

UNC SOG Policy on Professional Memberships

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines for the support and management of professional memberships for faculty members and staff. This policy aims to foster academic and professional development, enhance faculty and staff engagement in their respective fields, and ensure the responsible use of the School's resources. This policy applies to all full-time and part-time faculty members and to eligible permanent staff at the School of Government.

Objectives

Enhance Professional Growth: To support faculty and staff in staying current with developments in their fields and engaging with professional communities.

Encourage Scholarly Engagement: To promote faculty and staff participation in professional organizations and conferences.

Financial Stewardship: To ensure that the School's resources allocated for memberships are used effectively and in line with institutional priorities.

Eligibility

Faculty with full-time or part-time appointments whose academic discipline or ongoing research, as well as staff members whose professional duties pertain to the professional organization, qualify for membership support.

Types of Memberships Supported

Licensing Bodies: For attorney faculty, the cost of membership in the North Carolina State Bar and a local bar as required to maintain licensure will be paid by the School. If other faculty members have comparable licensure requirements, the School will typically support those as well.

The North Carolina State Bar has a process for becoming certified as a specialist in certain particular areas. Being certified as a specialist is not a licensure requirement. However, it does demonstrate an attorney's deep expertise, and therefore, the School may pay a faculty member's specialist dues if the specialization is closely related to the faculty member's work at the School.

Note that membership in the North Carolina Bar Association and similar voluntary groups is not required for licensure. Therefore, the School generally will not pay for membership in the North Carolina Bar Association. However, the School may pay for "affiliate membership" in a specific section pertinent to a faculty members' work.

Professional Organizations: Memberships in academic and professional organizations pertinent to the employee's duties.

Journals and Associations: Memberships that include access to scholarly journals and participation in academic associations.

Application and Approval Process

Application and Approval Process for Staff:

Eligible staff members should submit a request for professional membership, including a brief description of the organization, objectives, alignment with their professional goals, and benefit to the School, to their supervisor for approval. Alternatively, a supervisor may assign specific professional membership opportunities based on the employee's annual professional development plan. A brief email is an appropriate way to submit such a request.

Any requests for professional memberships in a given fiscal year should also be approved by the Senior Associate Dean for Administration.

Application and Approval Process for Faculty:

A faculty member should submit a request for professional membership, including a brief description of the organization, objectives, and alignment with the faculty member's professional goals, to the Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs (SADFA) for approval. A brief email is an appropriate way to submit such a request.

Review: Applications will be reviewed based on the relevance of the membership to the faculty member's academic or professional duties and available budget.

Approval: Approval is required before payment for membership fees is made. For ongoing or multi-year memberships, approval must be granted each year.

Funding and Payment Procedures

Funding Allocation: The School will allocate a specific budget for professional memberships each fiscal year to be shared between all departments and divisions. Funding availability may be subject to budgetary constraints.

Funding Limits: The School may set annual limits on the cost of membership or may decline memberships that are not sufficiently connected to the employee's work at the School. The School recognizes that some faculty members or staff may have more, or more expensive, memberships than others. This policy is not intended to establish a one-size-fits-all approach to memberships.

Covered Expenses: This policy is designed to address requests for membership fees. Costs for special events, such as sponsorships, or additional services provided by the organization may not be covered or requested through the professional membership approval process.

Payment: Eligible employees should pay for membership dues/fees using a School provided credit card, subject to the University's policies and procedures. While most expenses should be paid directly using a School credit card, some expenses can be paid via School check upon receipt of an invoice. An employee should not pay for these expenses out of pocket and seek reimbursement. In all cases, receipts and documentation must be provided.

Reporting and Accountability

Usage Reports: Employee's may be required to provide a brief report on how their School-paid membership has benefited their academic or professional work.

Compliance: Employees must comply with school and/or university policies regarding the use of funds and report any changes in membership status or use of resources.

Responsibilities

Faculty Members and Staff: Responsible for identifying relevant memberships, applying for support, and using memberships in accordance with professional and ethical standards.

Senior Associate Dean for Administration and Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs: Responsible for reviewing membership requests and ensuring alignment with departmental and institutional goals.

Finance and HR Department: Responsible for processing reimbursements, maintaining records, and ensuring compliance with financial policies.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by both the HR office and Business Office to ensure its relevance and effectiveness. Revisions will be made as necessary to align with the School's strategic goals and evolving needs. All revisions will be approved by the Senior Associate Dean for Administration and the Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs.

For questions or additional information about the Professional Development Policy, please contact the Business Office.