

6.5 Faculty development

The institution provides ongoing professional development opportunities for faculty members as teachers, scholars, and practitioners, consistent with the institutional mission.

Compliance Judgment: In Compliance

Rationale

In keeping with its [mission](#) ^[1] as a comprehensive institution that offers undergraduate and graduate programs of study grounded in a strong liberal arts and sciences curriculum, individual faculty members are expected to promote and enhance their growth as teachers, scholars, practitioners, and professionals. Faculty members are provided opportunities to take additional graduate classes, attend professional meetings and in-service training, and write and present scholarly works in their fields. The University of South Carolina Aiken and the University of South Carolina system provide numerous training programs, resources, and assistance to support faculty development and to encourage high impact learning practices.

Financial support. The university provides \$600 annually to each full-time faculty member for travel associated with professional development activities. Additionally, the USC Aiken Partnership Board has provided approximately \$60,000 annually, on average, over each of the past 10 years for travel to support faculty research and scholarly activities. These funds are released following a competitive peer-review process conducted by the Honors, Awards and Scholarship Committee of the Faculty Assembly and approved by the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs. All USC Aiken faculty, including those assigned to remote instructional sites are eligible. Over the past several years, the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs has augmented faculty development funds when the budget has allowed for it. In the 2019 fiscal year, approximately \$23,500 was expended to support faculty development.

The University of South Carolina system assigns a moderate sum each year for research purposes through several programs. Applications for support from these funds may be obtained from the [Office of the Vice President for Research in Columbia](#).^[2] Awards are made on a competitive basis. A moderate research incentive fund has been established on the Aiken campus to support faculty research, which contributes to these awards.

Tuition Assistance Program. As stipulated in Section 6.1 of the [Faculty Manual](#),^[3] all employees may take one three credit hour course (four hours in the case of a laboratory course) per academic term, from any institution within the USC system. Tuition charges for such classes are waived. In addition to providing a means of faculty development, this employee benefit affords faculty the opportunity to serve as role models for students in the pursuit of knowledge and life-long learning.

Sponsored Research. The USC Aiken Office of Sponsored Research assists faculty and staff with identification of funding sources, preparation of proposals, and submission of proposals via the [USC electronic research administration system](#).^[4] [Workshops](#)^[5] are periodically provided to faculty to help them improve skills in grantsmanship and meet funding agency expectations as they develop proposals. Sponsored funding to USC Aiken has been obtained from private foundations and federal, state, and local governments.

Sabbatical Leave. As stipulated in Section 6.3 of the [Faculty Manual](#)^[6], all tenured associate professors or tenured professors with six or more years of full-time faculty status at USC Aiken are eligible to apply for sabbatical leave. Sabbatical leaves, which are awarded through a competitive internal peer-review process, are intended to allow time for further professional development through significant scholarly/creative projects. The normal sabbatical award is one half year at full pay or one full year at half pay with full benefits continuing over the course of the sabbatical. Up to four sabbaticals can be awarded each year. Recipients of sabbatical leave are separated from all other university duties during the sabbatical. Requests are submitted to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in the fall of each academic year. A Sabbatical Review

Committee evaluates the merits of the proposed activities and submits a recommendation to the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs who bases the final decision on the recommendation of the committee as well as the impact of the leave on department/school operations and institutional resources. As shown in Table 6.5, there have been 13 sabbaticals awarded since the last reaffirmation of accreditation. An example of a recent [sabbatical award letter](#) ^[7] is provided.

Table 6.5. Sabbaticals Awarded Since the Last Reaffirmation of Accreditation

Year	Faculty Members
2010-11	Kerri Weed, Psychology
2011-12	Maggie Morehouse, History Sanela Porca, Business Richard Maltz, Music
2012-13	Tim Lintner, Education
2013-14	Jane Stafford, Psychology Carol Botsch, Political Science
2014-15	Christine Wernet, Sociology
2015-16	Katie Smith, English
2016-17	Matt Miller, English
2017-18	Devi Dillard-Wright, Philosophy
2018-19	Bing Han, Communication
2019-20	Virginia Shervette, Biology

Faculty Evaluation. [Student evaluations of teaching](#) ^[8], [annual faculty evaluation procedures](#) ^[9], the [post-tenure review process](#) ^[10], and the [post promotion review for Senior Instructors](#) ^[11] described in the Faculty Manual have a formative component designed to help faculty members in their professional development, as well as ensuring that USC Aiken’s standards for promotion and tenure are maintained. Greater details regarding faculty evaluation are provided in the narrative response to [Standard 6.3 – Faculty appointment and evaluation](#).^[12]

Center for Teaching Excellence. The [Center for Teaching Excellence](#) ^[13] promotes teaching excellence by providing individual consultations, videotaping,

technical assistance, [print and electronic resources](#),^[14] and [workshops on effective teaching strategies](#).^[15] The director of the center works directly with faculty as they design and prepare high quality instructional materials.

Office of Distance Learning. The [Office of Distance Learning](#) ^[16] supports the needs of distance instruction and facilitates professional development opportunities for faculty in pedagogy and technology. Faculty are provided support in [course design for online and blended learning](#) ^[17] and a [one-stop site of resources to support remote instruction](#).^[18]

Human Resources Training Workshops. The University of South Carolina system's division of Human Resources provides numerous workshops for faculty and staff on myriad topics such as working with and leading teams, performance evaluations, running data reports, motivation, and planning for retirement. An example of the types of workshops available is provided for the [month of June 2020](#).^[19] Workshops are repeated at different times to accommodate availability of faculty and staff. As the [linked example](#) ^[20] illustrates, emails are periodically sent to all employees across the USC system to inform them of upcoming workshops.

New Faculty Development Programs. Each new faculty member is assigned a New Faculty Mentor -- a senior faculty member who will help make new faculty feel welcome, be available to provide information about USC Aiken policies and procedures, and provide guidance and support. New faculty also participate in an orientation program organized by the [New Faculty Orientation Committee](#).^[21] Recent activities include social events, workshops to enhance teaching excellence, promotion and tenure workshops, and presentations from key resource personnel on campus.

University Awards and Recognition. Awards for faculty performance are presented annually at the Academic Convocation Ceremony to encourage, recognize, and support excellence in faculty endeavors. [Awards](#) ^[22] include the Part-time Faculty Teaching Excellence Award, the Teaching Excellence Award, the Excellence in Advisement Award, the University Service Award, the Community Service Award, and the Scholarly Activity Award.

.Supporting Documentation

1. [USC Aiken Mission Statement](#)
2. [USC System Research website](#)
3. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Tuition Assistance Program](#)
4. [USC System Electronic Research Administration website](#)
5. [Example Email regarding Research workshops](#)
6. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Sabbatical Leave](#)
7. [Example Letter of a Recently Awarded Sabbatical](#)
8. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Student Evaluation of Teaching](#)
9. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Annual Faculty Evaluations](#)
10. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Post-tenure Review](#)
11. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: Post Promotion Review for Senior Instructors](#)
12. [Narrative Response to Standard 6.3 – Faculty appointment and evaluation](#)
13. [Center for Teaching Excellence website](#)
14. [Teaching Resources website](#)
15. [Effective Teaching Workshops website](#)
16. [Office of Distance Learning website](#)
17. [Guidance for online course development website](#)
18. [Online Course Development Resources website](#)
19. [Human Resources Workshop schedule for June 2020](#)
20. [Email Notice of upcoming workshops](#)
21. [USC Aiken Faculty Manual: New Faculty Orientation Committee](#)
22. [USC Aiken Academic Affairs Website: Faculty Awards](#)