

CITY OF DUNEDIN

EDUCATIONAL REIMBURSEMENT POLICY

PURPOSE:

The City of Dunedin (City) recognizes that educational development of its employees is important and should be encouraged. For that reason, this policy has been established to motivate employees of the City to obtain additional education or training that will enhance the employee's job performance and prepare them for advancement in the future.

POLICY:

Under this policy, the City may, if funds are available, reimburse an employee for tuition, fees and books for satisfactory completion of acceptable courses taken at an approved school, college or university, if eligibility and procedural requirements are met. Employees covered by a bargaining unit contract shall be regulated by the terms of the contract.

ELIGIBILITY:

A. Employees

1. Reimbursement is available to any regular full-time employee who has been employed by the City of Dunedin for at least one (1) year and has successfully completed their employment probationary period.
2. Assessment of disciplinary action (written reprimand or above) may terminate the employee's eligibility for benefits under this policy. In these cases, eligibility for benefits will be determined by the Department Director in conjunction with Human Resources.
3. Benefits payable under the G.I. bill or other forms of financial assistance shall take precedence over this program. Individuals qualifying under other such programs may, however, submit any eligible expense beyond those covered by other programs for consideration under City policy.
4. After enrolling in an approved course, if an employee is laid-off through no fault of their own, their eligibility for tuition reimbursement benefits will not alter for that term.
5. The resignation or discharge of an employee automatically terminates their eligibility for benefits under this policy.

B. Courses

1. Reimbursement will be given for courses by approved technical institutes, trade schools, correspondence schools or accredited colleges, universities or other approved institutions. Reimbursement may be given for internships, practicum or apprenticeship courses. If a course is given by the City or by a City department, a tuition refund will not be granted.
2. Reimbursement for courses shall not exceed the University of South Florida, Tampa Campus, resident per credit hour rate.
3. Reimbursement for tuition, lab fees, or books shall include sales tax, but shall not exceed more than two (2) courses per quarter, semester, or term, unless pre-approved by the City Manager. All other fees will be at the expense of the employee. (i.e. online class fees)
4. Only courses, including electives, taken toward a college degree that are must be directly related to the employee's present job or a reasonable promotional objective within the City will be reimbursed, as determined by the City.
5. Post graduate work beyond the level of Bachelor degree will only be approved in rare circumstances directly related to the employee's work with the City, as determined by the City.
6. Course attendance shall be on the employee's own time and shall not interfere with their regular job. Under extenuating circumstances, exceptions to this rule may be made if the employee provides detailed documentation as to the need to be away from their regular job to attend the course and full approval for such a schedule is granted by the employee's immediate supervisor and the Department Director. This request should be submitted with the pre-approval form prior to course attendance.
7. Reimbursement will not cover application fees, professional licenses or testing of any kind. When necessary, clarification of eligibility for reimbursement will be provided by the Human Resources Department.

APPROVAL:

1. Approval for courses should be requested prior to the starting date of the course. Submission of an Educational Reimbursement Pre-Approval Form more than 30 days after course work has begun, may not be accepted. Prior approval must be granted by the employee's immediate supervisor, Division and Department Director and Human Resources.
2. Employees will be notified of disapproval by their supervisor. If a request is modified or disapproved, an explanation will be provided.

3. Blanket approval will not be given for a series of courses. Reimbursement for courses must be made on a course-by-course basis.
4. Final approval for reimbursement following the completion of a course is subject to the approval of the Human Resources Department.

REIMBURSEMENT:

1. Reimbursement by the City to employees for approved courses shall be limited to the costs of tuition, lab fees, and books (including sales tax) and will be subject to the successful completion of the course work.
2. If all eligibility requirements have been met, the employee will be reimbursed for tuition and books based on the following schedule:

<u>Grade Received</u>	<u>Percentage of Reimbursement</u>
A	100%
B	100%
C	50%
Pass/Satisfactory	100%

No reimbursement will be given for the cost of tuition, books, or fees if the employee receives a grade of "D", "F", Incomplete, Fail or Unsatisfactory in the course.

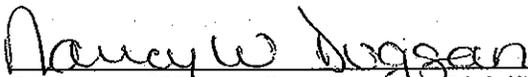
3. A Request for Educational Reimbursement Form must be completed by the employee following the completion of the course(s). Official verification of the grade received from the educational institution, along with a cancelled check or receipt for tuition, fees and books, must be attached to the form and submitted for approval and then forwarded to the Human Resources Department.
4. Verification of credit courses may be satisfied by an official grade report or transcript. Verification of non-credit courses may be satisfied by a written statement from the instructor or the institution.
5. No reimbursement for tuition, lab fees or books will be made after thirty (30) calendar days from the completion date of the course.
6. All reimbursement is subject to a two-year "buy back". If the employee separates employment from the City within two (2) years of receipt of reimbursement, the employee will be required to repay, or have deducted from their salary or final pay-out, a prorated amount of the reimbursement proportionate to the time remaining in the two-year "buy back" period. The lay-off of an employee through no fault of the employee exempts them from the "buy-back" requirement.

PROCEDURE:

1. When an employee wishes to apply for educational reimbursement, they must submit a completed Educational Reimbursement Pre-Approval Form to the Human Resources Department.
2. The employee must submit the form to their immediate supervisor and if necessary, discuss the request with their supervisor to determine if the employee is eligible to participate in the program.
3. If eligibility (employee and course) is determined, the employee's immediate supervisor will forward the completed form through to the Department Director for appropriate signatures for approval.
4. The pre-approval form, if approved, is then submitted by the Department Director to the Human Resources Department for approval.
5. The Human Resources Department will return a copy of the pre-approval form to the employee.
6. An employee may appeal any eligibility decision with the City Manager. The appeal must be in writing and submitted to the City Manager within ten (10) calendar days of the date the employee was sent the decision.
7. A new pre-approval form must be submitted for each session, quarter, semester or other term.
8. Within thirty (30) calendars days of completing approved course(s), the employee must complete a Request for Educational Reimbursement Form, with the required documentation and submit it to the Human Resources Department. Exceptions to this deadline will be determined by the Human Resources Department.
9. Upon the receipt of the above materials, the Human Resources Department will initiate the paperwork necessary to process the refund payment to the employee.

Effective Date of Policy
1st Revision
2nd Revision

January 2, 1996
January, 2005
January, 2008



Director of Human Resources & Risk/Safety

1-11-08
Date



City Manager

1/11/08
Date