

Pacific Lutheran University Cell Phone Allowance Policy

Introduction

In an institution whose primary purpose is to serve students, certain positions within Pacific Lutheran University require a cell phone to fulfill job responsibilities such as being available off-hours, frequent travel, or other business purposes. The purpose of this policy is to define payment rules for employee business expenses related to cell phone usage, either through a supplemental compensation allowance or direct reimbursement.

Eligibility for Allowance

Regular employees whose job requires them to use a cell phone for University business, as outlined in this policy, may be eligible to receive a monthly allowance to cover business use of their cell phone.

The University may provide a cell phone allowance to an employee if at least one of the following criteria is met:

1. The job requires considerable time outside the office or away from workstation (job need, travel, meetings, etc.) and use of the cell phone facilitates the effective conduct of business operations while away.
2. The job requires the employee to be immediately accessible to receive and/or make frequent business calls outside of working hours.
3. The job function of the employee requires work in many different locations on campus and use of the cell phone facilitates the effective conduct of business operations.
4. The position has been identified as a critical position in the University's emergency response plans.

Allowance:

The maximum monthly allowance is \$50.00.

Recommendation for an allowance is made by the employee's supervisor with final approval by the employees' Vice President/Provost and the University's Controller.

The allowance will be reviewed during the annual budget building process by Human Resources and the Business Office. The allowance amount will be communicated along with other institutional budget assumptions on the Business Office page on the PLU website.

Effective June 1, 2016, all allowances will be charged to the corresponding department's telephone budget by the employee's supervisor, who must ensure availability of funding.

The University will not provide for cell phone purchases. Basic cell phones are typically provided at no cost to the user with a new service contract. Requests for reimbursement for phone accessories are not covered. The University will not enter into contracts with vendors nor will it provide direct payment to vendors for monthly cell phone or internet service for an employee.

If an employee with an allowance travels internationally, the specific cost of business calls overseas can be deducted on his or her travel expense report. International data charges will be reimbursed only with proper documentation demonstrating business need.

Documentation and Review Requirements

An allowance must be requested using the Cell Phone Allowance Authorization Form. New requests may be made any time during the fiscal year.

Annually, on a fiscal year basis, budget heads and their Vice President/Provost will review the business cell phone needs of the employee. A Cell Phone Allowance Authorization Form must be completed in April for each applicable year.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to contact Payroll immediately when employees with allowances change positions within the University, goes on leave or becomes ineligible for the allowance by some other means.

Payment of Allowance

All cell phone allowances will be paid via the payroll system. This allowance does not constitute an increase to base pay, and will not be included in the calculation of percentage increases to base pay due to annual raises, job upgrades, etc.

Applicable federal payroll taxes on the amount of the allowance will be withheld from the paycheck and the amount of the allowance will be included in the wages line on the individual's year-end W-2 form.

Cell phone allowances will terminate upon an individual's separation of service with the University. As the individual is the owner of the device and the voice and/or data plan associated with the device, the individual will remain personally responsible for all associated costs and charges previously covered by the allowance.

Infrequent Use of Cell Phones for Business Purposes

If a University employee's job duties do not include the frequent need for a cell phone, the employee is not eligible for an allowance. Such employees may request reimbursement for the actual extra expenses of business cell phone calls. Reimbursement for per-minute "air time" charges is limited to the total overage charge shown on the invoice, i.e., expenses for minutes included in the plan will not be reimbursed.

In this case, an employee should make a personal payment to the provider, and then submit a request for reimbursement.

Cell phone charges that result from official overseas business travel should be included as part of the normal travel reimbursement.