

## **Guidelines for Tuition Reimbursement for Employees in Research Grant and Time-Limited Positions**

The purpose of these guidelines is to govern the Tuition Reimbursement Program at the University of South Carolina for employees in research grant or time-limited positions. Under guidelines approved by the South Carolina Budget and Control Board, this program offers the opportunity for these employees to further their education to support advancement within the University.

### **Eligibility**

An employee in a research grant or time-limited position is eligible to receive tuition reimbursement if the employee is employed at least thirty (30) hours per week, has satisfactorily completed six months of employment with the University, and has been admitted to the University through the appropriate admissions process. The determination of meeting the six months employment requirement does not include previous employment and is based on the official date that classes begin as determined by the Registrar's Office for the semester, session, or course for which the applicant is seeking reimbursement.

### **Program Provisions**

- 1) The employee may apply to take one three credit hour course (four hours in the case of a lab course) per academic term on a space available basis. For tuition reimbursement, employees are limited to four three credit hour courses (four hours in the case of a lab course) per academic year or the equivalent. Participants taking additional courses will pay the regular tuition rate in effect at the time of enrollment.
- 2) The course must be taken for academic credit and may not be taken on a "Pass/Fail" or "Audit" basis.
- 3) The regular application fee will be waived; however, the Tuition Reimbursement program does not pay for other expenses incurred or required by the course such as textbooks, field trips, laboratory fees, technology fees, etc. Special fees for admission in some graduate areas will not be waived.
- 4) The employee must be admitted through the appropriate admissions process and complete a Tuition Reimbursement Application. Applications must be approved by the employing department and the campus Human Resources office.
- 5) Final approval of the Tuition Reimbursement Application by the campus Human Resources office does not register or enroll a participant in the requested course, nor does it guarantee admission as a student to the University of South Carolina. Employees are individually responsible for applying for admission to the University and for receiving academic advisement.

- 6) Class Scheduling:
  - a. Whenever possible, employees are asked to enroll in classes during hours which do not conflict with other University obligations; however, when an approved class cannot be scheduled during off hours, the department chair or director may elect to adjust the work schedule. Department chairs or directors may deny participation in the Tuition Reimbursement program if the scheduled time of the course would interfere with the academic or business need of the department.
  - b. When an approved class cannot be scheduled during non-work hours and it is not feasible to adjust work schedules, participants who earn annual leave may be allowed to take annual leave for the purpose of attending class. Department chairs or directors must approve this in advance. Authorized leave without pay for up to 10 days may also be used to attend class. Both annual leave and authorized leave without pay must be approved in advance by the department chair or director. See [HR 1.21 Educational Leave Policy](#) for additional information.
- 7) The employee must receive a grade of “C” or better in order to avoid having to fully reimburse the University for the tuition.
- 8) To avoid the employee having to pay full tuition at the beginning of the academic term and to meet the reimbursement requirements of this program, the University requires the employee to complete and sign a Promissory Note in which the employee agrees to reimburse the University the cost of the tuition for the course depending on the final grade. The Promissory Note must be signed in the presence of a witness.
- 9) The Promissory Note will be considered paid in full and fully satisfied if the employee receives a final grade in the course of “C” or better.
- 10) In the event the final grade is lower than a “C” (e.g. “D,” “F,” “W,” “WF,” or “Incomplete”), the employee agrees to pay the Promissory Note in full within 10 days from the date final grades are posted by the Registrar.
- 11) If the employee fails to make payment to the University of South Carolina in a timely manner, the University is authorized by the signed Promissory Note to deduct the amount owed from the employee’s payroll checks.
- 12) A research grant or time-limited employee who resigns, is dismissed, or otherwise leaves the University will be allowed to continue in the course under the stipulations of the signed Promissory Note.
- 13) This benefit/award may be taxable. Employees who participate should contact their tax preparer for guidance on this issue.