1. GOVERNING REGULATIONS

The procedure is governed by System Regulation 31.99.01 Employees Registering as Students and System Regulation 33.05.01 Use of Public Funds for Employee Training or Education.

2. GENERAL

A full-time budgeted Texas A&M Forest Service employee is eligible to register at an educational institution for courses during normal work hours, in accordance with the following provisions.

3. ELIGIBILITY

3.1. Full-time, budgeted Texas A&M Forest Service employees are eligible to register for and attend classes as students at an educational institution subject to the following conditions:

   a. An employee registering for and attending classes outside of normal work hours may do so without approval from the department head, except when they plan to seek reimbursement for the tuition expenses.

   b. An employee registering for and attending classes during normal work hours or classes for which they intend to seek reimbursement must obtain prior written approval.

      (1) Requests to take classes during work hours must be supported with a plan to either make up the time (schedule must be defined before classes begin) or use annual leave or compensatory time. Exceptions to this requirement must be justified to and approved by the Director.

      (2) Requests to take classes during work hours or classes for which reimbursement is requested must be for classes that are relevant to the job, part of a degree plan that is relevant to the job, or required by the agency.

      (3) Requests to take classes during work hours must be approved by the Director through the employee’s chain of command. The employee’s immediate supervisor or department head must certify that agency operations will not be impaired by the employee’s absence for classes.
c. Class attendance must not interfere with the accomplishment of the employee’s duties or the work of the department.

4. APPROVAL PROCESS

4.1 Before each semester, an employee who desires to enroll in and attend classes during regular work hours must request written approval through the chain of command in accordance with section 2.1.b. using the Request to Attend Classes During Normal Working Hours form.

4.2 If approved, the employee may register for and attend classes. A copy of the form must be submitted to Employee Development to be filed in the employee’s personnel file.

4.3 If disapproved, the employee may not attend classes during work hours.

5. REIMBURSEMENTS

5.1 If an employee takes a training or education course (including online courses) at an institution of higher education to meet a job requirement, the employee may be reimbursed for tuition expenses if the following conditions are met:

   a. The employee is a budgeted, full-time employee.
   b. The course must relate to the employee’s duties following the training.
   c. The employee successfully completes the course.
   d. The reimbursement is approved by the Associate Director for Finance and Administration.

5.2 The requesting employee must provide appropriate documentation of course completion to support the reimbursement request.

5.3 Employees may not pay for this training with an agency procurement card, since course completion must be verified and the reimbursement approved prior to making the payment.

6. NON-COMPLIANCE

6.1 Failure of an employee to obtain the required approval can result in the following actions:

   a. Docking of pay for hours not worked and not made up.
   b. Other disciplinary action as provided in System Regulation 32.02.02 Discipline and Dismissal of Nonfaculty Employees.
7. REPORTING

7.1 The Financial Accountant in the Payroll and Support Services Department that is responsible for compliance reporting will submit a report to the Legislative Budget Board no later than August 31 when the agency spends more than $5,000 in a fiscal year for training or education program for any employee.

CONTACT: Employee Development Department Head, 979-458-6694