



## Career Training Program Release Time for UFT Paraprofessionals And DC37 Family Paraprofessionals

Each semester, the Scholarship Incentives and Speech Programs office receives numerous inquiries from schools and paraprofessionals regarding regulations governing “Release Time” for UFT and DC37 Paraprofessionals. This communication should clarify any questions or concerns you may encounter.

Paraprofessionals who meet the requirements indicated below are eligible for release time for non-classroom study or travel from work to their college/university. The NYCDOE will grant release time each college semester (fall, spring and the 1<sup>st</sup> summer session only) to eligible **full-time** paraprofessionals who are attending or taking online coursework at an accredited college or university under contract with the New York City Department of Education through the Career Training program. **Release time during summer session one may be taken but must be completed by June 30<sup>th</sup>. Release time will not be granted during the months of July and August.**

Paraprofessionals may not take classes during their regularly scheduled school day; therefore, release time cannot be used during this time. **Principals are not authorized to make exceptions to this condition.** Paraprofessionals are encouraged to take courses during the late afternoon, evenings and/or weekends to avoid conflict with their work schedules.

Release time shall only be granted to paraprofessionals enrolled in the Career Training Program (CTP) financed by the Division of Human Resources. Paraprofessionals enrolled in colleges and universities outside the parameters of the Career Training program are not eligible for release time.

Paraprofessionals enrolled in a **Master’s degree program for bilingual subjects or extension** may request release time. The Division of Human Resources, Office of Scholarship and Incentives programs must approve all requests for release time for this purpose.

### **I. Eligibility of UFT Paraprofessionals and DC37 Family Paraprofessionals**

#### **UFT Paraprofessionals**

During the fall, spring and summer semesters, the Department of Education will grant 2 1/2 hours of release time, per week with pay for study and/or travel to an accredited college. The paraprofessional must complete at least five semester hours/credits during that same semester of undergraduate study to be eligible for release time. Only UFT Paraprofessionals who are approved participants in the career training program are eligible for release time. Schools may confirm the participation of an individual by contacting their HR Director.

#### **DC 37 Family Paraprofessionals**

During the fall, spring and summer semesters, release time will be granted based on the work schedule and enrollment in an accredited college **which is paid for by the Career Training Program. DC37 Paraprofessionals may only attend the College of New Rochelle to participate in the Career Training Program.** The below chart indicates the prescribed minimum semester hours/credits needed for eligibility:

<b><u>HOURS WORKED PER WEEK</u></b>	<b><u>REQUIRED CREDITS PER SEMESTER</u></b>	<b><u>RELEASE TIME ENTITLEMENT</u></b>
21 - 27	5	2 hours per week
27 1/2 - 29	5	2 1/2 hours per week
30	6	3 hours per week

- DC 37 paraprofessionals working 20 hours per week, enrolled in an accredited college and completes a minimum of four credits are not entitled to release time but will receive two hours of additional pay.
- DC 37 paraprofessionals working 21 and 30 hours per week are entitled to release time only; they are not entitled to additional pay.

- DC 37 paraprofessionals working less than 20 hours per week are not eligible for any of the aforementioned benefits.

## **II. Verification**

### **Verification of Enrollment**

- At the beginning of each semester, any paraprofessional requesting release time must present a copy of the college bursar's receipt or other documentation of actual enrollment to the school principal or designee.

### **Verification of Course Completion**

- Within one month following completion of the semester, it is the responsibility of each participating paraprofessional to submit to the principal or designee a copy of the transcript, grade report, or other substantiating documentation indicating completion of the course(s) for which release time was granted.

### **Failing Grade-Withdrawal/Incomplete**

- A paraprofessional whose transcript indicates a failing grade during the semester for which release time was granted must submit to the principal written verification from the professor of actual attendance for the failed course. If this written verification is not submitted, the paraprofessional will be subject to the actions noted below in the Non-Compliance or Failure to meet requirements section.
- A grade indicating Withdrawal/Incomplete or any indication that courses were not attended will be considered as non-attendance and will be subject to the actions noted below in the Non-Compliance or Failure to meet requirements section.

## **III. Arranging a Release Time Schedule**

- Release time can only be used for non-classroom study or travel. **Paraprofessionals are urged to arrange classes during the late afternoon, evening or weekends to avoid a conflict with their work schedule and to ensure that adequate classroom coverage is provided.** Paraprofessionals must submit a class schedule to their principal in advance of the commencement of classes. The principal will then have sufficient time to review, approve or request that the schedule be modified. **Release time cannot be rescheduled or changed on a weekly basis. The principal has the final decision in or approving or denying release time, dependent upon scheduling and coverage issues, which may be required.**

## **IV. Non-Compliance or Failure to Meet Requirements**

### **Termination of Release Time and Responsibility of Principals to Authorize a Payroll Deduction**

- When release time must be terminated due to non-compliance or failure to meet requirements, the principal or designee must stop release time immediately and authorize a payroll deduction for any release time or pay that the paraprofessional received without appropriate documentation.

Questions may be referred to Human Resource Directors in the Borough Field Support Center or the Paraprofessional Career Training Office in the Division of Human Capital.