

ARTICLE 6
EDUCATIONAL/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT LEAVE

A. GENERAL CONDITIONS

1. Nurses are encouraged to pursue professional development and education in relation to their career in health care.
2. Nurses shall be reimbursed for the costs of educational programs required and approved by the University. Time spent in such educational programs shall be considered time worked.
3. Nurses attending University courses or seminars shall be eligible for fee reductions applicable to other nurses at their campus/Laboratory.
4. Nothing in this Article shall prevent the University from granting additional professional development and/or educational opportunities.

B. RELEASE TIME AND SCHEDULING

1. A nurse who has completed her/his probationary period, who wishes to participate in an professional development and educational leave program and who meets the qualifications listed below, shall request advance approval in accordance with departmental procedures.
2. Professional Development and Educational Leave:
 - a. may not be accumulated.
 - b. must be scheduled according to staffing requirements; however, the University shall make reasonable efforts to accommodate requests, and
 - c. may be used to participate in hospital-sponsored in-service training which is not required by the University, subject to the availability of funds.
 - d. Effective May 1, 2005 through December 31, 2006, nurses appointed at ninety percent (90%) time or more, shall receive sixty seven (67) hours of paid professional leave. Such leave shall be prorated for nurses appointed at less than 90%, based on their appointment rate. Effective January 1, 2007, and every calendar year thereafter, nurses appointed at ninety percent (90%) time or more shall receive forty (40) hours paid professional development and educational leave. Such leave shall be prorated for nurses appointed at less than 90%, based on their appointment rate.

Educational/Professional Leave time shall not be considered time worked for the purpose of overtime accrual or pay. Up to twelve (12) hours of the forty (40) hours maximum of paid leave may be utilized for appropriate home study/internet courses. A nurse who is enrolled in a degree program (BSN or MSN) at an accredited nursing school may use up to the annual forty (40) hour maximum paid leave for appropriate home study/internet courses which are part of the required curriculum for the degree program. The nurse will be required to verify that such course(s) are part of a degree program.

3. Nurses who are scheduled to take the examination which would grant a state and/or nationally recognized certification, and who request the examination day off in accordance with the unit's scheduling procedures, shall be assigned paid professional development and educational leave for the day on which the examination is taken.
4. A nurse, assigned to the evening or night shift, who is scheduled for a continuing education course or a certification examination, shall be scheduled off from the evening or night shift immediately preceding or following the course or examination with the exception of home study/internet courses when:
 - a. The unit scheduling policies have been followed; and
 - b. The course is six (6) hours duration outside scheduled work time; or
 - c. The examination is conducted by a state or nationally recognized professional organization.
5. When a nurse is enrolled in a formal education program which culminates in a higher degree, the University shall endeavor to modify the nurse's work schedule to accommodate the participation in such program.