

THE FACULTY DEVELOPMENT FLEXIBLE CALENDAR PROGRAM HANDBOOK - QUESTIONS & ANSWERS, AS WELL AS USEFUL & NECESSARY INFORMATION

Saddleback College

The purpose of this handbook is to explain, in a question and answer format, what the Flexible Calendar Program is, and how it functions at Saddleback College.

For most forms and links, please go to: http://www.saddleback.edu/asenate/flex_inservice.html

1 ➤ What is the Flexible Calendar Program and how did it originate?

A program instituted by the state of California in the early 1980's to encourage and provide time for professional development among California community college faculty and staff.

Due to the rapid expansion of community colleges and the influx of faculty during the 1960's and 1970's, numerous activities were developed to address the professional, personal, and organizational needs of these new instructors. Furthermore, the traditional 175-day community college calendar, fifteen days longer than community college calendars in many other states, limited the amount of time for faculty to prepare for spring courses. Also, because of the limited break after the end of the fall semester in January and the immediate start of the new semester, student services personnel needed more time to counsel students, process grades, and complete other tasks.

Because of these needs, the flexible calendar program was initiated by six California community colleges in 1976 as a pilot project authorized by Assembly Bill 2232 (1975). The bill allowed colleges the opportunity to replace up to fifteen days of regular instruction with alternative activities, such as course and program development and revision, staff development activities, development of new instructional materials, and other instruction-related activities. Saddleback College, along with 5 other community colleges became part of this test venture, to test its effectiveness.

After the success of the pilot programs was noted, legislation (AB 1149) in 1981 allowed all colleges the option of adopting a flexible calendar program. The program is not mandatory for all CA community colleges, and any college may opt out if it chooses. Saddleback College has participated in Flex Week Activities since the test project.

The basic purpose of the Flexible Calendar Program is to replace instructional days with professional development activities that enhance institutional programs and services and further student learning.

2 ↻ What does "flex" mean?

"Flex" generally refers to the Flexible Calendar Program or activities associated with it, and is often synonymous with "In-Service."

3 ↻ What are professional development activities?

Activities that result in staff, student or instructional improvement.¹

4 ↻ I am always involved in improving myself professionally. Why do I have to document activities for the college?

Because the Flexible Calendar Program, in which the college participates, requires documentation of 38 hours of professional development activities, in exchange for the dismissing of classes for nine days during the academic year.

5 ↻ Can I continue to undertake my own professional development activities without asking for hours of flex credit?

Yes.

6 ↻ Can I obtain flex credit for taking a class intended to help me advance on the salary schedule?

No. However, taking a class required to maintain your credential would count.

7 ↻ Can I obtain flex credit for attendance on a regular college committee?

Not unless the event takes place during in-service week and appears in the program as a scheduled event. Otherwise it would be considered part of your contractual assignment.

8 ↻ Could I complete my flex obligation of 38 hours without attending in-service weeks?

Yes. As long as none of your flex activities coincided with hours of duties that you are required by the current Certificated Employee Master Agreement. The flex hours for a given academic year are completed between July 1 and June 30 of that year. Flex hours may not be banked or carried forward.

¹ California Education Code, Title 5, Section 55724

9 ☞ What does "performing" an activity to earn flex credit mean?

There are three primary ways to earn flex credit:

1. *Participant (Attendee)* at a professional development activity
2. *Individual Activity or Project Planner* relating to professional development
3. *Presenter* of a professional development activity

10 ☞ How are "activities" defined?

In this sense, an activity is defined by its format, which include: lectures, workshops, presentations, discussion groups, skills laboratories, open houses, events, sessions, conferences, short-term classes or courses, licensure updating training, mentoring, advising, demonstrations, and seminars.

11 ☞ How many flex credits do I earn for presenting an activity?

Faculty members who present flex activities to SOCCCD employees will earn three hours flex credit for each hour of presentation. For example, when presenting a 2-hour activity, a faculty member will earn 6 flex hours; 4 hours for preparation time and 2 hours for presentation time. If no one attends the activity, flex hours will be earned for prep time only. For faculty members presenting an activity more than one time in a semester, flex hours for the prep time will only be counted once.

Faculty members who present flex activities to non-SOCCCD employees will earn one hours flex credit for each hour of presentation.

12☞ What is the difference between "presenting" and "participating/attending" an activity?

A) If you present an activity, you must address an audience of at least one person. You are responsible for preparing for the event, delivering your message or information clearly and professionally, supplying necessary handouts, requesting needed equipment, and beginning and ending the presentation at the times stated.

B) If you participate in, or attend an activity, you are part of an audience observing the presentation of information by a speaker or other presenter. You do not have to perform any work during the activity outside of reasonable requests made of you by the presenter during the event.

13 ☞ What is an "individual activity" and how is it different from presenting or attending an activity?

An individual activity is a project that you undertake alone or in a small group. The project has aims and objectives, corresponds to activities designated as professional development activities, has a beginning and end date during the same academic year. An individual activity does not have an audience, and is not being observed by an audience while it is being performed.

14 ☞ What are examples of presenting, participating/attending, and individual activities?

A) Presenting (to a group):

- Show slides and discuss the outcomes of a recent trip abroad
- Explain the concept of service learning
- Discuss recent changes in the chemistry curriculum in your department
- Provide an overview of state of the art devices to aid the hearing impaired
- Open you laboratory or center to colleagues and explain its function
- Report the outcomes of your sabbatical
- Explain the nature of health services available to students
- Demonstrate a new computer application
- Teach new ways to increase web page effectiveness
- Instruct the group in how to put your class on line
- Explain actions to take in the classroom in the event of an emergency

B) Participating in/Attending an activity

- Participate in a training session that teaches you the use of new technology
- Attend a short term class learning how to spot "troubled" students
- Be in the audience hearing a lecture on service learning
- Along with others, view a PowerPoint presentation explaining recent demographic changes in Orange County
- Attend a jazz ensemble performance in the Fine Arts complex
- Stop by the Employee Health Fair and question representatives of District benefit providers
- Spend time touring a colleague's laboratory open house

C) Performing an individual activity

- Spend time in the library reviewing newly acquired books and software, and recommending the withdrawal of outdate materials
- Create a brochure or instruction booklet explaining to your students how to utilize a computer program
- Write a grant
- Create self-study modules and/or computer-assisted instruction
- Plan and organize activity for the upcoming Multicultural Awareness Week
- Meet one-on-one with a student or group of students to explain your expectations of them and the outcomes they may expect of the course (This is not a "presentation activity" because its audience is not colleagues who are earning flex credit by attending your event).
- Produce a film documenting your trip to the Academia Real in Spain.
- Work on developing a class or department web site.

15 ☞ Why isn't an activity such as attending a class to obtain CPR certification necessary for your job considered an individual activity?

Because you are increasing or retaining your professional standing through the efforts of someone else (the presenter) instead of investigating, research and acquiring the information yourself.

16 ☞ How do I show my completion of an activity as a presenter, participant, or individual activity?

Complete the proper form(s) for each. All forms are available at:

http://www.saddleback.edu/asenate/flex_inservice.html

1. Presenter:

- Complete the In-Service Presenter Activity Form if the presentation is to be given during in-service. If the presentation is given at times other than in-service, the Presenter Activity Pre-Approval Form and the Presenter Activity Report Form are required.

2. Participant ("attendee"):

- If you participate in an activity that occurs in the Program of Events for any in-service week, you self-report your attendance at the flex website.
- If you participate in an activity that does not appear in the Schedule of Events, you must complete the Flex Activity Report Form. Complete the form, and return it to the Staff Development Office in AGB 121.

3. Individual Activity: complete 2 forms

- Individual Activity Pre-Approval Form - requires signature of division rep
- Individual Activity Report Form

17 ☞ Are there limits to the total number of hours I can earn performing an individual activity?

No. However, daily hours are capped at 8.

18 ☞ What is the difference between a presenter and a facilitator?

The facilitator of an event is not the presenter. Instead, the facilitator arranged for the presenter to come to the college during in-service week, and acts as the intermediary between the flexible calendar program coordinator and the actual presenter.

19 ☞ How can a faculty member be a facilitator?

If the faculty member wants to bring a presenter to campus to present a professional development activity, he or she is the liaison between the actual presenter and the Flex Week Coordinator. The facilitator does not earn flex credit because he or she is not presenting the activity.

20 ➤ What about attending a conference that takes place off-campus?

You fill out the Flex Activity Report Form (listed under Participant/Attendee)

21 ➤ Who signs or approves my applications for individual activities?

Applications to do an individual activity must be signed by your division Flex Committee Representative. Obtain this signature before you start the activity. Then send the application form to the Staff Development Office, in AGB 121. The Vice President for Instruction will also see and sign your application.

22 ➤ How do I find out who my division representative is?

The names are posted on the Faculty Development Flexible Calendar Program web page at: http://www.saddleback.edu/asenate/flex_inservice.html or call 582.4969

23 ➤ What is the difference between "faculty" and "staff" development?

The terms are also used interchangeably. Technically, staff development should refer to professional enhancement by an employee not designated as certificated.

24 ➤ Do associate faculty members have to complete professional development activities?

No. However all flex-earning activities are intended for both full-time and associate faculty members.

25 ➤ Are there special activities created just for associate faculty members?

Generally no. However during in-service week, associate faculty member meetings are conducted at scheduled times.

26 ➤ What are the advantages of attending in-service week activities?

One benefit of in-service week is that it allows faculty the time to meet and exchange knowledge and skills that would not be possible during regular instructional weeks.

27 ➤ Are flex days part of the academic calendar?

Yes. The target of 38 hours is equal to 9 days of the 178 day annual Academic Calendar. These days are divided into 5 in the fall and 4 in the spring.

28 ➤ Does the Certificated Employee Master Agreement refer to flex activities?

- ✓ The agreement defines "flex activities" as "activities performed in lieu of classroom, preparation, and office hour assignment time and, therefore, attendance is required for full-time faculty members"² (Title 5, Section 55726).
- ✓ The agreement also states both full- and part-time faculty members are encouraged to attend and participate in ... Professional development activities offered throughout the FLEX calendar".³
- ✓ It further states that "each faculty member's Flex obligation will be calculated at 4.2 hours per Flex day as designated in the Academic Calendar".⁴

29 ➤ What is my flex obligation if I am granted a sabbatical or other leave, such as maternity leave, OSH banked leave, leave for extended illness, etc?

You are not obligated to complete flex hours during the semester(s) that you are on leave.

30 ➤ What are the guidelines for the professional development activities in which I may participate?

Title 5, Section 55724, California Code of Regulations, states that, under the Flexible Calendar Program, college personnel will be engaged in staff, student or instructional improvement activities which may include:

- Instruction and evaluation
- Instructional improvement
- Program and course curriculum or learning resource development and evaluation
- Student personnel services
- Learning resource services
- Student advising, guidance, orientation, matriculation services
- Student, faculty and staff diversity
- Departmental meetings
- Conferences and workshops
- Institutional research

² Article IV, Definitions

³ Article XIV, 4, B, 4, Assignment, Contract Year, Hours of Service, and Professional Duties

⁴ Article XIV, 4, B, 4, a, *ibid*.

31 ↻ What are examples of specific activities that fall under the definition of professional development?⁵

A) Staff Improvement

1. Developing new programs (e.g., a workshop on designing curriculum/programs)
2. Faculty and staff (e.g. tutors, lab assistants) meetings to improve learning resource support services to students
3. Workshops on how to mentor students or how to mentor faculty
4. Orientation/education (e.g. new faculty; role of the academic senate; training students, staff and faculty to serve on committees; changing role of technology in education)
5. Student, faculty, and staff diversity (e.g. sexual harassment workshops, affirmative action conferences, cultural diversity seminars, multicultural activities)
6. Workshops on how to write grants
7. Workshops or individually designed activities to improve or enhance a person's skills or knowledge in his/her discipline
8. Wellness activities that assist individuals to be physically and mentally better able to perform their jobs (e.g. humor in the workplace, stress reduction, self-defense, nutrition, exercise, weight reduction)
9. Learning another language to better communicate with the diverse student population
10. Disaster preparedness (e.g. district procedures, first aid, review of facilities to determine areas of need)
11. Improving or learning how to deal with computers and technology
12. New full or part-time faculty orientation

B) Student Improvement

1. Teaching a class in shortened format during a flex period (in lieu of pay)
2. Developing a new program to meet changing student needs
3. Meeting with tutors or lab assistants to improve services to students
4. Review of learning resource materials to eliminate out-dated items and make recommendations for additions
5. Creating self-study modules and/or computer-assisted instruction
6. Training in classroom research (assessment) techniques
7. Mentoring of students
8. Faculty participation in student orientation programs
9. Matriculation services (e.g. special orientation for ESL students, workshops in specific disciplines for students with undecided majors)
10. Attending meetings (department/division/college-wide) specifically to discuss strategies for improving service to students

⁵ Guidelines for the Implementation of the Flexible Calendar Program by the Faculty Development Committee of the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges in cooperation with the Chancellor's Office program staff, 1993.

11. Institutional research focused on meeting the needs of students (e.g. job market surveys, transfer ratios, ethnicity data on students, gender equity)
12. Writing grants aimed to improve services to students
13. Articulation to improve transfer processes
14. Outreach for special projects (e.g. EOPS)
15. Conducting special workshops for students (e.g. understanding the college schedule, transfer requirements, setting academic goals)

C) Instructional Improvement

1. Attending workshops on teaching methods or techniques (e.g. classroom-based research training; Instructional Skills Workshops ; local, regional, national Great Teachers Seminars)
2. Development or revision of programs, courses, learning resources and evaluation methods
3. Modifying an existing course to comply with changing institutional or discipline requirements (e.g. changing theories in a discipline, articulation with transfer institutions, critical thinking, multiculturalism, writing across the curriculum)
4. Significant modification of a course to address the learning needs of diverse students (e.g. creating self-paced learning modules)
5. Developing student readiness programs specific to course disciplines
6. Review of learning resource materials to eliminate outdated items and recommend additions
7. Faculty and counselor meetings to address areas of curriculum
8. Creating self-study modules and computer-assisted instruction modules
9. Student, faculty, and staff diversity (e.g. sexual harassment workshops, affirmative action conferences, cultural diversity seminars, multicultural activities)
10. Institutional research (e.g. job skill requirements, research on transfer ratios, ethnicity data on students and staff, gender equity, campus climate)
11. Grant writing to secure funds for improvement of instruction
12. Visit the class of a colleague

32 ➤ What are some advantages of in-service week?

1. College-wide and District-wide programs and events allow faculty and staff to interact on a basis otherwise impossible during regular instructional weeks. (President's Breakfast, Academic Senate, Welcome Student Day, Chancellor's Opening Session, SOCCCD Faculty Association Luncheon & Meeting).
2. The District is able to bring in special speakers to address large numbers of faculty and staff, something that cannot be done for relatively smaller groups, such as divisions and departments. (CalSTRS Workshops, Safety in the Classroom Workshops, OCTFCU Benefits & Retirement Planning, District Employee Benefits Workshops, Long Term Care Programs, District Employee Open Enrollment & Health Fair, Harassment-Discrimination Prevention Training).

3. Important College services can be explained to larger groups of faculty. (Crisis Intervention, Code of Student Conduct, Disaster Preparedness, Articulation & Transfer, Career Planning Center, EOPS Opportunities, Services to Special Needs Students, Health Services to Students, Student Retention Options, Publication & Advertising Services, Foundation Opportunities & Fund Creation Opportunities, Campus Safety Services).

4. College divisions and departments can highlight their programs, courses, achievements, goals and objectives through open houses: e.g. Reading Center, Writing Center, Automotive Technology, Library, Career Center, Articulation Center, Music Ensemble Performances, Lifetime Fitness Center, EMT Program, Adaptive Technology Lab, Aquarium & Biological Sciences Labs, KSBR & Channel 39.

5. Individual faculty members have the opportunity to share achievements, personal experiences & expertise, instructional techniques, and information with many others outside of their particular division or department. (Overseas teaching and learning experiences: Northern Ireland, Peru, Namibia, Antarctica; Teaching Strategies, Student Learning Outcomes, Service Learning, Writing Workshops, PowerPoint Applications, Identifying Special Needs Students, Sign Language & the Hearing Impaired, Student Alcohol & Drug Awareness Sessions, Personal Endeavors: Hurricane & Similar Disaster Relief Participants).

33 ↻ When are In-Service Weeks?

In-Service Weeks occur at the beginning of fall and spring semester. There is no summer in-service week, however flex activities may occur. The 9 in-service week days account for 05% of a faculty member's contract year. See current Academic Calendar:

<http://www.saddleback.edu/MEDIA/PDF/2009-10calendar.pdf>

34 ↻ The Flexible Calendar Program and the California Education Code

Information regarding the Flexible Calendar can be found in the Barclays Official California Code of Regulation, Title 5 Education, Division 6 California Community College, Chapter 6 Curriculum and Instruction, Subchapter 8 Academic Calendar, Article 2 Flexible Calendar Operations. To view the California Code of Regulation use the following link:

<http://www.saddleback.edu/gov/senate/law.htm>

This handbook was last updated in September of 2009.