

## **CUPE Professional Development Fund: Application Guidelines & Criteria (Revised Dec 2013)**

### **What is the CUPE PD Fund?**

Under the Collective Agreement between AUGC and CUPE Local 3911, there is provision for a professional development fund in Article 27. There is \$ 40,000 available annually (the unspent balance at March 31st of each year will be carried forward into the next year) to be administered by four representatives from the Union. The fund is to be used for “such employee development purposes as are jointly agreed to by the above administrators”.

The four representatives meet quarterly as the CUPE Professional Development Committee.

### **Who can apply?**

You can apply for money from this fund if:

The GAU/CUPE Collective Agreement applies to you and you are currently employed, or on the first twelve months of a layoff period. If you are on a 12-month or less temporary Course Coordinator Contract under AUFA your application may be considered by the committee and an exception would be sought from CUPE Executive if funding was approved. The Professional Development fund is for the benefit of CUPE Local 3911 members.

### **What is the purpose of the fund?**

The purpose of this fund is to support individual or group activities of a professional development nature as follows:

Fundable activities should be connected to your CUPE work for Athabasca University and should yield a benefit to your teaching. For example, participation as a learner in a course, workshop, conference or program should be related to your subject area or to the development of skills (including teaching and technological skills), and/or to increase understandings in post-secondary and/or adult and/or distance education. Presentation of papers, participation in poster sessions or panels should be related to your subject area or Athabasca University’s mission. It is important that you complete the application with a view to informing the committee that your proposed use of PD Funds is appropriate given the guidelines.

### **What amounts and kinds of expenses are fundable?**

There is normally a \$1,500.00 – 2,000.00 upper limit per applicant per funding year. The approved funding will be based on the location of a conference/workshop/training opportunity; international travel will be funded to the \$2,000.00 maximum whereas travel within Canada will be funded to the \$1,500.00 maximum. The fund will only support one international application per member per year. All subsequent applications will be funded only to a maximum of \$1500 per application.

The fund has primary purposes of reimbursing registration fees and travel expenses of member’s attendance at conferences/training activities/workshops relevant to their subject area and the courses the member teaches at AU and/or to fund research activities directly related to distance education and the work of tutors and academic experts at AU.

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Examples of previously funded activities have included:

1. participation in a broad variety of non-credit courses, workshops, etc.;
2. presenter-participation in conferences for papers, panels, poster sessions or other types of presenter-participation;
3. non-presenter participation at conferences or other training opportunities;
4. expenses associated with research related to distance education and tutoring.

\*Please note that as of April 2014 this fund will no longer pay for Undergraduate or Graduate courses. AU courses can be partially funded under the “tuition waiver” (Article 21) of the Collective Agreement

Some examples of activities that have not been funded are:

1. personal development courses;
2. recreational programs;
3. course development or revision;
4. activities wholly funded by other employers;
5. research activities not related to distance education and/or the nature of the work of tutors and academic experts at AU
6. purchase of equipment, books or software\*;
7. payment of membership dues\*.

\*These types of expenses can be partially funded by each member’s allowance (Article 27.04)

### **How and when can I apply?**

Applications for funding must be made by completing and submitting a “CUPE Professional Development Fund Application Form”. (Available at Forms in the Tutor Services Tab on MyAU)

There is a call for applications (announced on the tutor email alias) four times a year – early fall, late fall, winter and spring – schedule as follows (next business day when on a weekend or holiday):

1. First Quarter – April 01 to June 30: Applications should be received by March 01,
2. Second Quarter – July 01 to September 30 Applications to be received by June 01,
3. Third Quarter – October 01 to December 31: Applications to be received by September 01,
4. Fourth Quarter – January 01 to March 31: Applications to be received by December 01.

Applicants are encouraged to apply the quarter before the activity although applications for the current quarter or the earlier quarter (i.e. six months before the activity) will be considered. Activities that have happened more than three months previous to the application will not be considered.

## **Then what happens?**

The committee meets regularly four times a year, as soon as possible after each quarterly application deadline, to consider applications, which have been received on or before the deadline.

Applicants are informed as soon as possible of the results of the committee's deliberations.

You may not get all the funding you have requested. Allocations depend on the availability of funds, number of applications, and the application of relevant criteria (see below). As well, as stated previously, there is normally an upper limit of \$1,500.00 - \$2,000.00 per applicant per funding year.

Your application submission includes permission to publish the 200-300 word highlights provided by you.

The funds are approved in principle and disbursed upon completion of the activity with the submission of an online expense claim form and appropriate original receipts. Receipts must be submitted no later than 45 days after the activity. An activity report (200 to 300 words or more), highlights of which may be published in Research News and/or other AU or CUPE publications, will also be required.

The Athabasca University Tutor Travel and Expense Claim Policy applies. Policy can be reviewed at: <http://ous.athabascau.ca/policy/finance/tutortravelexpenseclaim.htm>

## **How often can I apply?**

You can apply as often as you wish, but the committee will assign a priority to each application by considering factors of funding as many members as possible, likely value of the planned event to other members, past history of funding, whether international travel (limit of \$2,000.00 to any one applicant in a single year), etc.

## **Criteria for Awarding CUPE Professional Development Funds**

The committee's responsibility is to allocate available funds as fairly as possible among the applications submitted, while reserving sufficient funds to be fair to the applications which are expected to be submitted in the future. Factors that will be considered as the committee makes decisions about what to fund are:

1. how closely the proposed activity is connected to the applicants subject area and the purpose of the fund
2. the amount of funding the applicant has received or not received from this fund previously during this fiscal year; Priority will be given to applicants who have not received PD funding this fiscal year
3. seniority
4. size of AU/CUPE work assignment
5. committee work with AU

Additional PD Conference or Training Activities may be funded IF: there is excess money in the PD Fund and first requests for funding have been satisfied but only one international conference per person will be funded per year, so subsequent requests will be funded only up to \$1500 even if they are international.