

POLICY

The College, in its sole discretion, may provide educational reimbursement to full-time employees (as defined in Policy #3002, Full-Time Employment) who are in good standing, which is defined as not being in any stage of a Corrective Action or Performance Improvement Plan. Newly-hired full time employees are eligible for this benefit following the successful completion of their probationary period.

Tuition reimbursement for undergraduate or graduate courses may be provided for courses taken at any regionally accredited institution. Fees and other expenses related to courses are not eligible for reimbursement. The employee may be reimbursed for a maximum of twelve (12) credits each academic year (September through August). Employees enrolled in doctoral programs may be eligible for reimbursement beyond twelve (12) credits in an academic year, if formal reports of ongoing progress and associated billing documents can be obtained from the institution. The final reimbursement for a completed doctoral program will be processed following proof of a successful dissertation defense. Reimbursement is made at the institution's per credit rate, not to exceed the prevailing Kean University per credit rate.

Reimbursement for non-credit educational courses or programs that result in an earned certificate or recognized professional designation related to an employee's position at the College may also be provided. The employee may be eligible for reimbursement for a maximum equivalent of six (6) credits each fiscal year (July through June) at the prevailing Kean University undergraduate per credit rate.

The employee/student must disclose any grants, financial aid, scholarship and/or other discounts received. Reimbursement will be based on the employee/student's actual cost and reimbursement shall not exceed the amount paid.

The College reserves the right to decline a reimbursement request in the event an employee has given notice of their intention to retire or resign or has resigned or retired prior to reimbursement. Reimbursement may be declined if the employee has been or will be terminated for cause or be given a non-renewal notice prior to reimbursement. No reimbursement will be provided to any employee after separation from the College.

In instances where the specifics of this policy are at variance with the terms and conditions of a collective bargaining agreement, the terms and conditions of such relevant agreement shall take precedence.

ADOPTED: April 25, 2011
Revised: May 4, 2015
Revised: January 28, 2021
Revised: July 28, 2022

PROCEDURE

Obtaining Degree Program or Professional Certification Approval for Reimbursement:

1. Employees seeking a degree or professional certificate/designation must obtain approval via the **Application - Degree or Professional Certification Reimbursement Benefit** prior to seeking reimbursement for any part(s) of the program. In the event an employee is seeking his/her first baccalaureate degree, a liberal arts program or other broad field of study may be considered for reimbursement. [*Note: Changes to program, degree, certificate/designation and/or institution must be resubmitted for approval]. Tuition reimbursement will include general education classes necessary to acquire a degree as long as the degree program has been approved for reimbursement in advance.
2. In order for any portion of a degree or certificate program to be reimbursed, the Program must be approved **before** the program/courses begin, by the employee's supervisor and area Vice President, or designee, using the **Application - Degree Program or Professional Certificate Reimbursement**. The employee's supervisor and area Vice President, or designee) are responsible for review of the initial application, ensuring the relevance of the program to the employee's position, and the accreditation status of the institution or the authenticity of the certificate-granting professional organization before signing and forwarding the application to the Office of Human Resources. Courses or programs that overlap the employee's normal work schedule cannot be approved.
3. In the event an employee is awarded financial aid by federal, state, institutional, and/or private grants/scholarship agencies (not including loans), the financial aid will be applied first to tuition. If an employee's grants and/or scholarships exceed the amount of tuition owed, the employee will not be entitled to reimbursement. If an employee is awarded aid or scholarships that total less than the total tuition owed, reimbursement will be made to cover the balance paid out of pocket according to the allowable maximums. The employee is required to disclose any financial aid, grants/scholarships or discounts awarded to them prior to submitting expenses for reimbursement, including employee tuition discounts through OCC's participation with Kean Educational Affiliation Network or other partnerships

Steps to Obtain Reimbursement for Completed Credit Courses or Certificate Programs

1. For credit courses that are part of a bachelor's or master's degree program, a maximum of twelve (12) credits per academic year (September to August), per employee, are eligible for reimbursement. Only courses that are required within the approved program will be eligible for reimbursement.

To obtain reimbursement, the employee must submit, upon completion of a course, an itemized tuition and fee statement, which discloses applicable discounts, proof of tuition payment, and passing grade transcripts, to the Office of Human Resources, within ninety (90) days of the end of the semester during which the course(s) were taken. In the event a class starts in one academic year and ends in another academic year, the start date of the class will determine the academic year.

Employees should notify the Office of Human Resources when they have graduated from the degree program.

2. Doctoral candidates seeking reimbursement for dissertation/program credits must show proof of tuition payment and an appropriate grade to indicate ongoing satisfactory progress and may be eligible for reimbursement beyond twelve (12) credits per academic year (September to August). Only courses that are required within the approved program will be eligible for reimbursement. Eligible employees taking doctoral credit courses at institutions that do not base students billing on a traditional per credit basis must provide documentation to adequately substantiate the charges eligible for the reimbursement. The amount of reimbursement will be determined by the College. The final reimbursement payment for an employee in a doctoral program will be made upon submission of proof of a successful defense of the dissertation, assuming the employee is still in an active status and has not given notice of resignation or retirement at the time of submission.
3. For non-credit courses/programs leading to a certificate or professional designation, a maximum equivalent of six (6) credits each fiscal year (July – June) per employee are permitted for reimbursement. To obtain reimbursement, the employee must submit – after completion of the program – an itemized tuition and fee statement, which discloses applicable discounts, proof of program payment, and passing grade transcripts or proof of certification/professional designation to the Office of Human Resources within ninety (90) days of the end of the program. In the event a program starts in one fiscal year and ends in another fiscal year, the start date of the program will determine the fiscal year.

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