Staff Education / Travel

Purpose and Scope

This policy delineates procedures by which the Department of Rehabilitation Services grants travel leave, establishes educational priorities, and reimburses travel/staff education.

Audience

All members of the Department of Rehabilitation Services.

Policy

- When official duties or approved professional development activities are performed (including but not limited to, online training, on/off campus courses), employees may be granted educational leave, and/or expense reimbursement in accordance with University Policy. Approval at the departmental level will be based on the relevance of an activity to the mission of UTMB; the employee's job assignment; perceived benefit to the department; willingness of the employee to share costs of the activity with the department; the amount of previous travel support granted the employee; the employee's meritorious service and performance; and the employee's requirements for training to meet certification requirements for approved clinical programs.

- The Director and Program Manager will establish educational priorities for the coming year. The Program Manager will review requests.

- Employees completing educational travel with University funds will share their learning experiences during a scheduled In-service. The Program Manager will summarize educational, teaching and certifications received in the Departments Annual Report.

- To ensure reimbursement for travel to all employees in a timely manner, established state guidelines will be followed.

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Request for Travel Leave

- Employees will submit the "UTMB Leave Request" form with appropriate approvals, for absence from work, a "Travel Leave and Reimbursement Request" and a utmb Travel authorization form.
- Employees will submit requests for education leave to allow for departmental processing time to meet the early registration deadline, or no later than four (4) weeks prior to the date(s). If the request is for attendance at a symposium, conference, workshop, professional presentation, continuing education event, or any other official activity whereby you are representing your respective department and/or utmb Health System in the community, a copy of the announcement, if available, indicating beginning and ending dates, location, and registration fee should be attached to the request form. Educational leave will be treated as paid hours up to the limit established by the department. Employees may use other paid leave or days without pay for excess days as approved by their supervisor.
- If reimbursement is requested, expenses should be itemized and attached. Include mileage or air fare, estimated per diem costs, and registration costs, if any. Every effort should be made to manage expenses by lowest fare travel, sharing rooms, etc.

Approval of Education Travel

The employee will obtain signed approval from the Team Leader, who will then forward the request to the Program Manager, along with the completed Travel Leave and Reimbursement Request form. Notification of approval / disapproval for such leave will be communicated from the Director's office, and appropriate processing of official paperwork will be completed by the administrative staff.

Guidelines for Travel Reimbursement

- All requests for reimbursement along with original receipts and documentation must be received by the administrative staff within three (3) working days after completion of travel.

- The following original, itemized, receipts/paid bills in traveler's name are required in order for the employee to be reimbursed for travel:
  - Actual airline ticket receipt
  - Car mileage will be based on official state mileage chart
  - Taxi, city bus, and limousine fees are miscellaneous expenses - receipts will not be required
  - Employees will be reimbursed for actual meals and lodging (excluding hotel occupancy tax) expenses not to exceed state per diem for travel in Texas; employees traveling out-of-state may be reimbursed only for their actual meal and lodging expenses, not to exceed the maximum rates specified in the schedule for the location to which they are traveling
  - When traveling in Texas, a tax-exempt form must be presented to the hotel to ensure tax exemption. If tax exempt form is not utilized, employee will be responsible for paying incurred state taxes.
  - Parking and local / long distance official business phone calls will be reimbursed for overnight stays only (original, itemized, paid receipts for miscellaneous expenses must be submitted)
  - Entertainment expenses are not reimbursed.