

**THE TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY SYSTEM
HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER INTERNAL POLICIES**

25.99.08.Z1.01 Allowances for Communication Devices

Approved December 18, 2003

Revised March 19, 2008

Revised August 17, 2011

Revised September 21, 2011

Supplements System Policy 33.04 and System Regulation 25.99.08

1. GENERAL

1.1 The Texas A&M Health Science Center (HSC) recognizes that the performance of certain job responsibilities may be enhanced by the availability of personal communication devices such as cellular telephones, PDAs, and I-Pads or similar devices. In an effort to make the most efficient use of resources, the HSC will provide a communication equipment allowance to approved employees as compensation for the business use of their personal communication devices. Communication allowances may consist of two parts:

- a) Initial reimbursement for actual cost of equipment purchase and activation fees, up to the established HSC limit (see section 4.1).
- b) Monthly equipment allowance in the form of an employee salary supplement (see section 4.1).

1.2 A personal communication device that is acquired in part or wholly through a communication equipment allowance is considered to be the property of the employee and may be used in any way the employee deems appropriate. A communication equipment allowance is not considered to be an entitlement and is not part of an employee's base salary. The monthly communication plan allowance shall be paid in equal installments from departmental funds as a salary supplement, and is provided to the employee only for as long as the employee qualifies for the allowance. The communication allowance determined for the HSC will reside within the limits set by System Policy.

1.3 Some devices (e.g., an I-Pad) may be used for research and/or instructional purposes in ways not intended to be supported by the HSC allowance for communication devices. In such a setting, different funding structures may apply.

2. APPROVAL

2.1 Vice Presidents, Deans, and the IBT Director (or designee) are responsible for determining which positions necessitate personal communication equipment allowances. Granting a communication equipment allowance to an employee must be directly linked to the employee's HSC job duties and responsibilities.

2.2 Copies of the approval forms used to process the communication equipment allowance shall be retained in the employee's personnel file.

3. EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

- 3.1 The employee is responsible for the actual selection of, and enrollment in, his/her communication service plan.
- 3.2 An employee receiving a communication equipment allowance must provide to his/her department the current phone number to the communication device within five working days of the activation of that number.
- 3.3 The employee is personally liable for communication service contract stipulations including payment of all expenses incurred (including long distance, roaming fees, and taxes). In the event that an employee leaves the position that qualified for the communication equipment allowance, he/she will continue to be responsible for the contractual obligations of the communication service plan.
- 3.4 An employee receiving a communication equipment allowance must notify his/her Vice President, Dean, or IBT Director (or designee) within five working days of the inactivation of communication service or in the event that the communication equipment is lost or stolen.
- 3.5 An employee who is receiving a communication equipment allowance from the HSC must not receive additional reimbursement from the HSC or another part of the Texas A&M System for use of communication equipment or services. Communication equipment can be replaced no more than once every two years.

4. ESTABLISHING COMMUNICATION ALLOWANCE AMOUNTS

- 4.1 Communication equipment allowance rates shall be published annually by the Office of the Vice President for Finance and Administration. Allowances will be based on the average cost of available service provider plans.
- 4.2 Vice Presidents, Deans, and IBT Director (or designee) will be responsible for determining the appropriate level of published communication allowance for an individual employee based on the responsibilities of the employee's position. The employee may select a more expensive service plan, however, in such cases the employee will be responsible for the additional costs.
- 4.3 During the budget planning cycle, Vice Presidents, Deans, and the IBT Director (or designee) will evaluate all monthly salary supplements for communication equipment allowances, determine appropriateness of allowances, and make adjustments as necessary. Salary supplements in the form of communications equipment allowances may be established at any time of the fiscal year but should generally remain constant through the remainder of the year.

Office of Responsibility

Vice President for Finance and Administration