

POLICY

Ocean County College offers educational reimbursement to full-time benefit-eligible employees (as defined in Policy#3002, Full-Time Employment) who are in good standing and have successfully completed their probationary period.

Educational reimbursement of tuition may be available for all undergraduate, graduate, doctoral, or professional certification courses/programs (excluding fees and/or other expenses) related to the employee's position from any regionally accredited institution. Reimbursements will be paid, up to the prevailing Kean University undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral rates, for approved credit courses or programs and professional certification programs.

Beginning July 1, 2026, the total amount reimbursed to any employee during the College's fiscal year (July 1 – June 30) shall not exceed the annual IRS limit for tax-exempt educational assistance, as defined under Internal Revenue Code, Section 127. For purposes of administration, the IRS calendar year limit will be applied to the College's fiscal year.

Requests for educational reimbursement must be submitted in accordance with the attached procedures. Reimbursement may not exceed the actual cost or total paid and may not include scholarships, financial aid, or grants the employee has received. Reimbursements must be submitted within ninety (90) days of course completion.

Employees who apply to receive educational reimbursement agree to the terms of this policy and the repayment requirement if the employee leaves Ocean County College prior to obtaining the degree and before the specified employment term as written in the procedure.

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
Revised: May 28, 2026

PROCEDURE

Employee Eligibility: Newly hired full-time employees following the successful completion of their probationary period and employees in good standing, which is defined as not being in any stage of a Corrective Action or Performance Improvement Plan.

Obtaining Approval for Educational Reimbursement: Approval must be obtained prior to registering for courses.

1. Eligible employees complete and submit the Application for Degree or Certification Educational Reimbursement Form through the HRIS employee portal.
2. The application is first routed to Human Resources to determine eligibility.
3. If eligible, the employee's supervisor will receive the form to review. The employee's supervisor is responsible for ensuring the eligibility of the program (defined above) is relevant to the employee's current position or future advancements.
4. The area Vice President is responsible for final approval.

Once the application is approved, all courses associated with the program are eligible for reimbursement.

Reimbursement is not permitted unless an approved application is complete. If the employee changes the degree or professional certification program after approval, they must resubmit an application prior to pursuing the degree or professional certification.

Steps to Obtain Reimbursement for Completed Credit Courses or Certificate Programs

1. When coursework is complete and the grade is finalized, the employee must submit a Tuition Reimbursement Form through the HRIS employee portal.
 - a. Reimbursement is based on the Kean University prevailing rate.
 - b. Reimbursement may not exceed the annual IRS limit for tax-exempt educational assistance, as defined under Internal Revenue Code, Section 127, per fiscal year.
 - c. Reimbursement will exclude any awarded financial aid, grants, or scholarships. If an employee's grants, financial aid, and/or scholarships exceed the amount of tuition owed, the employee will not be entitled to reimbursement.
2. When submitting the Reimbursement Form, the employee must;
 - a. attach a transcript or evidence of their final grade for the course(s) approved for reimbursement. Grade must be final and passing. If submission is for a professional certificate program, evidence of completion must be submitted. Evidence may include a signed certificate by the program or a letter from an authorized representative where the professional certificate was obtained.

- b. attach proof of fully paid tuition for course(s) approved for reimbursement.
 - c. indicate on the reimbursement form the full amount of financial aid, grants, or scholarships received per course(s) submitted.
 - d. submit documentation that shows official proof of the grade and tuition paid are for the same course(s) approved for reimbursement. Documentation must include the employee's name as reference.
 - e. submit the Reimbursement Form to request payment within ninety (90) days of the end of the approved course(s).
3. Once submitted, Human Resources and the Finance Office will review the form and documents submitted. Human Resources will reach out if further information is needed. Reimbursements may take two to three weeks to fully process. The employee must ensure all documentation is submitted appropriately to avoid any delay in processing.
 4. Once approved, the Reimbursement Form is sent to Accounts Payable for final processing.

Employees should notify the Office of Human Resources when they have graduated from the degree program and provide official transcripts for the personnel file.

Employees who voluntarily resign and received educational reimbursement within the last year from the date of resignation are required to repay the College for reimbursement received in the past twelve (12) months. Employees will be notified by Human Resources of any monies owed during out-processing. Monies owed will be deducted from the last pay or payment arrangements will be made with the employee if last pay does not sufficiently pay the monies owed.

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