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Chairman

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HR-601 – TUITION ASSISTANCE POLICY

THE LANGUAGE USED IN THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT BETWEEN THE EMPLOYEE AND THE AGENCY. THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE ANY CONTRACTUAL RIGHTS OR ENTITLEMENTS. THE AGENCY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVISE THE CONTENT OF THIS DOCUMENT, IN WHOLE OR IN PART. NO PROMISES OR ASSURANCES, WHETHER WRITTEN OR ORAL, WHICH ARE CONTRARY TO OR INCONSISTENT WITH THE TERMS OF THIS PARAGRAPH, CREATE ANY CONTRACT OR EMPLOYMENT.

- Employees are responsible for reading and following this policy.
- Employees and new hires shall acknowledge they have read this policy by signing the Policies and Procedures Manual Acknowledgement Form.

PURPOSE/BACKGROUND

The Tuition Assistance Program is part of the Agency's commitment to maintaining a quality, educated workforce. It is the intent of the Agency to attract and retain motivated, productive, and efficient employees by providing job enhancement opportunities and encouraging continued growth and development through education. Eligible employees will be selected for this program without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, including pregnancy, childbirth, lactation (or related medical conditions), age, or disability.

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines that ensure the consistent and equitable treatment of employees of the SC Commission on Higher Education (Agency) who are eligible to participate in the Tuition Assistance Program (Program) and receive tuition assistance in compliance with the SC Department of Administration's guidelines.

GUIDELINES:

I. EMPLOYEE ELIGIBILITY

- Only employees occupying a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) position, temporary grant position or time-limited project position with at least six months of agency service may be eligible to participate in the Program.
- Employees in a permanent or temporary grant position must work a minimum of 30 hours per week for the Agency in order to be eligible.
- Employees must have a satisfactory work and attendance record with the Agency as certified by the immediate supervisor. Any employee who has received disciplinary action in the form of a written reprimand or above, will be ineligible to participate in the Program for one year from the date disciplinary action was imposed. Employees receiving disciplinary action in the form of a written reprimand and above, exclusive of

termination, who already have been approved for tuition assistance may be reimbursed; however, they will be ineligible for subsequent tuition assistance for a period of one year from the date the disciplinary action was imposed.

II. PROGRAM PROVISIONS

- A. Tuition assistance will be provided for one course (no more than four credit hours) per year per employee.
- B. Employees who participate in the Program are required to work their approved schedule of hours in their regular workweek. Supervisors are encouraged to work with employees to adjust approved work schedules or to allow employees to use annual leave to reasonably accommodate class schedules.
- C. Employees may not conduct any activities related to coursework during work hours.
- D. Tuition assistance will be provided only to employees who have been accepted for admission to and attend an accredited public South Carolina institution of higher learning. Courses must be taken for academic credit and must be relative to their career/job, but do not have to be taken toward the completion of a degree.
- E. Employees must pass the course with a grade of “C” or higher for undergraduate courses and a grade of “B” or higher for graduate courses to have tuition costs reimbursed. For courses evaluated on a “Pass/Fail” basis, employees must “Pass” the course.
- F. The Program will reimburse 50 percent of tuition and laboratory fees (not to exceed \$2,500) for the course, exclusive of books and any other fees, per academic year per employee based upon available funding.
- G. Employees receiving other assistance that does not require repayment, i.e., scholarships, may be reimbursed while participating in the program as long as the reimbursement and other funds received does not exceed the total costs of the course taken. If employees are receiving other assistance, i.e., student loans, that must be repaid, the Agency will allow tuition reimbursement. Employees must certify on the Request for Tuition Assistance form whether or not they are receiving any other form of tuition assistance and how much. Falsification of this information will be subject to disciplinary action.
- H. Selection in the Program is not subject to appeal.

III. COURSE REIMBURSEMENT ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:

- A. The course must reasonably relate to the employee’s current job assignment or occupational field, or be part of a planned degree program in a field that relates to the Agency’s mission.
- B. The course must be taken for academic credit but does not have to be taken toward a degree.
- C. The course must enhance the employee’s contribution to the Agency.

IV. REQUEST FOR TUITION ASSISTANCE

- A. The President and Executive Director shall budget funding for the Program at the beginning of each fiscal year.

B. All requests for tuition assistance must specify the amount of reimbursement for the cost of the course and/or laboratory fees and be recommended for approval by an employee's supervisor and the appropriate Office Director.

C. Recommended requests for fall term courses must be forwarded to the Deputy Director and General Counsel, for his or her review by May 31. The Deputy Director and General Counsel shall forward the requests along with his or her recommendations to the President and Executive Director, for approval by June 30. Recommended requests for spring term courses must be forwarded to the Deputy Director and General Counsel, for his or her review by October 31. The Deputy Director and General Counsel shall forward the requests along with his or her recommendations to the President and Executive Director, for approval by November 30. If funding is still available after requests have been granted for fall and spring term courses, recommended requests for summer courses must be forwarded to the Deputy Director and General Counsel, for his or her review by March 31. The Deputy Director and General Counsel shall forward the requests along with his or her recommendations to the President and Executive Director, for approval by April 30.

D. In any twelve (12) month period, the maximum reimbursement allowed per employee is one course, not to exceed four (4) credit hours.

V. REQUEST FOR TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

A. The employee must submit a Request for Tuition Reimbursement form, completed in its entirety, within thirty (30) days after successful completion of the course in order to be reimbursed.

B. A copy of the official grade report and fee receipt must be attached to the Request for Tuition Reimbursement form.

C. Employees who terminate employment for any reason prior to receiving previously approved tuition assistance under this program will not be allowed to claim reimbursement. Any exceptions must be approved by the President and Executive Director.

VI. REIMBURSEMENT

A. Reimbursement will be made directly to the employee through the Agency.

APPROVED BY:



May 3, 2021

SC Commission on Higher Education President and Executive Director