Professional Scheduling

Definition--Professional scheduling is defined as the responsibility of an employee who is exempt from the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) in controlling his or her work schedule to best meet the needs of NCCES clients while achieving a balance in work and personal time that is healthy for the organization and for the individual.

Situation--The charge of Extension employees is to extend the educational mission of the land-grant universities in North Carolina to the people across the state. Often, the availability of these clients and/or the nature of the program dictate the need for Extension employees to work during non-routine office hours (i.e. lunch hours, evenings, and/or weekends) and to work more hours than the typical 40-hour work week. Extension employees must be flexible to schedule their time to enable successful programming. It is also desirable that employees achieve a balance in work, home, and community life.

Principle--Extension administration, specialists, and agents are to meet their work objectives and, as professionals, are entrusted with the flexibility of balancing their work schedules to meet these.

Unless designated otherwise at the time of hiring, EPA Professional positions and field faculty EPA positions are classified as exempt from the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). These employees’ work responsibilities frequently require more than 40 hours per week and often at non-routine office hours, but are not eligible for compensatory time or overtime as defined and calculated under the FLSA.
- Professional scheduling is not designed to compensate for overtime hours or days worked.

- Professional scheduling is a privilege that can be revoked if abused.

- Professional scheduling is not an issue tied to an individual’s performance appraisal unless abuse results in unsatisfactory or poor program performance or poor or improper personal conduct.

**Policy and Implementation**—North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service (NCCES) expects that its employees will do all work that must be done to enable successful programming while practicing professional scheduling.

In order to ensure that professional scheduling is implemented equitably throughout the NCCES, the following guidelines are to be followed:

1. Extension administrators, specialists, and agents are accountable for fulfilling their job responsibilities and commitments and for maintaining their professional calendars.

2. Professional scheduling is to be taken at the mutual convenience of the organization and the individual. Meeting the availability and work scheduling expectations is the responsibility of the employee with advanced dialogue and agreement from their immediate supervisor or their designee. If the professional scheduling request made by the employee would negatively affect the unit’s programs or function, the supervisor can deny that period for professional scheduling. If an employee still wants to take the time off, annual leave must be used, and is likewise subject to supervisory approval.

3. Professional scheduling normally refers to periods of a few hours to half day. Requests for longer periods of professional scheduling are permissible if based on extenuating circumstances (e.g. multiple weekends, week(s) at 4-H camps, etc.) and if approved by the immediate supervisor in advance.

4. If an employee feels their requests for professional scheduling are denied for inappropriate reasons, they are encouraged to contact the next level supervisor for resolution.