



SUB-TOPIC
WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT POLICY

Purpose: To provide guidance regarding the acquisition and use of wireless communications equipment and associated services for University business use.

Effective Date: September 1, 2005

Policy: It is the policy of The University of Texas at Dallas (UT Dallas) to provide a cellular communications device and/or pager to those employees who meet eligibility requirements. Provision of such devices may be either through direct University purchase or a University subsidy of personally-owned devices/services. Administration of this policy shall fall within the Office of Business Affairs.

Definitions:

Communications Device - cellular telephones pagers, telephone/PDA combinations, batteries, hands-free devices, cases, carrying devices, chargers, cabling, and related miscellaneous equipment.

Department Level – includes any and all employees of a given department within the university, either academic or administrative.

Official Business Needs – the employee frequently engages in work-related travel, the employee is frequently out of the office on university business, the employee’s duties require being “on call” for essential services, and/or the employee is a member of key personnel needed in the event of an emergency.

Eligibility:

Employees meeting the official business need criteria above, as determined by their administrative unit, are eligible.

University Acquisition of Equipment/Services:

An administrative unit may choose to purchase a communications device/service for use by an employee in support of the business needs of the unit. In this case, the communications device is owned by the University and costs (as billed by Telecommunications Services) are the responsibility of the administrative unit. It is important that the administrative unit contact UTD Telecommunications Services to determine which phones and plans are available and supported by UTD. Typically the administrative unit will complete a Telecommunications Service Request and order the equipment and service through UTD Telecommunications Services. Employees are responsible for reimbursement to the University for incidental personal use of such devices which incurs additional cost to the University. The administrative unit must ensure that monthly statement reconciliations are properly conducted.

In unique circumstances, a department may have a business need for a communication device assigned to the department rather than to a specific employee. In those instances, the department head may request service to be paid by UTD. Such service must be approved by the appropriate Vice President, Dean, Director, or delegate. The department head is responsible for such university acquired and supported communications equipment, as well as providing training and policy and procedure information to departmental users.



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University Subsidized Personal Acquisition of Equipment/Services:

Administrative units may establish an agreement with individual employees whereby the University would provide a subsidy allowance to cover the costs of using personally owned communications devices and services for business use. Such allowances would be provided through payroll as a supplemental monthly income to the employee with details being arranged on a case-by-case basis, as appropriate to cover anticipated business needs.

Equipment and Activation Allowance: A one time allowance may be provided for the acquisition of communication equipment and initial activation fees. Equipment obtained by the employee utilizing the equipment allowance is the property of the employee. Requests for one time allowance will require approval of the appropriate Vice President, Dean or Executive Director. If an employee currently has UTD owned equipment and it is mutually agreed that the employee is eligible for the university subsidized plan, the equipment may be transferred from the university to the employee to be used in conjunction with the university subsidized plan.

Monthly Communication Plan Allowance: Numerous service plans are available in the telecommunications market. Eligible employees may choose any provider and plan. Provider contracts resulting from such choices are between the employee and the provider and in no way obligate The University of Texas at Dallas. The University of Texas at Dallas does not endorse any particular service provider or plan. The monthly allowance will be determined by the administrative unit based on projected usage following review and recommendation from the supervisor and approval by the department head. Requests for monthly allowance require approval of the appropriate Vice President, Dean or Executive Director.

Subsidies are Taxable Income: Cellular communication device allowances funded from an employee's department are taxable compensation subject to required tax withholdings. Such allowances are not an entitlement and are not part of the employee's base salary. Allowances do not qualify as compensation for TRS or ORP contribution purposes. Details of any University subsidy for employee owned equipment/services are to be negotiated between the employee and their department head and are subject to any additional case-specific approval mechanisms for expenditure of University funds.

Duration of Communication Allowance:

To receive a cellular communication device allowance, the employee's department head must submit an approved request to the Payroll Office. The monthly communication plan allowance is to be reviewed and approved annually by the sponsoring administrative unit during the budget cycle. The plan shall remain effective throughout the year, until this policy is revised or:

- the employee's job duties change and/or the department head does not consider that the employee's duties support a business need for a cellular communications device (in this case the department head is responsible for notifying the payroll office of the change in status);
- the employee terminates employment with the University.



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Reimbursements for Business Calls:

Employees who are not receiving an allowance for communications services may be reimbursed for business calls made using a personal device. Upon approval of the sponsoring administrative unit, employees may be reimbursed when business calls cause the employee to incur additional costs (an itemized billing statement will be required).

Employees receiving an allowance for communications services may not be reimbursed for business calls except in extraordinary circumstances with the approval of the department head. These situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis and complete documentation of the justification and extra costs incurred must be presented.