
Subject: Tuition Waiver and Reimbursement Program for Salaried Employees

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1. Purpose

Educational aid is designed to assist employees in gaining the competencies important to their successful performance in their current positions and to promote the professional development of the university’s workforce. This policy and [Educational Leave for Faculty and Staff Policy 4810](http://www.policies.vt.edu/4800.pdf), (<http://www.policies.vt.edu/4800.pdf>), outline a variety of educational options for employees.

The major purposes of educational aid are to:

- train employees in the use of new or modified methods and equipment
- train employees in skills and knowledge required by changes in the employees’ current positions
- increase employees’ knowledge and abilities so that they may take on greater responsibility and prepare for advancement opportunities within the university workforce
- assist employees to obtain advanced degrees when such degrees are required for continued employment
- enable employees to undertake research or advanced study necessary to meet specific needs of their programs/departments

The policy outlines program options, eligibility requirements, guidelines for supervisor approval, fee information, and employee obligations for the tuition waiver and reimbursement program.

2. Policy

Educational aid is designed to support the training or further education of full- and part-time employees who are expected to continue in state service for a period that would justify such aid. Such consideration should guide supervisors in determining the nature and extent of investment in training and education for individual employees.

The Tuition Waiver Program applies to full- and part-time salaried employees who wish to take credit courses at Virginia Tech or other accredited institutions. Participation in the tuition waiver program is contingent upon acceptance as a student by the University or other institution and compliance with academic requirements. Educational aid, including tuition waivers and reimbursements, will be included in the determination of financial

aid eligibility by the university's Scholarships and Financial Aid office in accordance with federal and state regulations and university policy.

Tuition waived or reimbursed for full-time salaried employees is limited to a total of twelve (12) credit hours per year (Fall through Summer II) with no more than six (6) credit hours waived in an enrollment period (Fall, Spring, Summer I, Summer II).

Part-time salaried employees are limited to a total of six (6) credit hours per year with no more than three (3) credit hours waived or reimbursed in a term.

The maximum number of hours applies to tuition waiver, tuition reimbursement, or a combination of both. All credits, including audited courses, will count toward the maximum allowance of twelve credit hours (six credit hours for part-time salaried employees). The maximum number of credit hours for which tuition is waived or reimbursed under this policy may not be appealed. Payment of tuition for hours over the allowable maximum or in excess of the agreed reimbursement rate is the responsibility of the employee.

Educational assistance may constitute a significant expenditure for the department and a considerable investment in the individual employee. In determining the propriety of approving tuition reimbursement, consideration should be given to the availability of funds, relevance of the program to the employee's position, likelihood of the employee continuing in university service, and equitable application of the policy to other employees in the department. The costs of required training is covered by the department and paid directly to the institution providing the training.

University Leadership Development sponsors several professional development certificate programs coordinated with the Virginia Community College System. The credits taken under these university-sponsored programs are normally not counted toward the maximum credit hours for tuition waiver and reimbursement program. Participation in these programs must be approved by the department head.

3. Procedures

3.1 Tuition Waiver and Reimbursement Program

3.1.1 Qualifications and Prior Approval

In order to qualify for tuition waiver or reimbursement, specific courses or degree programs must be approved by the employee's supervisor and approved by the department head, or designee, in advance of enrollment. The courses should not interrupt or impede the normal work schedule or operational effectiveness of the section or the department. The tuition waiver program applies only to courses of instruction offered by Virginia Tech.

The cost of the employee [tuition waiver](#) benefit is funded in a manner consistent with the employee's salary funding. For employees with salaries paid by educational and general funds (Agency 208, Agency 229 Cooperative Extension, or Agency 229 Agriculture Experiment Station), sponsored programs or overhead, central accounts external to departmental funds provide the employee tuition waiver benefit. The university will recoup the cost of tuition waivers for employees on grants and contracts from sponsors through the fringe benefit rate charged to grants and contracts. Since the Commonwealth requires auxiliary enterprises to be 100% self-supporting, auxiliary-funded departments (such as the Athletic Department, Communication Network Services, Residential and Dining Programs, and Recreation Sports) will incur the cost of the course(s) if the tuition waiver is approved.

Subject to department head approval, the tuition reimbursement program is available to full- or part-time salaried employees who wish to take credit classes at institutions of higher education other than Virginia Tech. In exceptional cases, departments may request approval from the Department of Human Resources for tuition

reimbursement for a wage employee to participate in for-credit courses that address specific job-related skills. The costs of tuition reimbursements may be fully or partially paid by the department. However, the costs of required training must be covered by the department and paid directly to the institution providing the instruction.

Eligibility Requirements

Employees who wish to take courses must meet all admissions requirements, registration and payment deadlines. Application for admission must be made and approved by the Admissions Office prior to the waiver of tuition for classes. Student regulations may further limit the credit hour maximums cited in this policy.

Employees must have satisfactorily completed their three-month waiting period (90 days employment in a salaried appointment) in order to establish eligibility for the tuition waiver. Department heads however have the authority to waive the 90-day waiting period if appropriate circumstances exist.

Persons in a leave without pay status are not eligible for tuition waiver, except in the case of leave without pay/layoff where the approved waiver would be continued through the semester in which the layoff occurred. A department head may approve a tuition waiver for an employee on approved Educational Leave.

The tuition waiver is contingent upon the employee's satisfactory academic progress.

3.1.2 Limitation on Number of Hours Waived or Reimbursed

If the tuition waiver or reimbursement is approved by the supervisor and department head, salaried employees may waive tuition for a total of twelve (12) hours per year (Fall through Summer II) with no more than six (6) credit hours waived in an enrollment period (Fall, Spring, Summer I, Summer II).

Part-time salaried employees are limited to a maximum waiver of six (6) credits per year with no more than three (3) credit hours waived in an enrollment period (Fall, Spring, Summer I, Summer II) with supervisor and department head approval.

The maximum number of hours applies to tuition waiver, tuition reimbursement, or a combination of both. All credits, including audited courses, will count toward the maximum allowance of twelve credit hours (six credit hours for part-time salaried employees). Payment of tuition for hours over the allowable maximum is the responsibility of the employee.

3.1.3 Limitation on Number of Hours Taken During Normal Work Schedule

If the tuition waiver/reimbursement and class schedule are approved by the supervisor **and** department head, full-time salaried employees may enroll in a maximum of five (5) credit hours during their normal work schedule. Exceptions to take courses with required laboratory sections requiring more than five credit hours during the normal work schedule must be approved by the department head, **and** the Dean or Vice President, prior to submission of the waiver request to the Department of Human Resources. All time away from work must be made up on an hour-for-hour basis. No exceptions will be made to the maximum number of hours that may be approved for waiver under section 3.1.3.

Additional hours may be taken outside the normal work schedule.

3.1.4 Auditing a Course under the Tuition Waiver

Salaried employees may audit courses upon meeting the admission and application requirements and with signature approval of department head and supervisor.

3.1.5 Making Up Time

Time used to attend for credit classes during normal work hours must be made up on an hour-for-hour basis, or leave charged to the appropriate balance, under a plan approved by the department head or supervisor, unless the course is required by the employer.

Classified and University staff employees must also submit to the supervisor a completed [Employee Time Sheet for Waiver/Reimbursement of Tuition Form P127](http://www.hr.vt.edu/downloads/forms/P127.doc) (<http://www.hr.vt.edu/downloads/forms/P127.doc>) to document class attendance and time missed from work. The form must be completed and class time noted accordingly even if the time of class is during lunch or outside of the normal work schedule. This form is to be maintained in the department for audit purposes. Completing this form is **not** necessary in cases where the training is **required** by the department since required training counts as time worked.

Employees participating in this program must use time outside the normal work schedule to complete study assignments or research projects, or use approved leave.

3.1.6 Responsibilities of the Employee

All tuition waived or reimbursed by the university is contingent upon the employee maintaining academic eligibility and continued salaried employment.

- For waived tuition, the employee will be responsible for the cost of the course on a pro-rated basis should there be a separation from university employment prior to the completion of the course. The employee is responsible for any applicable fees or costs other than tuition.
- For reimbursed tuition, the employee will be responsible for the cost of the course should there be a separation from employment during the semester. The department may choose to reimburse the separated employee if there are valid reasons. If an employee voluntarily transfers from one university department to another in the middle of a semester in which a class was taken, the new department may choose to partially or fully reimburse the employee for the tuition; otherwise the employee will assume full responsibility.

If the employee has applied for financial aid, the employee is responsible for promptly reporting tuition waivers or reimbursements to the Scholarships and Financial Aid office.

An employee may not be enrolled in any class section under the tuition waiver program if a regularly enrolled student would be displaced.

3.1.7 Overtime Implications

If required by the department, such training time away from the worksite is considered hours worked. If an employee who is non-exempt under the Fair Labor Standards Act works more than 40 hours in one workweek, including time spent in training, that employee must be paid overtime at the rate of one and one-half times the regular rate of pay. The employee's schedule may be adjusted within the same workweek to avoid incurring overtime. See *Fair Labor Standards Act Policy 4320, (Section 2. Guidelines, Accountability)*.

3.1.8 How to Apply

Employees must have prior approval from the supervisor **and** the department head on the appropriate forms.

Tuition Waiver Program

A [Request for Waiver of Tuition Form P-103](http://www.hr.vt.edu/downloads/forms/P103.doc), (<http://www.hr.vt.edu/downloads/forms/P103.doc>), should be completed and submitted to the Department of Human Resources no later than one week prior to the published deadline for payment of fees. Outdated forms will be returned to the employee with a request to complete the most recent version.

Tuition Reimbursement Program

The [Memorandum of Agreement for Educational Aid Reimbursement Form P126](http://www.hr.vt.edu/downloads/forms/P126.doc), (<http://www.hr.vt.edu/downloads/forms/P126.doc>), must be submitted to the Department of Human Resources, where employee eligibility and allowable credit hours will be verified, then returned to the employee to maintain until the completion of the course. Outdated forms will be returned to the employee with a request to complete the most recent version. Upon successful completion of the course, the department will submit the following documents to Human Resources: the academic grade report (for credit courses), a copy of the tuition bill, the accounting voucher charging the reimbursement to the appropriate departmental account, and the previously approved Memorandum of Agreement for Educational Aid Reimbursement.

Payment for approved tuition expenses will be in the form of full or partial refund to the employee contingent upon completion of the course with a grade of C or better or Pass in a pass/fail system for undergraduate courses, or a grade of B or better for a graduate course. Books may be paid for by the department; however, they must remain the property of the department. The purchase of other study materials or equipment by the department is not appropriate.

4. References

[Fair Labor Standards Act Policy 4320](http://www.policies.vt.edu/4320.pdf), (<http://www.policies.vt.edu/4320.pdf>, Section 2. Guidelines, Accountability

[Educational Leave for Faculty and Staff Policy 4810](http://www.policies.vt.edu/4810.pdf) (<http://www.policies.vt.edu/4810.pdf>)

5. Approval and Revisions

Policy 4800: Educational Aid for Full-time Faculty and Staff replaced with Policy 4800: Tuition Waiver Program for Salaried Employees.

Approved July 12, 2001, by Vice President for Budget and Financial Management, M. Dwight Shelton, Jr.

October 10, 2001: Technical corrections to update policy links.

- Revision 1

Minor changes for clarification.

Deletion of Section 3.1.8: Taxation of Employees Who Have Earned a Four-Year Undergraduate Degree. Due to change in tax laws effective January 1, 2002, employees using the tuition waiver and tuition reimbursement will no longer be taxed.

Approved March 14, 2002 by Vice President for Budget and Financial Management, M. Dwight Shelton, Jr.

- Revision 2

Minor changes for clarification.

Added provisions for tuition reimbursement for credit courses and non-credit programs.

Added references to 4410

Approved February 24, 2006 by Vice President for Business Affairs, Kurt Krause

- Revision 3

September 1, 2006 – Technical revisions to include University Staff in accordance with resolution approved by the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors June 12, 2006 to cover University Staff under policies identical to the current human resources policies until the new human resources system is developed.