



Cellular Phone Policy # 1950.005

INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE: July 1, 2008	LAST REVISION DATE: May 20, 2024	RESPONSIBLE UNIVERSITY DIVISION/DEPARTMENT Division of Information Technology/IT Security Office
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POLICY STATEMENT

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.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all University Employees (Faculty and Staff)



REASON FOR POLICY

Provide policy for the taxable allowance of cellular phone equipment and services those employees whose duties require the frequent use of cellular phone devices.

DEFINITIONS	
TERM	DEFINITIONS
Cellular phone devices	are defined as cellular phones, smart phones, data card services, personal digital assistants (PDAs), wireless handheld devices (e.g., iPads, tablets), satellite phones or other telecommunication devices that provide voice and/or data capabilities with a monthly service.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

FIU Cellular Phone Procedure

RELATED RESOURCES

FIU Cellular Phone Procedure
[Cell Phone Allowance Guidelines](#)

CONTACTS

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HISTORY

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Review Dates (*review performed, no updates*): N/A
Revision Dates (*updates made to document*): August 7, 2008; June 2, 2021, May 20, 2024



Cellular Phone Procedure # 1950.05a

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PROCEDURE STATEMENT

This procedure describes the process to request and approve an allowance from Florida International University for the use of cellular phone devices in order to conduct university business.

Any employee who receives an allowance will be required to have the pertinent contact information (i.e., phone number) published or distributed for University business purposes.

Process

Upon determination that the necessary criteria are met as stipulated in the “Cellular Phone Policy”, the employee and authorized approver will follow the process outlined below:

- Select the most reasonable monthly allowance option, based on the intended usage of the device, from the options in the table below:

Plan Option	Allowance Amount	Comments
Monthly cellular phone	\$50	Phone usage only
Monthly text messaging	\$10	Unlimited text messaging for cellular phone plans only*
Monthly cellular data	\$50	Data usage only
Monthly cellular phone/data allowance	\$90	Combined voice/e-mail functionality
Bi-annual phone equipment allowance	\$50	n/a
a Bi-annual phone/data equipment allowance	\$200	n/a
Emergency business-related calls**	Actual cost	Employee submits reimbursement form

*Unlimited text messaging is for employees with cellular phones so they may receive text notifications in the event of a failure of critical University services for which they are responsible (i.e., e-mail, internet, Panthersoft).

**Emergency business calls which cause the employee who does not receive a cellular phone allowance to exceed their personal cellular phone plans.

- Complete the Employee Cellular Phone Allowance Agreement form, which is available at https://hrapps.fiu.edu/uploads/file/Cell_phone_Allowance_Form.pdf and obtain necessary approvals.

Based on the type of option approved, the approved form is sent to either payroll or purchasing for processing.

The Employee Cellular Phone Allowance Agreement form must be reviewed annually. Changes in allowance may be made on an annual basis or as needed based on the employee's job function.

- Employees required to receive FIU e-mail on their wireless handheld devices (e.g., smartphone, tablet) are responsible for configuring the email client on their device. For instructions on how to configure the email on your device visit https://fiu.servicenow.com/sp?id=kb_article&sysparm_article=KB0010311.

Departmental Shared Cellular Phone Devices

For departments fulfilling functions related to special events, on-call duty, and maintenance, particularly addressing emergency and after-hours related issues requiring calling capabilities that cannot be addressed with a pager, a departmental shared cellular phone device may be approved as an exception.

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 monthly review and maintenance of records which establish the amount, date, place, and business purpose for each business call. A notated copy of the monthly cell phone bill is an example of such a record.

Departmental shared cellular phone devices shall only be used for business purposes, personal use is not permitted. Any employee in violation of this policy must, at a minimum, reimburse the University for the personal phone call. A first time offense will result in a reprimand. A second time offense will result in the employee's loss of use of the departmental shared cellular phone device.

Employees must adhere to the following established practice:

- Employees must document personal cellular calls and reimburse the University for the personal calls.
- Department heads must review employee usage of cellular phone devices.
- Department heads must sign-off on employee usage of cellular phones.

FIU Owned Cellular Equipment

In the event the employee leaves FIU, the cellular phone device must be returned to the department just like any other FIU owned property.

International Calls on Cellular Devices

For employees who occasionally travel overseas and make or receive calls or send or receive email on their cellular phone devices for FIU business in a foreign country, the cost of their cellular phone calls or data/email access may be reimbursed as part of their travel cost reimbursement. For employees who need to work extensively overseas, an international cellular phone plan to cover overseas phone call and data/email transmission may be approved as an exception. The international cellular phone plan should be cancelled as soon as an employee completes his/her overseas assignment and no longer needs it to conduct FIU business.

Grant Funds

Allowances from grant funds may be given to an employee provided they receive authorization from and follow guidelines established by the Office of Sponsored Research Administration (OSRA).

Nine-month Faculty

Nine-month Faculty will receive a twelve-month allowance distributed over the nine-months the faculty member is paid.

Terminations or lay-offs

In the event an employee is terminated or laid-off, the university will pay the penalty for terminating the cellular contract entered as part of an allowance.

Exceptions

Exceeding 450 minutes of the monthly cellular phone plans or requiring placing international phone calls for the purpose of conducting University business are considered exceptions. These exceptions must be authorized by the Provost, Senior Vice President of Finance and Administration and CFO, or the President as applicable. Approved exceptions entitle the employee to receive a monthly cellular phone voice allowance of \$100 (a total of \$140 with cellular data included) due to the availability of \$100 unlimited call plans. A departmental shared cellular phone device used to fulfill functions as outlined above and in the FIU Cellular Phone Policy is an exception and must be authorized by the Provost, Senior Vice President of Finance and Administration and CFO, or the President as applicable. Approved exceptions entitle the department to purchase the device with a FIU issued credit card (i.e., FIU Pro-card).