

## Career Training Program Release Time for UFT Paraprofessionals

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Each semester, the Division of Human Resources 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 may 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. **Release time during summer session one may be taken but must be completed by June 30<sup>th</sup>.** Release time is **not** to be granted during the months of July and August.

Paraprofessionals may not take classes during their regularly scheduled school day, which includes the extended day schedule. **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.

Paraprofessionals enrolled in a **Master's degree program for bilingual subjects** may request release time. The Division of Human Resources, Office of Scholarships, Incentives, and Speech Programs must approve all requests for release time for this purpose. Appropriate proof of acceptance and matriculation is required. Paraprofessionals enrolled in these programs must make a written request to the Office of Scholarships, Incentives, and Speech Programs via email at [CareerTraining@schools.nyc.gov](mailto:CareerTraining@schools.nyc.gov). Once approved by the Division of Human Resources, the final approval rests with the principal. Please note that release time is not granted for paraprofessionals in other master's degree programs or for paraprofessionals completing a second bachelor's degree.

**Release time does not apply to substitute paraprofessionals.**

### **I. Eligibility of UFT 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 a total of at least five (5) semester hours/credits during that same semester of undergraduate study to be eligible for release time. Release time requests will only be considered towards the completion of the participating paraprofessional's **first bachelor's degree** (Post-baccalaureate studies and additional Bachelor's degrees will not be considered for participation).

### **II. Verification** *(Required by the school)*

#### **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 must arrange classes during the late afternoon, evening, or weekend 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 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 (HRDs) in the Borough Field Support Center or the Office of Scholarships, Incentives, and Speech Programs in the Division of Human Resources.

Thank you for your cooperation.