PURPOSE

This Handbook is designed to provide information to faculty about "flex" at Hartnell College.

The questions this Handbook will answer are:

- What is "flex"?
- What are the flex requirements for full-time faculty at Hartnell College?
- What activities may be used to fulfill flex requirements?
- What are the processes for obtaining approval for activities to count toward flex obligations?
- What is the process for end-of-year reporting of flex activity completion?
- What are the consequences of failing to complete the required number of hours of flex?
- How do faculty make recommendations for flex and volunteer to present activities?
- What resources are available to help faculty identify flex opportunities?

WHAT IS "FLEX"?

"Flex", short for flexible calendar program, "is designed to provide faculty with paid time to participate in professional development activities sponsored by a local college or district" (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.

WHAT ARE THE FLEX REQUIREMENTS FOR FULL-TIME FACULTY AT HARTNELL COLLEGE?

According to Article 11 of the HCFA contract, full-time faculty are required to work in their designated classroom instruction or student and/or library services 170 days per year (of the 175 State-mandated work days). The remaining 5 days are set aside as professional development days.

One of those 5 days is the Convocation Day, held for the entire College and planned by the District. Two of the 5 days are developed for faculty, one planned by area supervisors and one planned by the Faculty Professional Development & Flex Committee. Normally, Convocation Day is held before Fall Semester begins; the 2 faculty days are held the 2 days before Spring Semester begins.

The remaining 2 days of the 175, or a total of 12 hours, are what are referred to as "flex" hours. These 12 hours are required of all full time faculty and may be completed by participating in a variety of approved flex activities.
WHAT ACTIVITIES MAY BE USED TO FULFILL FLEX REQUIREMENTS?

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, participation in online training, 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. Also, flex credit cannot be earned by attending any activity for which the faculty member is being compensated.

Please note the distinction between professional responsibilities and professional development. Faculty may not receive flex credit for performing duties that appropriately fall under the obligation of professional responsibilities. Article 8 of the HFCA contract defines professional responsibilities. Flex activities are defined as those activities beyond what is mentioned in Article 8.

According to Article 11, Section C of the HFCA contract, (regarding the 3 mandatory flex days):

6. Flex day activities may be from among the following:
   a. course instruction and evaluation
   b. staff development, in-service training and instructional improvement
   c. program and course curriculum or learning resource development and evaluation
   d. student personnel services
   e. learning resource services
f. related activities, such as student advising, guidance, orientation, matriculation services, and student, faculty and staff diversity
g. departmental or division meetings, conferences and workshops, and institutional research

7. The activities will be carried out by means of the following modes of delivery:
   a. in-service training
   b. workshops
   c. conferences
   d. seminars
   e. individual or small group planned projects
   f. institutionally planned activities
   g. course work

Similar activities may count toward the faculty member's additional 12 hours flex obligation. However, in order for those activities to be counted toward flex, they cannot be activities required by the HCFA contract Section 8. So, for example, a normal division meeting would not count toward flex, but a division meeting that called to focus on one of the areas listed in #6 might count, if the activity had been submitted on Flex Proposal form and had been approved for flex by the FPDFC.

WHAT ARE THE PROCESSES FOR OBTAINING APPROVAL FOR ACTIVITIES TO COUNT TOWARD FLEX OBLIGATIONS?

*Faculty Professional Development Calendar of Pre-Approved Activities*

No approval is needed for faculty to participate in activities placed on the FPD Calendar. Participation in any such activities will count toward meeting the flex obligation.
Activities Not on the Faculty Professional Development Calendar of Pre-Approved Activities

To request approval for activities (not on the FPD Calendar) to be approved for flex, a faculty member must complete and submit the Request for Approval of Flex Activity. The form must be submitted to the FPDC at least two weeks prior to completing the activity, but no later than May 1st.

If an activity is not approved, the Committee will provide the reason(s) why the activity was denied. Any questions or disputes regarding the Committee's action shall be brought to the Committee. If an agreement cannot be reached, the request will be forwarded to the Vice President of Instruction for further action.

For any activity that is approved, the faculty member must share what was learned from the activity with other faculty. This may be done at departmental or division meetings, at flex activities or in the After-Action Report. If presented at a meeting, the meeting must be announced and open to all faculty to attend in order to learn from the faculty member who participated in the activity.

Documentation supporting participation of the faculty member in the activity must be provided. A copy of the participant's ID badge, a copy of a printed program, or other such proof of participation must be provided, in order for the activity to count toward flex.
WHAT IS THE PROCESS FOR END-OF-YEAR REPORTING OF FLEX ACTIVITY COMPLETION?

Activities Completed between July 1st and May 15th

No later than May 15th of each year, faculty must submit the Flex Completion Report (FCR), showing all approved flex activities completed between July 1st and May 15th of the current fiscal year. The form is to be submitted to the Faculty Professional Development Committee, which is responsible for the maintenance of records of flex activities and accountability reporting to the Vice President of Instruction.

Activities Completed between May 16th and June 30th

No later than June 30th of each year, faculty must submit a second Flex Completion Report, showing all approved flex activities completed between May 16th and June 30th of the current fiscal year. The form is to be submitted to the Faculty Professional Development Committee, which is responsible for the maintenance of records of flex activities and accountability reporting to the Vice President of Instruction.

WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILING TO COMPLETE THE REQUIRED NUMBER OF HOURS OF FLEX?

If a faculty member does not complete the required 12 hours of flex activities during a fiscal year, an amount equal to the faculty member's hourly pay rate will be deducted from wages paid at the end of August of the following academic year for each hour of flex not completed. If the faculty member is not continuing in employment at Hartnell, the faculty member will be billed the amount owed to the College for work compensated, but not performed. Also, since the faculty member did not complete the number of days
required by the contract, those missing days (or hours) will be deducted from the faculty member's year of service records (used by STRS for purposes of computing retirement benefits).

HOW DO FACULTY MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FLEX AND VOLUNTEER TO PRESENT ACTIVITIES?

Faculty who want to present a professional development workshop to colleagues will make a proposal to the Faculty Development Committee describing the workshop and listing the date and time of the proposed presentation. The workshop must not be part of the faculty member’s regular obligations to the District. Also, the workshop must take place at times that do not conflict with the presenter’s regular class, office hour, counseling or library responsibilities. If the workshop is approved, it will become part of the Flex Calendar (i.e., a pre-approved flex activity).

Individual faculty who make approved presentations will earn 2 hours of flex credit for each hour of presentation for the first presentation. Subsequent presentations will earn credit for only the time of the presentation, unless the presentation is substantially different in a demonstrable way. For first time presentations with two presenters, both faculty will earn the two hours of flex credit for each hour of presentation time. For first time presentations with more than two faculty, a lead presenter will be designated and will earn 2 hours of flex credit for each hour of the presentation. Other presenters in the group will earn credit for only the time of the presentation. If the presentation group feels that additional flex credit is warranted, they may request review of their special circumstance.

Presenters are responsible for distributing and collecting the sign-in sheet for the activity. They are also responsible for distributing and collecting any evaluation forms required for the evaluation of their presentation. Both sign-in sheet and evaluation forms must be delivered to the Faculty Development Committee Chair within two working days of the activity.