**Guidelines for Staff
Professional Development**

PURPOSE

This document outlines Clemson University's approach to professional development for staff and offers guidance relevant to staff professional development opportunities. It is a reference for employees and supervisors and has the following goals:

- To align with the University's commitment to the personal and professional growth of employees
- To define the concept of professional development
- To summarize individual development practices at Clemson University
- To provide a mechanism and resources to help employees and supervisors fulfill their roles in the development process

The guidance covered in this document applies to all staff and their supervisors. Faculty Professional Development is governed by the *Faculty Manual* and is not covered in this document.

Clemson is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all persons and prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender, pregnancy (including childbirth, or related medical condition), national origin, age, disability, veteran's status, genetic information, or any other personal characteristic protected under applicable federal or state law. At no point shall any decision to provide, assign, withhold, or require completion of a development opportunity be made in a discriminatory manner.

GUIDELINES

I. Defining Professional Development

Clemson University encourages the ongoing training and professional development of employees in order to support organizational vitality and achieve individual, departmental, and University goals. Clemson expects all employees to strive for improvement in their position. Employees are often interested in taking extra steps to advance skills and gain experience. Professional development refers to those

opportunities (programs, classes, training, etc.) of continued training and education for an individual throughout their career.

Employees are encouraged to work with their supervisor to discuss and identify professional development opportunities; however, employees should drive their own development (with the support and approval of their supervisor).

II.   Eligibility

While all University staff and their supervisors are encouraged to pursue professional development, opportunities to participate should generally be reserved for those who have:

1.   completed the probationary period, and
2.   received a recent performance rating of "Successful" or higher.

III.   Roles and Responsibilities

Employee
The employee is at the center of the professional development process, and their responsibilities include the following:
- Creating an Individual Development Plan (IDP)
- Sharing IDP with supervisor for feedback and coaching from the supervisor
- Developing a specific action plan
- Setting short term and long-term goals
- Seeking out training and development opportunities
- Executing the action plan
- Participating in one-on-one meetings or check-ins with supervisor
- Asking for help when needed to receive coaching from supervisor
- Achieving development goals

Supervisor
The supervisor should help to promote an environment and culture that supports professional development. This includes the following:
- Reviewing the IDP with employee – ensuring it is realistic and providing constructive feedback as necessary
- Coaching employee based on their development goals
- Providing a climate of trust
- Supporting training and other development opportunities for employee
- Committing to regular one-on-one meetings or check-ins with employee

Reviewer (Supervisor's supervisor)
For the purposes of the performance management process, the supervisor's supervisor is the "Reviewer." Regarding professional development, the Reviewer should help promote an environment and culture that encourages and supports

individual development. This includes coaching and providing feedback to the supervisor as necessary to encourage the development of employees.

Office of Human Resources
The Office of Human Resources (OHR) serves as a professional development resource for the University. OHR provides tools, guidance, and training for employees and supervisors. If any staff member has a question, please contact [Ask-HR](#).

IV.   Conditions

The focus and means of an employee's professional development activity should be guided by departmental objectives, available resources, and the employee's career goals. Conferences, University-sponsored educational programs, academic coursework, internships and time for research or intensive reading are a few of the ways an employee may pursue professional development. There is no inherent promise of promotion, increased compensation, or added employee benefits as part of participation in professional development programs or activities.

1. All professional development is at the discretion of the supervisor, and employees must obtain supervisory approval before enrolling in development opportunities that might impact their schedule or ability to complete their regular work duties.
2. Personal development that is not related to an employee's position and is conducted outside of standard working hours, is at the sole discretion of the employee and does not need supervisor approval.
3. Generally, supervisors should allow employees to participate in job related training or development opportunities and programs during regular work hours without being required to take leave.
4. Supervisors may allow their employees to utilize flexible or alternate work schedules, and in some cases temporary or part-time reassignment to a different department may be needed. Supervisors may also require an employee to submit leave without pay or annual leave at full or partial pay in order to make up time missed while attending a professional development opportunity not required by the employee's current position during regular work hours.
5. In situations where professional development opportunities pursued outside of normal working hours may cause a non-exempt employee to incur overtime, the employee must obtain advance supervisory approval and may be required to obtain approval from the applicable college or division.
6. There is no guarantee that development opportunities not required by the employee's current position will be reimbursable or may be attended while on University paid time. For example, a staff member participating in a degree-seeking program outside their regular work would not be

compensated for time spent in class. Employees may request an adjusted work schedule as an alternative to allow the staff member the development opportunity.

V.   Individual Development Plan (IDP) and Process

To explore career development opportunities that require supervisory support, employees should prepare an Individual Development Plan (IDP) to discuss with the supervisor. Supervisors are not required to approve an employee's IDP. While all employees are encouraged to pursue professional development, supervisors should consider past and current performance and current workload/projects when assessing IDPs. IDPs are not linked to increases in pay or a promise of career progression.

The IDP should highlight the benefits to the department and college/division as well as the employee's own career development. A template and training for the creation of an effective IDP are available as resources (access the links in the Resources section at the end of this document).

An Individual Development Plan (IDP) can be used by an employee to achieve professional development goals within defined timeframes. Employees and supervisors collaborating on an IDP should follow these steps:

1. Following a request for development, the supervisor and employee take trainings created by OHR which detail their roles within the professional development process and introduce online development tools.
2. The employee and supervisor agree on a specific focus for development identified by the employee.
3. With coaching from their supervisor, the employee creates an IDP and executes the action plan to complete their development.
4. The supervisor and employee meet regularly to discuss and modify the IDP as needed.
5. The employee achieves development goals.

Staff Development Methods
An individual's career can develop in a vast number of ways, but each step of development will likely fit into one of three general categories: **experience** (on-the-job training, cross-training, etc.), **exposure** (job shadowing, mentorships, etc.) or **education** (online self-paced training, instructor led courses, conferences, etc.). Development plans which utilize all three categories are the most effective for positive and long-lasting change.

Some staff development occurs on the job, with the supervisor or an experienced co-worker leading the development activity in the context of the actual work environment. Other development occurs at training facilities or other non-work locations. In addition, many staff take advantage of the educational benefits

Clemson offers through online training courses and an Employee Tuition Assistance Program for eligible staff.

By no means meant to be an all-inclusive list, the following are effective methods to help staff develop/reinforce new skills:

Cross-training – Cross-training refers to training an employee to perform job duties other than those normally assigned. Cross-training can be a short-term or ad-hoc opportunity, or it can be an ongoing, planned process.

Job rotation – Job rotation is the systematic movement of employees from job to job within an organization.

Job shadowing – Job shadowing requires more than just having an employee follow a colleague around all day. Shadowing allows an employee to view the organization from a different perspective and learn firsthand about the challenges facing other departments.

Mentoring – Mentoring matches employees with more experienced colleagues through formal or informal programs.

Online training – Also known as computer-based training (CBT), distance learning, or e-learning, online training is a form of instruction that takes place completely on the internet. Online training is generally self-paced and customizable to suit an individual's specific learning needs.

Self-study – Reading, learning, researching by taking university courses in pursue of a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree.

"Stretch" assignments – Challenging projects and "stretch assignments" give employees a chance to learn while doing real work. These opportunities allow employees to develop the new skills, knowledge and competencies necessary for higher-level positions.

VI.   RELATED RESOURCES

The Office of Human Resources' [Employee Development Webpage](#) is a great starting point and resource center for those interested in employee development. Through the Employee Development Webpage, employees and their supervisors can access a wide variety of courses, programs, tools, and learning resources.

Employee Tuition Assistance Program (ETAP)
Clemson University recognizes the importance of higher education with respect to career development. The Employee Tuition Assistance Program (ETAP) is a great self-study option to support the growth and career development. Visit the [ETAP webpage](#) for additional information including program eligibility requirements.

University Policies and Documents
[Staff Performance Management Policy](#)
[University-Required Training Policy](#)
[Employee Tuition Assistance Policy](#)
[Procurement Policies and Procedures: Disbursements – Memberships, Dues and License Fees](#)
[IDP Process Flow](#)
[Charting My Development (IDP) booklet](#)
[Charting My Development Journey Plan (one page)](#)