



City of Pittsburgh
Operating Policies

**Policy: Tuition Reimbursement
Program Non-Union Employees**

**Original Date: 9/30/09
Revised Date: 04/2019**

PURPOSE: This policy is issued to provide a uniform system of administering the City of Pittsburgh's Tuition Reimbursement Program for all eligible Union and Non-Union employees.

POLICY STATEMENT: All eligible Union and Non-Union employees are to follow this policy when requesting tuition reimbursement for courses that will enhance their job performance. **NOTE:** If an employee submits an initial Pre-Approval Form for Tuition Reimbursement and the employee is working towards completion of a degree/program (i.e., Associate's, Bachelor's, etc.), once the program is approved as "job related" all of the required course work for the program/degree will be considered as job related.

Disclaimer: No statements in this policy are intended or set forth as contractual commitments or obligations of the City to any individual employee or group of employees, or to establish an exception to the employment-at-will doctrine beyond that specified in the Civil Service Statutes and Rules or pertinent collective bargaining agreement. If there are differences between the various collective bargaining agreements and this policy, the pertinent collective bargaining agreement takes precedence.

NON-UNION Employees

GENERAL GUIDELINES:

- A. To be eligible to request participation in this Program, the non-union employee must:
 1. Have completed one year of continuous employment with the City of Pittsburgh as a full time regular employee. Re-hired or reinstated employees who have met this criterion in their previous City employment do not have to wait one year to participate in the Program, AND
 2. Be employed in a non-union, full time regular position at the time of submitting the Pre-Approval Request, AND
 3. Not be on lay off, Workers' Compensation, Short Term or Long Term Disability, Sick Leave, or other leaves of absence at the time of submitting the Pre-Approval Request.
- B. An eligible employee must complete a Pre-Approval Request Form A and submit it, along with all required supporting documents, to his/her Department Director as early as possible, but at least ten (10) work days prior to the date the course starts.
- C. The employee's Department Director must submit the Pre-Approval Request Form A, with all required supporting documents and the Department Director's recommendation for approval or disapproval, to the Director of Department of Human Resources & Civil Service (HRCS) as soon as possible but at least five (5) work days prior to the date the course starts.
- D. The Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service (HRCS) may require additional information or documents from the employee before approval or disapproval. Failure of the employee to provide the requested additional documents or information to the Director of HRCS prior to the date the course starts will preclude approval and the Pre-Approval Request will be disapproved.
- E. The City may revoke pre-approval at any time prior to the employee's payment of tuition and lab/technology fees becoming irrevocable.
- F. Eligible employees who have received approval of the Pre-Approval Request will receive 50% reimbursement of tuition and lab/technology fees upon the successful completion of college or university level courses that are job related or degree related courses which will improve the employee's knowledge and skills that are job related. Courses must be taken at an accredited college or university. Correspondence courses and non-credit courses are not reimbursable.
- G. Reimbursable costs will be for tuition and lab/technology fees only. Fees for registration, University, computer, administrative, or late fees, school activities, deferred payment, graduation, books, instruments, transportation, meals, etc. are not reimbursable under the program.
- H. Successful completion of a college or university level course is defined as: achievement of a "C" grade or better for all undergraduate work completed, achievement of a "B" grade or better for all graduate level work completed, or achievement of a "P" grade for courses graded on a Pass/Fail basis only as determined by the college or university. Attainment of a "C-" for undergraduate coursework or a "B-" for graduate coursework does not constitute successful completion of a course.
- I. Reimbursement will be made only after the employee submits a completed Tuition Reimbursement Program Reimbursement Request Form verifying the successful

- completion of a pre-approved course.
- J. Reimbursements will be treated as ordinary income and, as such, will be subject to Federal, State and/or Local taxes based on IRS Requirements in effect at the time of the request.
 - K. If an employee receives other available non-repayable tuition assistance such as a grant or scholarship from government, college/university and/or private funds, the City's Tuition Reimbursement Program will reimburse 50% of the difference between such other available non-repayable tuition assistance and the amount of the tuition and lab/technology fees.
 - L. Employees must attend class on their own time. Participation in the Tuition Reimbursement Program must not interfere with the employee's work responsibilities or hours of work.
 - M. Approvals of both Pre-Approval and Reimbursement Request Forms under this program are subject to and contingent upon City Council appropriating sufficient funds for the program. The funds appropriated to each department for the program shall be used to cover tuition and lab/technology fees incurred by any department employee, regardless of bargaining unit status. Once the amount of preapproved requests equals the allotted funds for a department in any given year, no further approval will be given to employees who enroll in courses during the year. If the funds allocated to the department for any given year are insufficient to pay for all requests for reimbursement, then the Department Director shall determine which requests to approve.
 - N. Employees who transfer to another City department after they have received approval of a Pre-Approval Request, must seek approval for reimbursement for that course from their new City Department Director.
 - O. An employee who resigns or is terminated from employment for reasons considered to be just cause prior to completion of a pre-approved course, will not be eligible for reimbursement. An employee who is terminated by the City for reasons not considered just cause (e.g.: lay-off, economy reduction, abolition of position, etc.) prior to completion of pre-approved course will be eligible for reimbursement provided all other criteria for eligibility are met.

PRE-APPROVAL PROCEDURES:

1. Employee's Request – Part 1 of Pre-Approval Request Form A
 - a.) A Pre-Approval Request Form A must be completed for each proposed course. The form must be submitted to the employee's Department Director at least ten (10) work days (holidays are excluded) prior to the date the course starts.
 - b.) The employee must attach to the Pre-Approved Form A, a copy of the institution's formal description of the proposed course and confirmation from the institution of the tuition and

- lab/technology fee costs associated with the course including source(s) and amount(s) of any grants, scholarships, etc.
- c.)** Eligible employees are SOLELY responsible for providing supporting documents for each proposed course to the satisfaction of his/her Department Director and the Director of Human Resources and Civil Service to receive consideration under the City's Tuition Reimbursement Program. Failure to do so within the time frame specified in this procedure shall result in disapproval of the employee's request.
2. Department Director Action – Part II of Pre-Approval Request Form A
- a.)** Upon receipt of the Pre-Approval Request Form A with Part I completed, the Department Director will review the request to verify that the request has been submitted in a timely basis and that all required information and supporting documents are complete and accurate. Any modifications, changes, corrections, etc., made to Part I of the form must be initialed and dated by the Department Director or his/her designee.
- b.)** The Department Director or Bureau Chief will review the request to determine if the employee meets the qualifications for consideration under the Tuition Reimbursement Program (see Eligibility and Section I: General Guidelines A., G., K., and M.) by completing questions 1 through 6.
- c.)** The Department Director or Bureau Chief will complete 6a. in Part II describing how the course is job related. The Director will also complete Part II of the Pre-Approval Request Form A and all accompanying documents to the Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service for review and approval or disapproval of the proposed course and sign the form. If disapproval is recommended the Director must state his/her reasons for recommending disapproval.
- d.)** The Department Director must submit the completed Pre-Approval Request Form A and all accompanying documents to the Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service for review and approval/disapproval at least five (5) work days prior to the date the course starts.
3. Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service Action – Part III of Pre-Approval Request Form A
- a.)** The Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service will review the Pre-Approval Request Form A, all accompanying materials, and the recommendation from the Department Director to ensure compliance with program requirements.
- b.)** The Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service will complete Part III of the Pre-Approval Request Form A indicating approval/disapproval of the request and stating the

reason(s) for approval or disapproval. All decisions of the Director of Human Resources & Civil Service shall be final.

4. Copies will be distributed to department director, employee, payroll, and the employee's personnel file upon approval from Director of Human Resources and Civil Service.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURES:

1. Employee's Request – Part 1 of Pre-Approval Request Form A
 - a.)** The employee is responsible for initiating the reimbursement request process. A Reimbursement Request Form must be completed for each preapproved course. The form must be submitted to the Department Director no later than sixty (60) days after completion of the course.
 - b.)** The employee must attach to the Reimbursement Request Form, a copy of the paid invoice, receipt or canceled check showing that the employee has paid for the course, and grade report verifying successful completion of the course, If the institution the employee is attending has a policy that students participating in employer tuition reimbursement programs need not pay the full tuition until after they receive reimbursement, verification of this policy must also be submitted.
2. Department Director Action – Part II of the Reimbursement Request Form
 - a.)** Upon receipt of the Reimbursement Request Form with Part I completed, the Department Director or his/her designated representative will accurately note the date received and the initials of the person receiving the form.
 - b.)** Upon receipt of the grade report and verification of costs incurred, the Department Director will review the request to determine if the employee meets the qualifications for reimbursement (see General Guidelines B., G., and I.). The Director will complete Part II of the Reimbursement Request Form recommending approval or disapproval of the request and sign the form. If disapproval is recommended, the Director must state his/her reason(s) for recommending disapproval.
 - c.)** The Department Director will submit the Reimbursement Request Form, the grade report, and documentation that the employee has paid for the course to the Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service for review and approval/disapproval.
3. Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service Action – Part III of Reimbursement Request Form
 - a.)** The Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service will review the Reimbursement Request Form, all accompanying materials and the recommendation from the Department Director.
 - b.)** The Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service will complete Part III of the Reimbursement Request Form indicating

approval/disapproval of the request. If the request is disapproved, the Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service will state the reason(s) for disapproval. All decisions of the Director of the Department of Human Resources & Civil Service shall be final.

c.) Reimbursement under the Tuition Reimbursement Program shall be charged to and payable from each Department's Education and Training Code Account.

NOTE: Pre-Approval Request Forms and Reimbursement Program can be obtained online at

<http://pittsburghpa.gov/humanresources/humanresources--policies>.