



I. Policy Title

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP DUES AND LICENSES/CERTIFICATIONS

II. Policy Purpose and Statement

Fort Valley State University (FVSU) recognizes the importance of faculty and staff professional development. Memberships in external professional organizations, the achievement and maintenance of certifications and licensing, and subscriptions to professional journals and newspapers are often part of professional development. In addition, memberships to private clubs for certain university personnel may serve to advance the institution. The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for payments and reimbursements for memberships, dues, and professional licenses/certifications.

III. Policy Application and Effective Date

- a. This policy applies to all University employees.
- b. This policy is effective **February 1, 2019**

IV. Definitions

- a. **Memberships:** There are basically two types of memberships; Institutional memberships that are held in the name of the institution; and Individual memberships that are held in the name of an individual.
- b. **Licenses:** Professional licenses are those licenses which may be required of individuals in certain occupations by state or local law (e.g. CPA licenses, real estate licenses, and medical licenses).
- c. **Institutional funds:** Institutional funds include all funds to which an institution holds title, such as student fees, auxiliary revenues, state appropriated funds, etc.

V. Policy

Institutional Membership Dues

FVSU may pay institutional membership dues in professional associations provided they are in the name of the University. These memberships must be related to the function of and beneficial to the University. In those instances where FVSU holds membership in an organization and an institutional representative is called for, the appropriate vice president designates a faculty member or staff as its official representative.

Individual Membership Dues

Membership dues in the name of an individual FVSU employee are generally not paid for or reimbursed from any funding source unless one or more of the following circumstances applies:

- I. **Job Requirement:** The membership is required to fulfill the requirements of a job. A letter of justification detailing the necessity of the membership should be attached to the payment request.
- II. The sole purpose of the membership is to purchase professional journals at a reduced rate that are not available through the University Library. The membership must include the cost of the journal and be less than the amount that would be paid if the journal was purchased alone. These journals become the property of the University rather than the individual in whose name the membership is made. The journals must pertain to the mission of the department from which payment is made. A letter of justification

providing details to show the cost advantage of purchasing the membership must be attached to the payment request.

- III. The membership cost is less than the savings realized for a non-member conference/symposium registration.

If the state is to benefit from an individual's membership in an organization, that benefit should derive not because of the individual, but because of the individual's position with state government regardless of who is in the position.

Department heads must review and approve all memberships to determine that the benefits accruing to the university from such memberships will exceed the costs.

Memberships in the name of an individual terminates upon separation from the University.

Student Memberships

Student memberships are not allowable with institutional funds, unless the funding source used states student memberships as an allowable expense e.g. grant, student fee, etc.

Private Club Memberships

Payment to or reimbursement by the university for an individual's membership dues for a private club is prohibited for any employee of FVSU using institutional funds. Funds from the FVSU foundation may be used to pay for the President's membership dues in such clubs. Such a payment is considered a taxable benefit to the President.

Dues to Chamber of Commerce

University System of Georgia Business Procedures Manual § 19.3 – "Payment of Dues to a Chamber of Commerce" notes that the Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts classifies the payment of membership dues to a chamber of commerce as an expenditure that does not qualify as necessary for the operation of an institution. As a unit under the supervision of the Board of Regents, FVSU does not make payments for dues to a chamber of commerce using institutional funds.

Professional Licenses/Certification

Fees directly associated with obtaining a license or certificate are not reimbursable. However, tuition and registration cost incurred securing continuing education credits necessary for maintaining professional credentials may be reimbursed, if funds are available and the department head deems them to be beneficial to both the employee and the University. Professional license and certificate renewals will be paid on a reimbursement basis and only upon presentation of the complete paid invoice or statement that details all fees and assessments.

Reimbursement of license and certificate renewals is considered a taxable benefit to an employee unless it is a condition of employment.

Note:

- Membership dues are generally not allowable on a sponsored project unless they are directly necessary for the performance of a sponsored agreement. Faculty and staff must contact the Office of Sponsored Programs before attempting to charge these expenditures to a sponsored project.
- Membership dues cannot be paid using a p-card, even if the membership is part of a registration for a conference.

VI. Process/Procedures

Institutional Memberships

Membership dues payments are initiated through the Payment Request Module in PeopleSoft Financials. The payment request must be routed to the appropriate Dean or Vice President for approval. The Dean or Vice President will:

- Review the payment to ensure that the membership is not personal.
- Ensure that the membership is in the interest of the university.
- Confirm that it is not a duplicate membership.

Once this review is complete and the payment meets these criteria, the Dean or Vice President may then approve the payment.

Individual Membership Dues

Membership dues payments are initiated through the Payment Request Module in PeopleSoft Financials. The completed Professional Membership Request Form must be attached to the payment request, alongside applicable supporting documentation.

VII. Forms

Professional Membership Dues Request Form

VIII. Related Resources

https://www.usg.edu/business_procedures_manual/section19/C1555/
https://www.usg.edu/assets/audit/documents/Straight_and_Narrow_Volume_6_Issue_29.pdf
<https://law.georgia.gov/opinion/98-16>

IX. Responsible Party

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to:
Job Title: Akwai Agoons, Controller
Department: Accounting Services
Phone: 478-827-3229
Email: agoonsa@fvsu.edu
Fax: 478-825-1963