

Cell Phone and/or Equipment Allowance Policy

OVERVIEW

Keck Graduate Institute will provide authorized employees a taxable monthly allowance for cell phone and/or equipment use.

This policy is established as a guide for employees who, by the nature of their work, routinely use mobile communication devices in the performance of their job. Based on job responsibilities, eligible employees may qualify for a taxable allowance to cover the business use of personal cell phones. The employee's supervisor, with approval of their cabinet level supervisor, is responsible for determining the eligibility of an employee to receive a cell phone and/or equipment allowance based on job responsibilities.

For guidance on what kind of uses are business uses, employees should consult with their Department Supervisors. Additional guidance may be found in the [September 14, 2011 Control Number: SBSE-04-0911-083 ... - IRS.gov](#).

MONTHLY SERVICE

Keck Graduate Institute requires employees approved to use a cell phone for business purposes to maintain a cell phone and service plan in exchange for a taxable allowance provided by KGI and funded by the department. The allowance is intended to reimburse the employee for the business use of the phone, not to pay the entire phone bill, under the assumption the device will be used for personal and business purposes by most employees. The allowance can be changed or withdrawn by the supervisor without notice at any time. KGI is not responsible for any additional costs associated with the cell phone—for example, shipping, taxes, insurance, accessories, overages, etc.

The employee is responsible for obtaining a phone and monthly plan that, at a minimum, meet the level of service required by the department. Because the telephone is owned by the employee, it may be used for personal and business use, but must be available for the performance of responsibilities as designated by the department and within policy. The employee may obtain a larger plan if needed for personal use, but will only receive the amount agreed upon for business use. Bills for the cellular plan and device are the responsibility of the individual.

There may be rare circumstances where the allowance amount must be adjusted due to special departmental needs. A cabinet level supervisor must approve any exceptions to the standard allowance amounts designated by the Institute.

TYPES OF ALLOWANCES AND LIMITS

1. A monthly allowance of **\$50** per month for cell phone service internet service.
2. A cell phone equipment allowance of up to **\$150**. The equipment allowance must be preapproved by a Cabinet Level Supervisor. A similar allowance for replacements may be made at intervals of no less than two years.

KGI may grant one or more of the above allowances to any qualified employee as defined above.

ALLOWANCE REQUIREMENTS

KGI contributions for employee-owned services are not to be based on a particular title or position. Approved allowance amounts should be based on the actual job requirements of the individual faculty or staff member. Approval for a cellular allowance must be based on a valid, institute-related need and meet at least one of the following criteria:

- **On-call availability:** Employee is required to be on call a majority of the time to be contacted in the event of an emergency or service need.
- **Frequent mobility:** The job requires considerable time outside the office during working hours and it is imperative to the functioning of the Institute that the employee be immediately accessible to receive and/or make frequent business calls during those times.
- **After-hours availability:** The job requires the employee to be immediately accessible to receive and/or make frequent business calls outside of working hours. Employee must be readily accessible due to the specific nature of their duties, and must be available for emergency responses and time-sensitive consultation after normal office hours.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Recipients of a cell phone allowance have the following responsibilities:

- Purchase cellular phone service and equipment and assume responsibility for vendor terms and conditions. The employee can select any service provider, plan, and features that meet the requirements of the job responsibilities as specified by the supervisor and approved by the cabinet level supervisor and that, at a minimum, meet the level of plan and services the allowance is intended to cover. The employee is responsible for plan choices, calling areas, service features, termination clauses, and paying all charges associated with the cellular service and device.
- Purchase, repair, maintain, insure, and/or replace phone equipment and accessories, including lost, damaged, or stolen equipment and accessories.

- Ensure the carrier selected has service in required usage areas, such as on campus and/or at home, as required by the department. Take advantage of trial/return time frames offered by most carriers.
- Establish himself/herself as the billing party. Regardless of cost, the employee is responsible for any additional expenses above the Institute's contribution.
- Maintain an active service contract for the duration of the allowance.
- Notify your supervisor within 5 working days if the eligibility criteria are no longer met, if your service is canceled, or when your phone number, carrier, or plan eligibility changes.
- Request an allowance renewal from your department at the end of each fiscal year.

ANNUAL RENEWAL

The employee's supervisor is responsible for an annual review of the business need for a cell phone allowance and whether the agreement needs to be changed, renewed, or discontinued. Prior to each fiscal year, a request form must be completed by the supervisor, approved by a cabinet level supervisor, and submitted, to Human Resources in order to continue the allowance. A copy of the completed request form must be kept on file in the employee's personnel file.

EQUIPMENT ALLOWANCE

Employees can submit a request for an equipment credit once every 2 years. The employee can receive reimbursement up to the Institute's established equipment reimbursement amounts. A Cell Phone and/or Equipment Reimbursement Request Form must be submitted to Human Resources, along with an original invoice or receipt indicating that the equipment was purchased for the employee's line.

APPROVAL PROCESS

If a supervisor deems it appropriate for someone in his/her department to receive a cell phone allowance, the supervisor is to provide written authorization (e.g., attached authorization form with approval from the appropriate Cabinet Level Supervisor) to Human Resources.

If an employee uses a carrier that provides a discount to employees of KGI or The Claremont Colleges, the discount should be deducted from the approved basic plan amount. If an employee has a group or family plan and the basic plan amount cannot be easily segregated, the basic plan available from that carrier should be documented to support the allowance.

KGI is not liable for cancellation or other charges or penalties incurred by the employee.

CHANGE OR CANCEL EXISTING ALLOWANCE

If the employee resigns, is terminated, transfers departments, changes job duties, no longer requires telephone services, or otherwise no longer qualifies for an institutional allowance, the employee's supervisor is responsible for submitting a revised request form to Human Resources. In the event that an employee leaves the position, he/she continues to be responsible for the contractual obligations of the cellular service plan.

SMARTPHONES AND DATA PLAN ELIGIBILITY

Some positions may find it necessary that an employee is able to regularly send and receive time-sensitive institute email remotely, and computer access is not adequate for this purpose. To be eligible for a data plan allowance, the employee must have a smartphone, and the equipment and plan must allow syncing with institute email, calendar, and contacts. Certain smartphones do not qualify for a data allowance, because they do not connect to KGI's email, calendar, and contacts. It is important to verify the eligibility of a smartphone prior to obtaining it. Eligibility for a data plan allowance is based on the following:

- Real-time decision making and Institute responsiveness is of an urgent nature and must be accomplished through email.
- Real-time communications/responses by email are required when traveling, off campus, away from the office, or after hours.

Given that smartphones may be storing and transferring critical KGI data while connected to the Internet, all KGI policies are applicable and will be enforced.

EQUIPMENT

The employee is responsible for the purchase and maintenance of the cell phone or smartphone and related accessories. The employee is responsible for the purchase, repair, maintenance, loss, damage, insurance, and/or replacement of phone equipment and accessories. Employees are responsible for purchasing their own equipment.

CONTRACT CHANGES OR CANCELLATIONS

Most carriers charge an early termination fee for canceling a contract prior to the end of the established term. In certain limited circumstances, the department will cover employee early termination fees. If an institutional decision is made (unrelated to employee misconduct) that results in the need to change or end the cell phone contract, the department will bear the cost of any associated contract termination fees. For instance, if the Institute determines that a phone is no longer required for the position, the employee changes positions, or the employee terminates employment with the Institute, the department will then reimburse the early termination fee billed to the employee. In order to be reimbursed in these circumstances, the original billing statement indicating the early termination charge billed is. The employee is

responsible for early termination fees in all other circumstances. For instance, early termination fees billed due to a personal decision, employee misconduct, misuse of the phone, or if changing providers after the allowance is initiated, the employee will bear the cost of any associated contract termination fees.

Payroll Processing:

Human Resources Department will add the allowance to the employee's payroll check. A copy of the approved authorization form will be returned to the supervisor to inform the department of approval.

USE OF CELL PHONE WHILE DRIVING

In the interest of safety, KGI employees are prohibited from using a cell phone while driving. If your job requires that you keep your cell phone on while driving, you must use a hands-free device and safely pull over before conducting Institute business. This policy includes while driving on behalf of the Institute in personal vehicles, campus vehicles, and carts.

OTHER DEVICES AND SERVICES

Other non-phone communication devices and services are not eligible for nontaxable allowances.

Employee's Name (Print)

Employee's Signature

Date