

## Wireless Services Allowance Procedure

**Office:** Information Technology

**Procedure Contact:** Chief Information Officer

**Related Policy or Policies:** Wireless Services Allowance Policy FAD.042

### Revision History

Revision Number:	Change:	Date:
1.0	Initial Version	7/10/2012
1.1	Format changes	3/24/2014
1.2	Removal of OUS references	6/16/2016

### A. Purpose

This procedure provides information relating to the use of wireless (cellular) phones by Southern Oregon University employees and to provide reimbursement guidelines, criteria and conditions for business use of personally owned wireless communication devices and services.

### B. Definitions

**Wireless Communication Devices** – Devices that provide for wireless communication e.g., cell phones, smart phones such as the iPhone or Droid.

**Smart Phone or PDA Smart Phone**– wireless communication device that combines the functionality of a cellular telephone and personal digital assistant (PDA) in a single device and allows secure access to e-mail.

**Wireless Service Provider** – Companies that provide wireless (cellular) communications services such as AT&T, Sprint, U. S. Cellular, Verizon, etc.

### C. Procedures

#### 1. Allowance Plan: Business Use of Wireless Services and Devices

- a. A department must first authorize an employee to use his/her personal wireless service and phone for SOU business. A Wireless Services Authorization Form shall be signed by the employee, the employee’s department head, and the appropriate Vice President. The authorization form will identify the employee and the employee’s personal wireless phone number and be submitted to the Payroll Office.
- b. Reimbursement begins the month following the date of the Director’s signature and will be paid retroactive following receipt of the signed authorization form and attached copy of the employee’s first wireless services bill.
- c. The employee is responsible for turning in a copy of their wireless service bill with the initial Wireless Services Allowance Authorization Form and annually to document that the employee still has the service. The bill copy should be submitted to the employee’s supervisor.
- d. The monthly wireless allowance shall not exceed the employee’s monthly wireless plan base charges. The University will pay an allowance equal to the lesser of the employee’s monthly base plan or a maximum of \$40 per month. An allowance for data services may also be requested for employees who: have regular

business travel off-campus; must have remote access for network or service monitoring; or are members of the campus emergency response team. This maximum additional allowance for data plan coverage is \$25. Employees may request reimbursement for both services; however the maximum monthly reimbursement shall not exceed \$65. These wireless services allowances will be added to the employee's monthly paycheck. These allowances may be taxable as determined by the IRS. The department's head is responsible for notifying Payroll of all allowance amounts and changes in allowance amounts or eligibility.

- e. The employee is responsible for immediately alerting their department head of any change in their wireless service plan which reduces the cost of the base plan below \$40 per month. The department head is responsible for notifying the Payroll Office in writing when any of the following occur: a reduction in the employee's plan cost; cancellation of the reimbursement allowance if the employee is no longer required to use a wireless phone for their position; if the employee terminates their employment with the University; or if the department for any other reason revokes the wireless service authorization.
- f. The signed copy of the authorization form will be returned to the department head as notification of approval. If approval is not granted a copy will be returned with an explanation of why the request was not granted.

## **2. University Owned Cell Phones: By Exception Only**

- a. If you are not satisfied that the allocation plan works for your circumstances you can apply for a University owned cell phone and service plan through the exception process.
- b. Exceptions require the prior approval of the department's head, the division's Vice President, and the Vice President for Finance and Administration. The request may be made by completing the Wireless Services Exemption Form.
- c. Employees with a University owned wireless phone are required to itemize all calls on the monthly bills, indicating the purpose of each call. Any personal calls shall be clearly identified. Itemized bills should be turned into their department each month and properly filed. The employee is responsible for reimbursing the University for all personal calls. Calls shall be reimbursed based on a pro rata share of the monthly charges (see Wireless Services Policy FAQ for how to calculate). Employee reimbursements shall occur within thirty (30) days after the department receives the service bill.
- d. Department Heads are expected to audit bills to insure that proper itemization and reimbursements are occurring through random inspection of bills on a periodic basis. Business Services and/or Internal Audit will conduct periodic internal audits to insure compliance.
- e. The signed copy of the authorization form will be returned to the Director as notification of approval. If approval is not granted a copy will be returned with an explanation of why the request was not granted.

## **3. Reimbursement for Occasional Business Use of Personal Wireless Device**

The employee must submit a copy of the wireless service bill with the business calls highlighted and a brief description of the purpose of the call described on the bill. Costs to be reimbursed are incremental costs incurred for individual business calls, over the monthly plan cost or a pro rata share (see Wireless Services Policy FAQ for how to calculate) of the total base bill depending on the volume of business calls made.

immediately upon approval.

## **D. Other Information**

### **1. Wireless Services Policy FAQ**

#### **Does everyone get an allowance for a personally-owned cell phone or Internet connection?**

No. This is not an entitlement. You should only receive the allowance if your job requires that you carry a cell phone where other less expensive means of communication are not adequate or your job requires you to have an internet connection away from the university premises.

#### **My plan has changed. How do I change the amount of my allowance?**

Complete a new Wireless Communication Allowance Agreement.

#### **Will SOU cover the purchase cost of my cell phone?**

You are responsible for the purchase cost of the cell phone. Most wireless service providers bundle a free or discounted cell phone with the initial service plan, and you should consider this when shopping for your equipment and plan. Any cost to purchase the equipment is a personal expense and will not be reimbursed.

#### **Who is responsible for replacing a cell phone that is lost, stolen, damaged, or what if I just want a new one?**

Unless you have a University "loaned" cell phone, the cell phone, or smart phone and plan are your property. Should the phone be lost, stolen or damaged it is your responsibility to replace it.

#### **Can the communication allowance be paid using grant and contract funds?**

No, the communication allowance is not an allowable direct cost on a grant or contract. Per OMB Circular A-21, communication access costs are considered part of indirect cost; also there is no substantiation of use for audit purposes. This allowance must be paid with departmental funds; education and general, gift, or endowment.

#### **I need email and Internet access on my phone, will that require a data plan?**

Yes, email and Internet access will require a data plan.

#### **Which cell phone and provider should I use?**

Wireless service providers in the Rogue Valley include AT&T, Sprint, US Cellular, T-Mobile, and Verizon. Information Technology cannot endorse a particular carrier or franchise. IT does not provide assistance in selecting a wireless service provider or service plan. The service provider can assist you in making these selections.

#### **I need a plan that costs more than the standard SOU allowance what should I do?**

SOU understands that the policy may not meet every need. If you are not satisfied that the allocation plan works for your circumstances you can apply for a University owned cell phone and service plan through the exception process.

#### **Will any "features" be considered part of my base plan cost? (As an example: text messaging, caller ID block, enterprise paging, extended nights and weekends, roadside assistance, voice dial, insurance).**

The wireless services allowance should cover the cost of these items. Your business need for these features and accessories should be discussed and agreed to with your department head as part of the process of getting approval for your allowance.

#### **I have a family or shared plan. Can I still get the allowance?**

Yes. As long as the primary plan is at least \$40

**Do service providers offer any discounts to government employees, and can I take advance of these discounts on my personal plan?**

Some providers do offer discounts. However, you should be advised that Ethics law outlined in ORS Chapter 244 prohibits public officials (including SOU employees) from participating in provider or contractor discount programs designed for government use, except as noted in the ORS. When you complete the Wireless Services Allocation Authorization Form you will be asked to verify that the wireless plan selected does not conflict with SOU policy and is not in violation of Oregon Ethics Law.

**2. University Owned Cell Phones (By Exception) FAQ**

**What are the requirements for University owned cell phone holders?**

Employees with a University owned wireless phone are required to itemize all calls on the monthly bills, indicating the purpose of each call. Any personal calls shall be clearly identified. Itemized bills should be turned into their department each month and properly filed. The employee is responsible for reimbursing the University for all personal calls. The department's records will be periodically audited. Employees are required to promptly reimburse the University for any personal calls within 30 days of the receipt of the monthly bill as described below.

**I never go over the base plan minutes. Why would I need to pay for any personal calls?**

IRS rules say that personal calls that are included in the base plan must be documented and reimbursed, or reported as wages. The amount is prorated based on the percentage of personal minutes against the total minutes used.

**How do I calculate the cost for personal calls (a pro rata share) on my University wireless service plan?**

The following are two examples for calculation of personal call reimbursement:

Example 1: You have a 600 minute plan that costs \$40.00. You only use 300 minutes, but 30 of those were personal. Your total bill is \$40.00. Use this formula:  $30/300 \times \$40.00 = \$4.00$ .

Example 2: You have a 600 minute plan that costs \$40.00. This month you made calls totaling 650 minutes. Your total bill is \$57.50. Of those minutes, 30 were for personal calls. You should pay  $30/650 \times \$57.50 = \$2.65$  for personal calls.

**How are unlimited night and weekend, and free mobile to mobile minutes calculated in pro rata share?**

Although night and weekend and free mobile to mobile minutes may be included in the plan, University owned cell phones plans are still restricted to business use only. In the rare unforeseen circumstances when personal calls may occur using night and weekend or mobile to mobile minutes these minutes should be included in the reimbursement calculation as described above.

**My workgroup or department has a contract in place with special cell phone features and plan that we need for our team. Can we keep that plan in place and still have SOU pay for the plan?**

Yes, but the policies related to requesting and getting approval for an exception to the University Wireless policy apply.

**3. Reimbursement for Occasional Business Calls On Personal Wireless Services Plan FAQ**

**How do I calculate reimbursements for the occasional high volume of business calls (a pro rata share) on my personal wireless services plan?**

The following are two examples for calculation of business call reimbursement:

Example 1: You have a 500 minute plan that costs \$40.00. You only use 500 minutes, 300 minutes of the calls were personal and 200 minutes were business. Your total bill is \$40.00. Use this formula:  $200/500 \times \$40.00 = \$16.00$  is your reimbursement.

Example 2: You have a 500 minute plan that costs \$40.00. This month you made calls totaling 650 minutes. Your total bill is \$80.00. Of those minutes, 400 were personal calls, 250 were business. Use this formula:  $250/650 \times \$80.00 = \$30.77$  is your reimbursement.