

F l e x i b l e
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*In Support of
Staff Excellence and
Student Success*

Mendocino College

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**Mendocino College
FLEXIBLE CALENDAR PROGRAM**

HISTORY

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 in February, student services personnel needed more time to counsel students, process grades, and complete other tasks.

As a result 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. 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.

On 11/1/89, the Board of Trustees approved the Flexible Calendar Program for Mendocino College, replacing nine days of instruction with nine flex days. There are two institutionally planned flex days (hereafter referred to as "flex/in-service"), one at the beginning of each semester. The Flex Committee, in conjunction with the Academic Senate, plans the activities for these two days. The remaining seven flex days are planned individually.

PURPOSE

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

Faculty design and propose their professional development activities under the flex program. Full-time faculty submit an annual agreement setting forth a professional development plan for the year. Part-time faculty submit an agreement each semester. Part-time faculty who are eligible to participate in the flex program have flex hours allocated on their contract, although participation is optional.

GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

1. **Title 5 Regulations:** Title 5, Section 55724, 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. **Sample Activities:** Mendocino College faculty members must propose professional development activities within one or more of these categories: **staff improvement, student improvement or instructional improvement.** (See Form 100, Mendocino College Flexible Calendar Agreement.)

Note: Approved activities must be supplemental to full-time faculty responsibilities outlined in the Full-Time Faculty Handbook.

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 a second 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-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. Faculty and staff (e.g. tutors, lab assistants meetings 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. Meetings (department/division/college-wide) specifically to discuss strategies for improving service to students
11. Institutional research focused on meeting the needs of students (e.g. job market surveys, transfer ratios, ethnicity data on students, gender equity, campus climate)
12. Writing grants aimed to improve services to students
13. Articulation to improve transfer processes
14. Outreach for special projects (e.g. MESA)
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. Faculty and counselor meetings to address areas of curriculum
7. Review of learning resource materials to eliminate outdated items and recommend additions
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. Departmental or division meetings to discuss overall curriculum and program review
11. Institutional research (e.g. job skill requirements, research on transfer ratios, ethnicity data on students and staff, gender equity, campus climate)
12. Grant writing to secure funds for improvement of instruction
13. Visit the class of a colleague

* From 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.

The following may not be used for flex activities:

- serving as a club advisor
- conducting faculty evaluations
- serving on advisory committees

GUIDELINES FOR FULL-TIME FACULTY

Determining Flex Hours

A full-time instructor is responsible for performing duties on campus at least thirty hours per week. (***Full-time Faculty Handbook***, Section 1.7.2) Therefore, 9 flex days obligate full-time instructors to 54 flex hours. Counselors and Librarians also participate in 54 flex hours. The 54 flex hours consist of 12 hours of institutionally planned activities, to be fulfilled on 2 scheduled flex/in-service days, and 42 hours of individually planned professional development activities.

Because the flex program is part of the contract year, failure to attend flex/in-service or complete the individually planned professional development activities will result in a forfeiture of pay.

Flexible Calendar Agreement

Full-time faculty are required to complete a Flexible Calendar Agreement each year proposing how they will use their individually planned flex hours for professional development activities, pursuant to the guidelines on Page 2-4.

The agreement must include:

- A detailed statement of the proposed activity/activities
- Identification of the appropriate category for each activity: staff, student, and/or instructional improvement
- Clearly explained rationale for each activity

Submission Process/Flex Review Committee

Instructors and librarians submit their proposed plans to the Dean of Instruction. Counselors submit their plans to the Dean of Student Services. Receipt of the agreements are noted and next given to the Flex Review Committee. After the Flex Review Committee approves an agreement, it is returned to the appropriate Dean who forwards a copy of it to the faculty member.

Three full-time faculty members from the Flex Committee serve on the Flex Review Committee. They each receive 20 flex hours for this. One faculty member will be designated as chair and at least one serves a two-year term.

Timelines and Approval Process

1. By May 1, faculty will receive the flex program booklet and a Flex Activities Agreement (Form 100) for the following year.
2. On or before 5:00 p.m. of the fall in-service day, faculty members must submit a Flex Activities Agreement (Form 100) for the year to the Dean of Instruction (instructors and librarians) or Dean of Student Services (counselors). If the faculty member plans a flex activity for July or August, he/she may apply to the Flex Review Committee for prior approval by the last day of the Spring Semester. Retroactive approval of a July/August flex activity is also possible; however, approval after the fact is not guaranteed.
3. The Flex Review Committee will meet the second week of the Fall Semester to review Flex Activities Agreements.

4. Faculty members who have not submitted a Flex Activities Agreement (Form 100) by 5:00 p.m. of the fall in-service day will receive a notice from the Vice-President of Academic Affairs giving them two work days to do so. The notice will inform them that if the agreement is not received by the designated date, the District will assume they do not intend to participate in the Flex Program, and their annual pay will be reduced by 54 hours. (An adjustment of pay such as this decreases retirement service credit as well as one's retirement allowance.) If extenuating circumstances exist, such as a serious illness or a family emergency, the faculty member should notify their Dean in a timely manner.

5. Flex Activities Agreements (Form 100) will be approved based on professional development activities guidelines, Pages 2-4.
6. Two members of the Flex Review Committee must approve each Flex Activities Agreement (Form 100). If not approved, it will be returned to the faculty member with suggestions for revision within three weeks of the beginning of the fall semester. If still not approved, the agreement will be referred to the Dean of Instruction or Dean of Student Services for final resolution.
7. The Dean retains the approved Flex Activities Agreements (Form 100).
8. Proposed changes to the agreement must be filed on a Flex Agreement Modification Form (Form 200) and submitted to the Dean. The form must be approved by the Flex Review Committee prior to completing the proposed modifications. Proposed modifications will not be accepted beyond the deadline for completion of flex activities.

Certification of Completed Flex Activities

1. When flex activities are completed, faculty must submit a Certification of Completed Flex Activities (Form 300) to the appropriate Dean. Approved activities must be completed no later than the last day of class prior to finals week in May, unless a trip or conference scheduled for June was approved as a flex activity.
2. Certification forms will be sent to faculty members by the respective dean.
3. The Flex Review Committee will meet during finals week to sign certification forms (Form 300) verifying that activities have been completed. If the flex obligation is not met or the certification form is not submitted, flex hours unaccounted for will result in a reduction of pay in the first check of the **following** academic year. A notice will be sent to the faculty member by Personnel Services informing him/her of this.
4. White copies of all forms will be forwarded to Personnel Services for inclusion in the faculty member's personnel file, pink copies will be forwarded to the faculty member, and yellow copies will be retained by the Dean.

Flex Hours and Overloads

Overload contracts for full-time faculty include optional flex hours for that assignment. Follow the Guidelines for Part-time Faculty when completing those flex hours.

Full-time faculty may not bank flex hours for overloads with the expectation of applying those hours toward the professional development requirements of a load bank leave. That requirement must be met at the time the leave is taken.

Other Related Details:

- Employees are not responsible for flex activities during professional development leaves.
- When taking load bank leave, faculty are responsible for 27 flex hours for a semester's leave and 54 flex hours for a year's leave.

Flex Credit for Video Conferencing/On-Line Classes

Full-time faculty may use all of their individually planned flex hours the first time they teach a video conferencing class or prepare and/or teach an on-line class.

Flex Credit for Faculty Who Present Flex Activities

Faculty members presenting flex activities will earn three (3) hours flex credit for each hour of presentation. For example, when presenting a 2-hour activity, a faculty member will earn 8 flex hours – 6 hours for prep 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.

Video/Audio Tapes Available Through the Library

Although there is no longer a “flex library” per se, video and audio tapes may still be proposed for individually planned flex activities. Former flex video and audio tapes have been subsumed into the library media collection. A catalogue of these materials is available on the college website (Library link), and faculty may use standard library check-out procedures for them. (These resources may not be checked out by students, but are available to them for viewing/listening in the Library.)

What is meant by “Beyond a normal workday?”

An instructor is responsible for performing duties on campus at least thirty (30) hours per week. On a daily basis, these hours vary from instructor to instructor and from semester to semester. To allow for consistency in determining what counts towards flex time, an instructor must first account for six hours of an instructional day to determine if flex activities may take place that same day. Examples:

- For an instructor who conducts a 2-hour class and 1 office hour scheduled on an instructional day, then attends an 8-hour conference, 5 flex hours may be earned.
- For an instructor who does not conduct a 2-hour class and 1 office hour scheduled on an instructional work day, but instead attends an 8-hour conference 2 flex hours may be earned.
- For an instructor attending an 8-hour conference on a non-instructional day, such as a Saturday, 8 flex hours may be earned.

GUIDELINES FOR PART-TIME FACULTY

Flex Hours for Part-time Faculty

While all part-time faculty members are encouraged to take advantage of the professional development opportunities provided by the Flexible Calendar Program, compensation for such is only possible when flex hours are allocated on the employment contract and completed pursuant to the process set forth below. Completion of flex hours is optional.

Allocating Flex Hours for Part-time Instructors

Part-time instructors are allocated flex hours when teaching full-term, semester-length courses. The flex hours allocated are equal to the number of course hours required per week.

Flex hours are not allocated for summer school, work experience, short-term, independent study, and distance education courses as they are exempt from the flex program. Because the flex calendar reduces the number of teaching days for semester-length courses, the State pays the District for the reduced days as if classes were taught on those days. The District in turn pays part-time faculty for flex hours rather than instructional hours (Title 5, Section 58188; Guidelines for the implementation of the Flexible Calendar Program, Statewide Academic Senate, 1993).

When more than one course is scheduled during the same time period (such business office technology and physical fitness labs), flex hours will be equivalent to the course requiring the most hours per week.

If a course is cancelled, flex time will only be paid if it was approved and completed prior to the cancellation.

Allocating Flex Hours for Counselors and Librarians

Flex hours for part-time counselors and librarians are allocated based on their contracted FTE percentage for the semester applied to the flex obligation for full-time Counselors and Librarians (54 hrs/year, or 27 hrs/semester).

Flex Credit for Faculty Who Present Flex Activities

Faculty members presenting flex activities will earn three (3) hours flex credit for each hour of presentation. For example, when presenting a 2-hour activity, a faculty member will earn 8 flex hours – 6 hours for prep 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.

If a part-time instructor is scheduled to present a flex activity and his/her teaching contract is changed thereby reducing or eliminating his/her flex hours, he/she will still be paid for the flex activity in accordance with the paragraph above.

Video/Audio Tapes Available Through the Library

Video and audio tapes may be proposed for individually planned flex activities and are available through the Library. A catalogue of these materials is available on the college website (Library link), and faculty may use standard library check-out procedures for them. (These resources may not be checked out by students, but are available to them for viewing/listening in the Library.)

Timelines and Approval Process

1. Your employment contract includes any optional flex hours allocated for the semester.
2. To be paid for flex hours, complete a Flexible Activities Agreements (Form 100) describing how you plan to use the hours for professional development purposes, and submit it to your supervising Dean.
3. Part-time Faculty may use their flex hours to participate in any institutionally planned activities scheduled on inservice days.
4. The supervising Deans will approve part-time faculty agreements and return the pink copies to the faculty members.
5. If you need to change an agreement, complete an Agreement Modification Form (Form 200) and submit to the supervising Dean.
6. Complete fall flex hours by the end of the semester break in January. Complete spring flex hours between the beginning of the January semester break and the last day of classes for the spring semester.
7. Upon completion of flex hours, submit a Certification of Completed Flex Activities (Form 300) to the supervising Dean who will verify completion of flex hours; return the pink copies to faculty; and retain the yellow copies. Certification forms for the fall semester are due no later than the first day of class for the spring semester. Certifications for the spring semester are due no later than the last day of classes for the spring semester.
8. White copies of all forms are forwarded to Personnel Services for inclusion in the faculty member's personnel file. When Personnel receives the paperwork, payment for flex hours will be included in the part-time faculty member's next available check.

GUIDELINES FOR CLASSIFIED, MANAGEMENT AND CONFIDENTIAL EMPLOYEES

In support of professional growth, enhanced services to students, and student success, Classified, Management and Confidential staff are welcome to participate in institutionally planned professional development activities with approve of their supervisor.