained by Employee Development in ODHR for consideration by future Education and Professional Development Leave Committees should the recipient apply again for a future education or professional development leave.
- E. Failure by education/professional development leave recipients to fulfill the requirements set forth in Valencia's policies and procedures on education/professional development leave may result in disciplinary action and/or financial obligation for the repayment of all or part of the compensation received during the education/professional development leave period.

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**Procedure History:**

Adopted 5-23-18

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**Date of Last Procedure Review:**

04-21-2021