

8.01 EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

External continuing education and staff development opportunities for employees are crucial to efficient, up-to-date library operations as well as to employee morale and satisfaction. A well-trained, knowledgeable staff is a valuable asset to this library. A high priority is placed on providing appropriate learning opportunities for all staff.

An employee who wishes to attend a workshop, conference, or other work-related event should first discuss it with and obtain approval from his or her supervisor and should then submit the request in writing, for approval by the supervisor and by the Director. The Director may also initiate a request that a staff member attend a meeting or other library function on behalf of the library. It is important that staff understand that, while the library places a high priority on learning new skills and may want to give everyone the opportunity to attend every workshop they may desire, this is obviously not always possible, due to scheduling, financial, or other concerns. Supervisors and the Director have the right to deny requests.

Criteria for approval or denial of such requests include availability of funds, relevance to the employee's job area, and scheduling requirements of the department. Consideration will also be given to the number of opportunities the employee has had (or not had) in the past; willingness of the employee to share the knowledge gained by training other employees afterwards; whether or not the employee is a member of the sponsoring organization; and level of responsibility, performance, and length of service of the employee.

Employees attending pre-approved library-related events will be reimbursed by the library for reasonable charges. Specific travel guidelines are attached, but reimbursement may fluctuate with the availability of funds. Therefore, all potential costs and reimbursements must be approved by the Director in advance.

Employees' timesheets should reflect attendance at any meetings or other events outside the library, with a written notation. Hours credited to the employee for attending such library functions may not exceed the normal 8-hour day, except in cases where additional travel time was required. No more than 8 hours travel time may be credited for a day devoted exclusively to traveling to/from a meeting or conference. To be claimed on the timesheet, travel time must be approved in advance by the Director. In no case may the entry for the days spent at the conference exceed the hours regularly scheduled. Approval will be given primarily for meetings or events that the Director has requested that the employee attend.

An employee who attends community organizational meetings or events will be able to count those as "hours worked" only if he or she was asked to attend on behalf of the library by the Director.

TUITION ASSISTANCE

To encourage employees to further their education, to encourage ongoing self-improvement, and to assist employees in upward mobility within the organization, the library provides tuition assistance.

A maximum amount of \$1,000 per full-time employee per annum may be requested. Part-time regular employees in positions that are 20 - 29 hours per week may request reimbursement of 50% of the maximum FT amount. Part-time employees working 30 - 39 hours per week may request reimbursement of 75% of the maximum amount. Reimbursement will be made to any regular employee of 20+ hours who meets the following criteria:

- The employee must have worked at the library at least one year;
- The course or degree pursued must be job-related;
- The employee's grade must be "B" or better;
- Budgeted funds must be available.

An employee who wants tuition assistance should make a request, in writing, at least six months in advance of the beginning of the class. A request in the calendar year preceding the course is preferred, however, as it allows the library greater ability to budget such funds.

Tuition assistance funds must be reimbursed to the library if the employee leaves WPPL sooner than one year after the course was completed.