

Arkansas State University System

Operating Procedure

Effective Date: 6/19/2014

Subject: Professional Development Operating Procedure for Classified Employees

In order to increase the adult degree completion rate ASU will recognize classified employees for professional development efforts, by awarding a one-time incentive bonus of up to six percent (6%) of the employee's salary (not to exceed the cap on each degree) for the attainment of a first time degree between July 1, 2014 and June 30, 2015. All bonuses are subject to availability of funds. Eligible degrees and bonus caps are:

Degree:	Cap:
Associate Degree	\$1,000
Bachelor Degree	\$2,000
Master Degree	\$3,000
Specialist Degree	\$4,000
Doctoral Degree	\$5,000

- Employees must complete the Individual Professional Development Plan and receive approval from their supervisor and vice chancellor. The plan must be submitted to Human Resources prior to the completion of the degree program.
- Approved degrees must be from regionally accredited institutions and be relevant to the employee's position.
- To be eligible, employees must be in a full-time position a minimum of one year prior to completion of the degree.
- To be eligible, the degree must not be a special requirement or minimum qualification established by the official class specification for the employee's current position.
- All documentation required prior to payment.

APPLICATION PROCESS

1. Employee must submit a written request utilizing the Individual Performance Development Plan.
2. The request must be reviewed and approved by the Department Head and Human Resources.
3. Upon review of the individual performance plan, Human Resources will notify the employee of whether or not the plan meets the program requirements.

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions are provided to outline the degrees that are eligible for award under the Operating Procedure. This information is based upon definitions provided by the Arkansas Department of Higher Education.

- 1) **Associate degree (two years or more):** a degree granted upon completion of a program that requires at least two, but fewer than four, academic years of postsecondary education. It includes a level of general education necessary for growth as a lifelong learner and is comprised of 60-72 semester credit hours. There are four types of associate degrees:
 - **Associate of Arts (A.A.):** degree awarded for completion of collegiate level coursework which is transferable toward a baccalaureate degree. The range of hours is 60 to 64 semester credit hours.
 - **Associate of Science (A.S.):** degree awarded for completion of collegiate level coursework with an occupational objective of which the majority of occupational courses and all general education courses are transferable toward a baccalaureate degree. The range of hours is 60 to 72 semester credit hours.
 - **Associate of Applied Science (A.A.S.):** degree awarded for completion of collegiate level coursework that is primarily designed for direct employment. A minimum of 50% of all semester hours is in the technical area, and the occupational field may be specified in the title of the degree (e.g., Associate of Applied Science in Electronics Technology). The range of hours is 60 to 72 semester credit hours.
 - **Associate of General Studies (A.G.S.):** degree awarded for completion of collegiate level work of transfer and/or occupational courses. The degree is intended to serve as a flexible program option for students whose needs cannot be met by other programs. Individual courses may fulfill requirements for transfer toward a baccalaureate degree, direct employment, or educational enrichment. The range of hours is 60 to 64 semester credit hours.
- 2) **Baccalaureate (bachelor's) degree:** a degree granted upon completion of a program that requires four to five years of full-time college work and carries the title of bachelor.
- 3) **Master's degree:** a degree which requires at least one, but no more than two, full-time equivalent years of study beyond the bachelor's degree.
- 4) **Specialist degree/certificate:** a degree or certificate carrying the title of specialist, which requires completion of a program or study beyond the master's degree but does not meet the academic requirements of a doctor's degree. Also called a post-master's certificate.
- 5) **Doctoral degree:** a degree awarded upon completion of an educational program at the graduate level which terminates in a doctor's degree.