The following guidelines for reviewing staff requests for release time (in conjunction with the fee waiver program) for enrolling in university courses is built on the premise that the first priority for the Academic Affairs division must be to provide the highest quality of service to our clients: the prospective and current students, faculty, and staff of CSU San Marcos, our professional colleagues, and the general public. To do so we must be appropriately staffed during the workday to be readily accessible to telephone and walk-in traffic and to handle effectively and efficiently the general transactions of the daily workload.

Release time is considered time worked. It is taken during an employee’s normal work schedule and is paid time. While it is understood that release time reduces the total number of person-hours available to a particular unit, it is also recognized that improved staff morale and overall productivity are the expected benefits of a program of staff development. The following procedure and guidelines are designed to assure that our staff development program supports the realization of these benefits to the individual as well as to the effectiveness of the Academic Affairs division. Within the constraints of office workloads, unit managers will make good faith efforts, through flexible scheduling or the use of student assistants, to accommodate requests for release time. It is recognized that this document cannot cover all possible circumstances of individual requests. Consequently, the manager’s decisions, while guided by it, must ultimately be made in accord with the best interests of those we serve.

GUIDELINES FOR REVIEW OF REQUESTS:

Since the first priority of the division is to provide high quality service to our clients, staff must be performing satisfactorily in their current job assignments to be granted release time.

Subject to conditions listed in a. and b. below, an employee may be granted reasonable release time for one (1) CSUSM course per semester.

a. The course shall be job-related or shall be part of an approved Career Development Plan.
b. The operational needs of the department are met as determined by the appropriate administrator.

Release time may be used for class attendance at an on-site CSUSM class only; off-site CSUSM classes are not eligible for consideration.

PRIORITY

Release time is not guaranteed. It is approved or disapproved by the appropriate administrator who takes into consideration the operational needs of the unit.
Academic Affairs Procedure/Guidelines for Reviewing Staff Requests for Release Time for Educational Purposes

In instances when there is a problem in scheduling that requires a choice of approving one request over another, the following priorities will normally be used to guide the decisions of the appropriate administrator in individual cases:

1. The unit’s ability to continue to function effectively.
2. Courses directly related to the employee’s work responsibilities and which have been recommended by the appropriate administrator.
3. Courses that are part of the employee’s approved Career Development Plan.
4. Courses in a degree, credential, or certificate program that must be completed in a given term because of a required sequence or other time-constrained schedule.

If release time is not approved, the employee and the appropriate administrator may work out other arrangements, including a flex schedule, use of vacation, or a combination thereof.

PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTS FOR RELEASE TIME:

Class schedules are generally not available until one week before priority registration begins. This allows only a small window of time for staff to plan their programs and for the administrator to review and approve the release time requests. Requests for release time must be submitted to the appropriate administrator before the beginning of priority registration. A specific deadline date will be announced each term that will generally be no later than two working days before the priority registration start date.

Staff members should update their records as soon as possible to reflect clearly whether they are following career development or job related education plans. Those who intend to follow a career development plan should complete their admission files with all appropriate documents.