LPC
Flex Guidelines

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What is a Flexible Calendar Program?
The purpose of the flexible calendar program is to provide time for faculty to participate in professional development activities that are related to “staff, student, and instructional improvement” (title 5, section 55720). The flexible calendar program is a component of the staff development program and the major vehicle for faculty participation in development activities. The flexible calendar program allows faculty (full-time, part-time, instructional and non-instructional) the time to work individually or in groups to achieve improvement in three distinct areas:

- Staff improvement
- Student improvement
- Instructional improvement

The “normal” academic year for California’s community colleges covers 175 days of classroom instruction. The flexible calendar program, begun in the 1980’s by the California Community College Chancellor’s Office, permits a district to convert up to 15 of these days of instruction to staff development activities.

However, the Chancellor’s Office also places stipulations on any district that adopts the flexible calendar, the most important being that of accountability. Since California’s education code requires 175 days of instruction, the days converted to staff development (Flex Days) must be accounted for. As such, each instructor must clearly identify how that time was spent on a Variable Flex Day Fulfillment Form.

When are the Flex Days?
There is one Variable Flex day will be placed on this school calendar. Faculty are accountable for the completion of six (6) hours of activities that will fulfill this one variable day.

What kinds of activities qualify for Variable Flex credit?
Flex credit is limited to those activities designed to improve a college’s staff, student, and instructional program (Title 5, section 55724). Professional development activities can be delivered in many formats, including in-service training, workshops, conferences, seminars, individual or small group activities, institutionally planned activities, etc. Faculty attending conferences on instructional days during fall or spring semester cannot claim such activities for Flex fulfillment if they conflict with the individual’s regularly assigned duties. Please note the distinction/difference between professional responsibilities and staff development.

You may not receive Variable Flex credit for performing duties that appropriately fall under the obligation of professional responsibilities. Section 10D.3c,d,e (page 20) of the contract defines professional responsibilities. Variable Flex activities are defined as those activities beyond what is mentioned in Section 10D.3c.
Instructional improvement activities include, but are not limited to:

**Staff Improvement**

- Developing new programs (e.g., designing curriculum/programs/services)
- Faculty and counselor meetings to address areas of concern (e.g., academic advising, prerequisites, referring students for services)
- Faculty and staff (e.g., tutors, lab assistants) meetings to improve learning resource support services to students
- Workshops on how to mentor students or how to mentor faculty
- Orientations and workshops for new faculty (e.g., role of the academic senates; training students, staff, and faculty to serve on committees; changing role of technology in education)
- Student, faculty, and staff diversity activities (e.g., sexual harassment, affirmative action, cultural diversity, multicultural)
- Meetings designed to improve a cohesive working relationship among members of the group (e.g., divisions, disciplines, committees, mixture of college constituencies)
- Workshops on how to write grants
- Workshops or individually designed activities to improve or enhance a person’s skills or knowledge in his/her own discipline
- Wellness activities that assist individuals to be physically and mentally better able to perform their jobs
- Learning a second language to better communicate with the diverse student population
- Emergency preparedness
- Learning and/or improving how to deal with computers and technology

**Student Improvement**

- Developing new programs to meet changing student needs
- Faculty and staff (e.g., tutors, lab assistants) meetings to improve services to students
- Review of learning resource materials to eliminate out-dated items and make recommendations for additions
- Creating self-study modules and/or computer-assisted instruction
- Training in classroom research (assessment) technique
- Mentoring of students
- Faculty participation in student oriented programs
- Meetings (discipline/division/college-wide) specifically to discuss strategies for improving service to students
- Institutional research focused on meeting the needs of the students (e.g., job market surveys, transfer ratios, ethnicity data on students, gender equity, campus climate)
- Writing grants aimed to improve services to students
- Articulation to improve transfer processes
- Outreach for special projects (e.g., Math, Engineering, and Science Achievement [MESA])

**Instructional Improvement**

- Attending workshops on teaching methods or techniques
- Development/revision of programs, course curriculum, learning resources and evaluation
Developing a new course/program
- 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)
- Significant modification of a course to address the learning needs of diverse students (e.g., creating self-paced learning modules)
- Developing student readiness programs specific to course disciplines
- Faculty and counselor meetings to address areas of curriculum
- Creating self-study modules and computer-assisted instruction modules
- Student, faculty, and staff diversity (e.g., sexual harassment workshops, affirmative action conferences, cultural diversity seminars, multicultural activities)
- Discipline or division meetings to discuss overall curriculum and program review
- Institutional research (e.g., job skill requirements, research on transfer ratios, ethnicity data on students and staff, gender equity, campus climate)
- Development of distance education courses/program
- Grant writing to secure funds for improvement of instruction

What is my Variable Flex Requirement?
Six (6) hours of commitment are required for the purpose of fulfilling one Variable Flex day.

When can I perform my Variable Flex hours?
Faculty can utilize flexible calendar hours anytime during the fiscal year, July 1 through June 30 for instructional improvement (Title 5, section 55720 a). The scheduling of activities at any time during the fiscal year and any time outside the accountable “workday” hours enables faculty and staff to participate in workshops when the opportunity arises rather than on arbitrarily scheduled days. Flexible scheduling facilitates faculty/staff participation in development activities during the summer or throughout the academic year.

Participation in Flex activities may occur during summer break, recesses, weekends, and on instructional days when faculty do not have regular professional responsibilities. Flex activities cannot be done when faculty have regularly assigned duties since you are already being paid for that time. Likewise, Variable Flex hours cannot be credited when compensation or reassigned time is given for work performed.

How do I document my Variable Flex obligation?
A pre-approval system has been implemented for your protection. In order to receive Variable Flex credit, you must submit a written proposal of your activity to Staff Development prior to your participation in the event. The first section of the Variable Flex Fulfillment Form is designated for proposal write-ups. Once approved, your Variable Flex Fulfillment Form (VFFF) will be returned to you and you are free to engage in the pre-approved activity. This process has been designed to eliminate the possibility of having your work “rejected” after the fact and to ensure that activities undertaken by faculty will receive appropriate Variable Flex credit.

Within two weeks of completion of your Variable Flex work, you must submit your completed VFFF to Staff Development. The Variable Flex program works largely on the honor system. However, accountability for work completed ultimately falls upon the faculty. Accordingly, attach any/all documentation that can be used to help verify your project. (Ticket stubs, program
schedules, authorization signatures, copies/samples of work completed, etc.) All VFFF forms must be on file with Staff Development by June 30 to receive Flex credit.

* IMPORTANT NOTE*
Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) workshop sessions, approved Staff Development activities and designated Faculty Senate sponsored seminars already have “pre-approved” status. When participating in any of these activities you do not need to receive prior approval from Staff Development in order to earn Variable Flex credit. Merely return your VFFF form to Staff Development upon completion of your work and within the required timeframe.

**What if I do not complete my expected Variable Flex obligation?**
Every 6-hour block of time that is fully accounted for on an individual’s Variable Flex Fulfillment Form will count towards the completion of one working (Flex) day. For every 6-hour block of time that is not fully accounted for in an individual’s file by June 30, there will be a loss of one sick-day for that person for the academic year. For example:

- 0 – 5.5 hours of Variable Flex completed = loss of 1 sick-day
- 6+ hours of Variable Flex completed = Variable Flex obligation met

**I’m presenting at a workshop that can be used by others for Variable Flex fulfillment, can I receive credit for my “prep time”?**
Individuals presenting workshops that can be used by others to fulfill flex requirements shall be compensated in time for preparation time in addition to the hours request up to 15 hours presenter’s compensation time for preparation time in addition to the hours completed by attending the workshop. The presenter’s preparation hours shall be listed on the appropriate negotiated form. A presenter may not receive Variable Flex credit for the preparation/presentation of work that is being otherwise compensated or for which reassigned time is provided. For every hour of presenting there shall be a two-to-one Flex credit to apply to that fiscal year Flex obligation.

**Is there funding for Variable Flex activities?**
Staff Development is not responsible for funding individual flex activities. Staff Development operates under AB 1725 guidelines. Variable Flex operates under a different set of guidelines (Title 5). Faculty may apply for Staff Development funds according to normal staff development procedures. Funds are limited. Faculty is encouraged to explore other funding sources.