Florida International University offers a taxable allowance for cellular phone equipment and services to those employees whose duties require the frequent use of cellular phone devices. These employees are entitled to a monthly allowance to cover FIU business-related costs. The university does not purchase cellular phone devices or cellular service plans for employees conducting university business. An exception may be granted for departmental shared cellular phone devices as detailed below. Cellular phone devices and service plans purchased with the monthly allowance may be used for both personal and business purposes. The allowance is intended to defray the cost of conducting University business with cellular phone devices and may at times not cover the total cost of a cellular phone plan or usage. Departmental shared cellular phone devices shall only be used for business purposes, personal use is not permitted.

FIU issued credit cards (i.e., FIU Pro-cards) may not be used to pay for any cellular phone device, service, accessories, or associated voice or data plans. An exception may be granted for departmental shared cellular phone devices as detailed below.

Criteria

The allowance is granted per the following criteria:

- Job function requires considerable time outside of assigned office or work area and it is essential to the University that the employee be accessible during those times.
- Job function requires continuous accessibility beyond scheduled or normal working hours (i.e., on-call responsibilities for critical university services).
- Job function requires access to e-mail outside of the office or beyond normal scheduled working hours and it is essential for the University that the employee has the ability to receive and send e-mail during those times.

A cellular phone device acquired as provided by the criteria above is considered to be the personal property of the employee. No University unit or supervisor shall force employees to use a specific cellular phone device, carrier or plan.

Exceptions

A departmental shared cellular phone device for use by multiple individuals within the department may be purchased with an FIU issued credit card (i.e., FIU Pro-card) under the following conditions:

- The departmental shared cellular phone device will be used to fulfill functions related to special events, on-call duty, and maintenance, particularly to address emergency and after-hours related issues that require calling capabilities that cannot be addressed with a pager.
- Multiple employees will be using the departmental shared cellular phone device to fulfill functions as noted above making individual assignments financially imprudent.
- The departmental shared cellular phone device will be assigned to one individual within the department to manage and maintain control of the device, including phone assignment and ensuring that the equipment is only used for business purposes. This entails reviewing and maintaining records which establish the amount, date, place, and business purpose for each business call. A notated copy of the cell phone bill is an example of such a record.

Cost reduction measures

Cellular phones and data plans are not intended to replace other available lesser expensive means of communication such as landline phones. In an effort to reduce costs, employees should:

- Use conventional communication methods (e.g., landline phones) when available and cost effective.
• Minimize forwarding landline calls to cellular phones.
• Use landlines instead of cellular phones while in the office.

If an employee does not use their landline phone due to the amount of time spent out of their office, the supervisor should evaluate elimination of the landline phone.

Allowance

The allowance will be provided as taxable income to the employee, but will not be considered part of the employee’s base salary or considered for calculation of retirement benefits. This allowance does not constitute an increase to base pay and will not be included in the calculation of percentage increases to base pay due to annual raises, promotions, etc. An employee is prohibited from continuing to collect a monthly communication plan allowance when his/her cellular phone device is no longer active or needed for the performance of the employee’s job responsibilities. Simple convenience is not a criterion for granting a cellular phone device allowance. Please see “Cellular Phone Procedure” for the allowance amount.

DEFINITIONS (R*)

Cellular phone devices, for the purpose of this policy, are defined as cellular phones, data card services, personal digital assistants (PDAs), wireless handheld devices (e.g., BlackBerry), satellite phones or other telecommunication devices that provide voice and/or data capabilities with a monthly service.

PROCEDURES (O*)

Please see the FIU Cellular Phone Procedure.

RESPONSIBILITIES (O*)

Please see the FIU Cellular Phone Procedure.

HISTORY (R*)

Effective Date: July 1, 2008; Revision Date: August 7, 2008.

RESPONSIBLE UNIVERSITY DIVISION/DEPARTMENT (R*)

Division of Information Technology

RESPONSIBLE ADMINISTRATIVE OVERSIGHT (R*)

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The University Policies and Procedures Library is updated regularly. In order to ensure a printed copy of this document is current, please access it online at http://policies.fiu.edu.

For any questions or comments, the “Document Details” view for this policy online provides complete contact information.

FORMS/ONLINE PROCESSES (O*)

Employee Cellular Phone Allowance Agreement

Link to the above referenced Form(s) available in the "Document Details" Section of the online version of this policy document.

*R = Required  *O = Optional