



Faculty Enrichment Committee's

FLEX

Information and Procedures

Updated for Academic Year

2021 - 2022

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Purpose of This Document

All FLEX activities comply with Title 5, § 55720 and 55724, and the College of the Sequoias Teachers Association (COSTA) Master Agreement, Article VIII, and it is these documents that govern our work. For specific language, please refer to these documents.

This document here is for informational purposes, to help guide and facilitate the process through which faculty can complete their FLEX obligation.

What Is FLEX?

FLEX is an abbreviation for Flexible Calendar. As part of College of Sequoias' (COS) academic calendar, full-time faculty are released from several classroom hours for professional development. In lieu of those classroom hours, faculty are required to complete a number of FLEX hours each academic year. Currently full-time faculty are obligated to complete 20 hours of FLEX activities each year.

Faculty can complete these hours in a couple of ways:

- i. One mandatory staff development day each semester (2 days per year, totaling 8 hours). These days are each semester's Convocation Day.
- ii. Additional FLEX-approved professional development activities throughout the year (totaling at least 12 hours).

Faculty Enrichment Committee (FEC)

FLEX activities are coordinated and overseen by the Faculty Enrichment Committee (FEC), a subcommittee of the Academic Senate. While FEC membership can change from semester to semester, the current year's FEC leadership is:

- FEC Faculty Co-Chair: Erik Armstrong (erika@cos.edu)
- FEC Administrative Co-Chair: Jesse Wilcoxson (jessew@cos.edu)
- FEC Record Keeper: TBD

You can find more information at the [FEC website](#).

FLEX Approval and Documentation Process

For activities to be counted for FLEX hours, each activity must be approved by FEC. Each semester there will be a variety of approved activities for faculty participation, and faculty can

submit proposals for their own plans for professional development. **NOTE:** Approval for FLEX activities can take up to two weeks.

BLANKET, PRE-AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES

In addition to the mandatory staff development day, each semester FEC will maintain a list of blanket authorized activities for which faculty can accrue FLEX hours. These activities will not require faculty to submit individual proposal forms; faculty will only need to sign in or submit self-documentation forms (see below) to receive FLEX hours.

Some past examples for blanket authorized activities include, but are not limited to, meeting with a Library Liaison, some committee work, outcomes and assessment work, etc. Each semester FEC will review and post a list of blanket authorized activities on its website.

Whenever possible activities intended for blanket authorization will be reviewed by the FEC Committee during its regular meetings.

ELIGIBLE FLEX ACTIVITIES

Beyond the blanket authorized activities advertised by the FEC committee, there are numerous professional development activities that can count for FLEX hours. You can see a full list of possible activities in the [Chancellor's Office Guidelines](#), but all activities fall into three broad categories:

- i. Staff improvement
- ii. Student improvement
- iii. Instructional improvement

You can also see a list of possible activities at the FEC [FLEX information website](#). **Activities not included in blanket authorizations must be approved through the proposal process.**

INELIGIBLE FLEX ACTIVITIES

Occasionally activities get proposed for FLEX that cannot be counted or approved, so those proposals for hours get denied. To help prevent that, it is helpful to identify activities for which faculty cannot claim FLEX credit:

- i. Activities that do not meet any of the criteria for FLEX-eligible activities listed on the FEC Information website
- ii. Activities that are part of regular class/lab preparation or professional responsibility (e.g., development of assignments and materials, reading of relevant textbooks, development of rubrics, grading of assignments, preparation of lectures and activities, basic curriculum work)

- iii. Activities that take place during regularly scheduled classroom hours (classroom faculty), office hours, paid hours (non-classroom faculty), hours you are accountable to the District (reassigned time), or activities for which you are otherwise compensated (i.e., paid by an organization to attend, receiving a stipend to perform, etc.)

Double check any proposal or documentation forms to ensure they do not claim FLEX hours for ineligible activities.

Electronic FLEX Proposal Forms

For activities that are not blanket authorized by FEC, faculty need to seek FEC approval through the FLEX proposal forms. These forms are electronic and can be found at the [FEC FLEX information website](#). As noted earlier, approval for FLEX activities can take up to two weeks. To ensure approval before the proposed activity, FEC encourages faculty to submit proposal forms early and ahead of the activity. Otherwise FLEX hours may not be approved and not counted.

USING ELECTRONIC PROPOSAL FORMS

Now that proposal forms are electronic, seeking and gaining approval is much more streamlined. Here is a quick guide on how to submit a FLEX proposal for submission:

Base Form

SharePoint Search this site

Top of The Lookout Departments Edit

COS Employee Resources

FLEX Activity Proposal Request Form

Workshop, Conference, Individual Plan, or Mentorship Program Activity

Requestor * 1

EA Erik Armstrong X

Contact Phone

(559) 730-3739

Division *

English

Select Type of FLEX Activity *

Choose a FLEX activity...

(You must choose a FLEX Activity from the drop-down above)

This activity is directly related to the following categories of professional development 2

By submitting this form, I hereby certify that I have read and understand the instructions contained within this form.

I Agree

Submit **Cancel**

Regular FLEX activity approval occurs between August 1 and May 30 of any academic year. Prior approval cannot be guaranteed between June 1 and July 31.

Clicking "Submit" does not guarantee approval of this FLEX proposal. It submits the proposal for review by the FEC Co-chairs. You will be notified via email regarding this proposal's approval or rejection. Emails will be from "Employee Resources," so watch out for these emails to inform you of your proposal's progress. Once the proposal is approved by both Co-chairs, you will receive a final notification of its approval, along with information for documenting your FLEX activity. To ensure the best opportunity for timely approval, proposals should be submitted two weeks prior to the proposed FLEX activity.

As you can see above, the electronic forms are dynamic, so when you are logged in it will auto populate parts of the form and be able to pull information from our campus contacts and building information. In the image above, the following are highlighted:

1. Your information should auto populate into the Requestor section.
2. You must choose a type of FLEX activity. When you do, the rest of the form will change to accommodate the purpose of your request.

Below in this section are walkthroughs of the different types of forms.

Workshop at COS

When requesting a workshop at COS be approved for FLEX credit, you will want to choose the option "Propose a new workshop at COS." When you do, the top of the form will look like this:

Propose a Workshop

Lead Presenter 1

Additional Presenter(s)

Non-COS Presenter(s)

Desired Schedule

NOTE: Selecting a building and room below is to correctly document and advertise the location of your workshop. **It does not reserve the room for you.** In order to reserve the room you've selected (if you haven't already), you need to **complete and submit a Facilities Request**. [Click here to see the Facilities Request form.](#) 2

Building (Or Type of Area) 3 Room (Or Area)

Virtual (Hosted Online)

Start Date: 9/3/2020 End Date: 9/3/2020 4 Days of the Week Scheduled: Thursday

Each Day's Start Time: 8:00 AM Each Day's End Time: 9:00 AM

Here you need to enter the pertinent information:

1. Enter the presenter's name. The lead presenter could be you, or it could be someone else if you are requesting on their behalf.
2. It is important to reserve your room [for facilities](#). **The FLEX proposal form will not reserve rooms.** Simply click the link provided to reserve the room through facilities if you have not already done so.
3. Enter the building information in the form, and then select the appropriate room. If the workshop is planning on being remote (e.g., via Zoom or Microsoft Teams), simply check the "Virtual" box.
4. Select the start and end dates and then select the appropriate day(s) of the week that the workshop will be held. The default date is two weeks away from when you initiate the request. This will ensure that FEC will have enough time to review and approve each request.

After you enter this information, the rest of the form will look like this:

Workshop Title 1

Workshop description and objectives 2

Meeting URL / Event URL / Web Site 3

For the remainder of the form, enter the following:

1. Give the full title of your proposed workshop
2. Describe the workshop here and list the intended objectives. **This information is vitally important because it helps FEC determine if this workshop is eligible for FLEX.** Please combine a measure of specific detail and brevity to provide a clear sense of the workshop.
3. If there is a registration link or website, provide that information here. If you selected the “Virtual” option above, then you must provide a link here.

Just below these lines you’ll also be asked how you would like to see the event advertised:

Advertise To All Divisions



Advertise this workshop to all Divisions (not just yours)

Sometimes proposed workshops are only for a certain Division, but at other times the workshop is intended for a wider audience. If you’d like to see it broadly advertised (on the FLEX Calendar, in the FEC Newsletter, etc.), simply click that switch to “Yes.” FEC will see that when it is approved and will endeavor to advertise it appropriately. (The earlier the event is proposed and approved, then the sooner advertisement can begin.)

Attending a Conference or Workshop Elsewhere

If you are planning on attending a workshop or conference outside of COS, select “Propose to attend a conference or workshop.” When you do, the form will change to look like this:

Propose to Attend a Conference or Workshop

Conference or Workshop Title **1**

Beginning Date **2**

Ending Date

(If you are attending for only one day, leave the dates the same.)

Location **3**

Description **4**

Event URL or Web Site (Optional - e.g. Eventbrite) **5**

Enter the following information into the form:

1. Provide the full title of the conference or workshop. Please avoid acronyms or abbreviations as they may not be clear to those outside the discipline.
2. Select the date ranges of the conference. The default date is two weeks away from when you initiate the request. This will ensure that FEC will have enough time to review and approve each request.
3. Provide the location of the conference or workshop. City and state should be sufficient for travelling to a conference. If the conference or workshop is online, provide the platform (e.g., Zoom, etc.), if known, or say “Virtual.”
4. Describe the conference or workshop and how it contributes to your professional learning. **This information is vitally important because it helps FEC determine if this workshop is eligible for FLEX.** Please combine a measure of specific detail and brevity to provide a clear sense of the conference or workshop.
5. Provide any associated URL or website. For instance, you could list the Eventbrite registration or, if a large (inter)national conference, you can link to the coordinating organization’s website that announces and describes the conference or workshop.


Individual Plan

Sometimes professional development is work you do on your own, like conducting research, so if you are planning on undertaking such a project, you’ll want to select “Propose an individual plan” from the drop down menu. When you do, the form will change to look like this:

Propose an individual plan 1

Individual Plan Description and Objectives

Attach Documentation (Optional) 2



Drop here or click to select

Enter the following information into the form:

1. Describe your plan and your objectives in more detail. **This information is vitally important because it helps FEC determine if this workshop is eligible for FLEX.** With no other information provided, this section will require more detail to clearly indicate what you plan to do and how your plan is FLEX eligible.
2. Attach any supplementary documents here. You can click the box and select files, or you drag and drop files from your folders. Please provide any necessary attachments that will help FEC understand and evaluate your individual plan.

Completing a Workshop, Conference, or Individual Plan Proposal

Whichever form you select, the bottom portion of the form remains the same:

This activity is directly related to the following categories of professional development 1

By submitting this form, I hereby certify that I have read and understand the instructions contained within this form.

I Agree 2

4

3
Regular FLEX activity approval occurs between August 1 and May 30 of any academic year. Prior approval cannot be guaranteed between June 1 and July 31.

Clicking "Submit" does not guarantee approval of this FLEX proposal. It submits the proposal for review by the FEC Co-chairs. You will be notified via email regarding this proposal's approval or rejection. Emails will be from "Employee Resources," so watch out for these emails to inform you of your proposal's progress. Once the proposal is approved by both Co-chairs, you will receive a final notification of its approval, along with information for documenting your FLEX activity. To ensure the best opportunity for timely approval, proposals should be submitted two weeks prior to the proposed FLEX activity.

When at the bottom of the form, complete the following steps:

1. Select which category of professional development your proposal: student improvement, staff improvement, or instructional improvement. You may select more than one if your proposal seems to cover more than one area.
2. Check the box that indicates your agreement with what you have submitted and read in the form.
3. Read the bottom of the form for pertinent information regarding your proposal.
4. Once you have read, doublechecked the form, and checked "I Agree," click the Submit button.

Once forms are submitted, they will be reviewed by FEC leadership:

- i. Submitted proposals will first be reviewed by the FEC Faculty Co-Chair.
- ii. If approved by the FEC Faculty Co-Chair, proposals will be reviewed by the FEC Administrative Co-Chair.
- iii. If proposals are approved by both Chairs, the FEC Record Keeper and the proposing faculty member will receive an email notification of the proposal's approval. The faculty member can then proceed with documenting the activity for FLEX hours.

If a proposal is rejected, an email will be sent to the proposer and reasoning will be provided. If a proposal has been denied and the faculty member wishes to appeal that decision, they can make that appeal to the Academic Senate-COSTA Liaison Committee.

Faculty Mentorship Form

The last remaining form is for our Faculty Mentorship Program. This program is designed to help facilitate professional learning by pairing up interested faculty with a mentor or mentee. If you are interested in this FLEX activity, select "Propose a FLEX Faculty Mentorship Program activity. When you do, the form will look like this:

Name of Faculty Mentee 1	Mentee Division	Mentee Phone
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Name of Faculty Mentor	Mentor Division	Mentor Phone
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Semester 2	Academic Year	Number of FLEX Hours 3
<input type="text" value="Fall"/>	<input type="text" value="2020-2021"/>	<input type="text"/>
Division Dean/Chair 4	Signatures are required at the top of the form for the Division Dean/Chair, Mentee, & Mentor.	
<input type="text" value="Richard Lubben"/>	Be sure to sign above, under your designation.	
Please describe the specific goals for/areas of faculty improvement this Mentorship Program will address: 5		
<input type="text"/>		
Please explain the specific activities/work that the faculty members will undertake to address the areas of improvement above, including projected classroom observation dates/times: 6		
<input type="text"/>		

Once you have selected the Mentorship form, fill in the following information:

1. Fill in the names of the mentor/mentee. The information should automatically populate from our Outlook contact information, including the Division and phone once a name is selected.
2. Provide the semester and year for the planned mentorship. By default, the current semester and academic year are selected, but they can be changed.
3. Input the number of FLEX hours for the planned mentorship. Currently a maximum of eight (8) hours can be earned/selected.
4. Select the Division Dean/Chair that will approve the mentorship. By default, the requestor's supervisor is selected.
5. List the specific goals for improvement that the mentorship is expected to accomplish. This will help determine whether the proposal is appropriate for FLEX and whether the amount of FLEX hours proposed is appropriate.
6. Describe the work the mentor and mentee will do to achieve the stated goals and accumulate the proposed FLEX hours. Again, this will help determine whether the proposal is appropriate for FLEX and whether the amount of FLEX hours proposed is appropriate.

Like with the other proposal forms, once the above information is provided, the bottom of the form will need to be completed as well:

This activity is directly related to the following categories of professional development 1

By submitting this form, I hereby certify that I have read and understand the instructions contained within this form.

I Agree 2

4

3
Regular FLEX activity approval occurs between August 1 and May 30 of any academic year. Prior approval cannot be guaranteed between June 1 and July 31.

Clicking "Submit" does not guarantee approval of this FLEX proposal. It submits the proposal for review by the FEC Co-chairs. You will be notified via email regarding this proposal's approval or rejection. Emails will be from "Employee Resources," so watch out for these emails to inform you of your proposal's progress. Once the proposal is approved by both Co-chairs, you will receive a final notification of its approval, along with information for documenting your FLEX activity. To ensure the best opportunity for timely approval, proposals should be submitted two weeks prior to the proposed FLEX activity.

When at the bottom of the form, complete the following steps:

1. Select which category of professional development your proposal: student improvement, staff improvement, or instructional improvement. You may select more than one if your proposal seems to cover more than one area.
2. Check the box that indicates your agreement with what you have submitted and read in the form.
3. Read the bottom of the form for pertinent information regarding your proposal.
4. Once you have read, doublechecked the form, and checked "I Agree," click the Submit button.

Once a mentorship proposal is submitted, they will go through the following approval process:

- i. First, as indicated on the form, both the mentor and mentee will need to digitally sign the form at the top. Simply click the down arrows under your name and check the box to "sign."
- ii. Next, the proposal will be sent to who you listed as your Division Chair or Dean.
- iii. Once they sign the form, it will then head to the FEC Faculty Co-Chair
- iv. If approved by the FEC Faculty Co-Chair, proposals will be reviewed by the FEC Administrative Co-Chair.
- v. If proposals are approved by both Chairs, the FEC Record Keeper and the proposing faculty member will receive an email notification of the proposal's approval. The faculty members can then proceed with documenting the activity for FLEX hours.

If a proposal is rejected, an email will be sent to the proposer and reasoning will be provided. If a proposal has been denied and the faculty member wishes to appeal that decision, they can make that appeal to the Academic Senate-COSTA Liaison Committee.

DOCUMENTING FLEX HOURS

For FLEX hours to be officially counted, documentation needs to be submitted, and FLEX hours can be documented in one of two ways:

- i. For approved workshops or committees or other group activities, a completed FLEX sign-in sheet should be submitted to the FEC Record Keeper or the FEC Faculty Co-Chair. If you do not need FLEX hours, please sign in and note 0 for your total hours.
- ii. For individual work, such as non-COS conferences or Individual Plans, a completed self-documentation form should be submitted to the FEC Record Keeper or the FEC Faculty Co-Chair. Self-documentation forms must be accompanied by clear documentation verifying the FLEX work performed.

Fillable PDF versions of these forms can be found at the FEC [FLEX information website](#). Recording of FLEX hours can take up to two weeks after receiving all necessary and completed paperwork.

Using the Self-Documentation Form

To help ensure the approval of self-documented FLEX hours, here is a quick guide to completing the self-documentation form:



COLLEGE OF THE SEQUIOIAS FLEX PROGRAM
FLEX Self-Documentation Report

NAME: (Please Print Name)			DIVISION:		
SEMESTER:	SCHOOL YEAR:	CONTACT PHONE:	Use this form to report conference or individual plan activities that have received prior approval, including activities with blanket preapproval.		
The specific activity I performed/completed as part of my FLEX obligation:					
This activity took: (Maximum hours: 4 hrs per day unless attached agenda clearly shows additional time)					
HOURS		DATE(S)		LOCATION	
Briefly describe this activity and its contribution to your professional development:					
This activity is directly related to the following categories of professional development:					
<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Student Improvement <input type="checkbox"/> Instructional Improvement					
I certify all of the following: - I have completed the above activity in compliance with district FLEX policies and regulations. - I have attached appropriate documentation that supports the hours reported above. - I understand that failure to document my obligated FLEX hours by the published due dates will result in the docking of my pay.					
Signature: _____ Faculty Member					Date: _____

Forward this form to the FEC mailbox within five (5) days of completion of an activity and no later than the last day of instruction of the Spring Semester (see Master Agreement 8.1.2.3.4). For activities that occur between the end of the spring semester and June 15, the form must be submitted within 5 calendar days of the completion of the activity. No forms will be accepted after June 20.

To fill out the form completely and thoroughly, use the following guidelines:

1. Enter your personal information and the semester information in this section. Be sure to list your full name (first and last) and the phone number to best contact you.
2. Specifically name the activity you participated in for FLEX credit. This could be the title of a workshop or presentation, or it could be a name that indicates what was done, such as “Emergency DLA Additions to Chemistry due to COVID-19.” Below that input the total hours claimed, days (date range if continuous days), and location of the activity. If the activity does not occur in a physical space, you can put the virtual space, such as “Zoom” or “Webinar.”
3. Describe what was entailed in your activity. While the description should be brief, it should also include specific details to help document your work, attest to the hours claimed, and explain how this helped your professional learning. For instance, if you attended a conference, what sessions did you attend? For how long? What did you learn? If you attended a series of self-defense trainings, when did they happen? How long were they? How did it help you be better able to physically and mentally perform your

work? You can—and may need to—include additional documentation, such as tables, agendas, registration confirmation, etc. to fully document your work.

4. Choose the box or boxes that best define your professional development activity. Some activities fall into more than one category; if so, mark all that apply.
5. Be sure to sign and date your form. **FLEX hours cannot be documented if the form is not fully complete and signed.**

If you have any questions or concerns, feel free to contact the FEC leadership or one of the FEC members.

CHECKING FLEX HOURS

It is the responsibility of each faculty member to track their FLEX hours and initiate any necessary corrections. Faculty can track their hours on any on-campus computer by visiting the website reports.cos.edu, or they can use the AWS Stream App in their Giant Login to access their FLEX hours through the Extended Information System (EIS). All FLEX hours should be submitted and documented by June 20 of each year.

NOTE: All FLEX hours should be completed by the end of the spring semester to ensure they are counted for that academic year. **Failure to complete one's FLEX obligation will result in a reduction in pay and can reduce a faculty member's years of service credit, according to current State Teachers Retirement System (STRS) rules.**

REASSIGNED TIME AND FLEX HOURS

Because a faculty member's FLEX obligation is based upon their workload, a faculty member receiving reassigned time will also have a reduced FLEX obligation. For example, a faculty member with 20% reassigned time will be required to complete 16 hours of FLEX rather than the full 20 hours:

$$0.8 (\text{load minus reassigned time}) \times 5 (\text{number of FLEX days}) = 4 \text{ days}$$

$$4 \text{ days} \times 4 (\text{hours per FLEX day}) = \underline{16 \text{ hours}}$$

Be sure to check your faculty load sheet each semester to ensure your reassigned time is properly documented.

Part-time Faculty Professional Development

While the above information is predominately directed at full-time faculty, FEC is committed to supporting the professional development of part-time faculty. Thus, although part-time faculty are not required to accrue FLEX hours (as full-time faculty are contractually required), part-time faculty are invited and encouraged to participate in FLEX activities.

To support part-time faculty engagement, FEC offers an hourly stipend. Currently the hourly stipend is \$35/hour (as of Summer 2021).

NOTE: This stipend is contingent upon available funding. When available stipend funding is exhausted during the course of an academic year, the FEC Faculty Co-Chair or the Administrative Co-Chair will publish this fact to part-time faculty via email. In order to ensure funds are available to as many part-time faculty as possible, FEC may limit the number of FLEX hours for which adjuncts may receive the stipend for certain FLEX events. Currently, each event is capped at sixteen (16) hours that can be claimed for the part-time FLEX stipend.

Part-time faculty cannot receive the hourly stipend for the following activities:

- i. Events/activities which are required by the COSAFA Master Agreement
- ii. Events/activities that take place during regularly scheduled class time
- iii. Events/activities for which a part-time faculty member already receives compensation

In order to receive the hourly stipend, part-time faculty need to document their participation:

- i. If a sign-in sheet is available, be sure to sign-in and indicate the hours present.
- ii. If no sign-in sheet is available, complete a self-documentation form at the FEC [FLEX information website](#). Submit this self-documentation with your time sheet (as discussed below). Make sure to attach relevant evidence to the Self-Documentation form. In some cases (e.g., completion of Program Review work), a confirmation email from the Division Chair can suffice as evidence for completed FLEX work.
- iii. Keep track of your hours for such events on a [district time sheet](#). Make sure your time sheet accurately describes all FLEX events included. Submit your time sheet to the FEC Faculty Co-Chair by the 15th of each month. You may include multiple FLEX events on a single time sheet or submit a separate time sheet for each FLEX event. Time sheets should include dates from the 16th of the past month to the 15th of the current month.

Sabbaticals

Professional learning also goes beyond FLEX hours. Sometimes projects require more in-depth attention and participation. In this case, faculty sabbatical leave provides an opportunity for full-time faculty to pursue semester-long or year-long projects.

Each year the number of sabbaticals available is determined by the Board of Trustees, and FEC will solicit and review faculty applications for sabbatical leave. For specific information regarding the sabbatical process and requirements, please review the governing documents: AP/BP 7341 and section 12.5 and Appendix F-1 through F-3 of the COSTA Master Agreement.

NOTE: The signatures of the Division Chair and Area Dean on the application forms for sabbatical leave do not constitute endorsement (or rejection) of the application, but acknowledgement of receipt for scheduling purposes.

Institutional Improvement Projects (IIPs)

In addition to sabbatical leave, IIPs provide another option for faculty to engage in sustained professional development. Unlike sabbatical projects, IIPs are conducted during a faculty member's semester load. To help facilitate IIPs, faculty members earn 20% reassigned time.

Each year, along with sabbaticals, FEC will solicit applications for IIPs. IIPs will be granted if all of the allotted sabbaticals are not filled, and one semester of available sabbatical leave is equivalent to five IIPs. For specific information regarding the IIP process, please review the governing documents: Section 12.6 of the COSTA Master Agreement.

NOTE: The signatures of the Division Chair and Area Dean on the application forms for IIPs do not constitute endorsement (or rejection) of the application, but acknowledgement of receipt for scheduling purposes.