Standard Practice Guide Policies

Tuition Support Program 201.69

Applies to: Regular full-time and part-time (50% or more) staff members with the exception of those covered by the terms of a collective bargaining agreement

I. POLICY

The University offers a tuition support program to increase the career opportunities available to staff members, enhance their performance and encourage professional growth. To qualify for tuition support under this program, a staff member must take the course for credit and must successfully complete the course as defined below (see section II. C.). Tuition support under this policy may be paid as either a reimbursement or an advance, at the option of the staff member (see sections II. F. and G.).

II. REGULATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

A. STAFF MEMBER ELIGIBILITY

A staff member is eligible for tuition support if they:

1. are currently employed at the University of Michigan in a regular non-bargained-for full-time appointment, or part-time appointment of at least 50%, and

2. have been employed at the University of Michigan in one of the above classifications for at least six consecutive months at the time of enrollment for the class, and

3. intend to, and do, remain on the active payroll during the entire term of the class at the same or at a greater appointment fraction than that held by the staff member at the time of enrollment, and

4. take the course for credit, and

5. successfully completes the course, which is defined for purposes of this policy as receiving a grade of "B" or better for graduate level courses and a grade of "C" or better for all other courses, and

6. provide the required documentation in a timely fashion (see sections II. F. and G.).

B. CRITERIA FOR COURSES

To qualify for tuition support, the course must be job-related or related to career opportunities within any area of the University of Michigan, including Michigan Medicine. A course qualifies if it meets any of the following requirements:

1. is taken to complete the requirements for a high school diploma

2. is a basic course in reading, writing, or mathematics

3. will contribute toward enhanced performance in the staff member's present position, for example by updating and improving knowledge and skills that will enable the staff member to more effectively perform their current duties

4. will help the staff member qualify for consideration for a higher level position at the University to which the staff member may reasonably aspire and for which there is probable opportunity for advancement

5. is a required or elective course taken to complete the requirements for an associate degree or bachelor's degree, second bachelor's degree, master's degree or second master's degree.

Accredited Educational Institutions. Courses must be taken from accredited educational institutions including those approved under government education and training programs such as those under the Veterans Administration Program. The Department of Education (http://www2.ed.gov/admins/finaid /accred/accreditation_pg6.html) and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (http://www.chea.org/)(CHEA) maintain directories of nationally recognized and specialized accrediting agencies.

Non-eligible Programs. Workshops, seminars, management development programs, special examinations for admission to degree programs, and private consultant refresher courses to take examinations such as C.P.A. certification and admission examinations are not eligible for reimbursement under this policy. Support for these programs may be provided by unit policies for professional development purposes. Staff members should consult with their supervisors for more information.

Courses in graduate professional programs in Law, Medicine, and Dentistry and courses in any degree program beyond the Master's level are specifically excluded from this program.

C. AMOUNT OF SUPPORT

1. GENERAL TERMS

The amount of tuition support is calculated based on tuition and registration fees only. Other fees and expenses are not covered under this program, except for technology fees which are required by some non-University of Michigan courses. Tuition support is calculated using the in-state tuition rate (where applicable), regardless of the residency status of the staff member, and is based on the tuition rate in effect at the time of the request. For part-time employees, tuition support is calculated on a pro rata basis according to the staff member's appointment fraction on the date the request for tuition support is approved.

The decision to grant tuition support and/or a work accommodation is discretionary with the unit supervisor and is based on the supervisor's assessment of a number of factors, including anticipated needs of the unit, available resources of the unit, and the motivation and potential of the staff member making the request.

An employing unit may, in its discretion, offer a Tuition Support Policy that provides a benefit greater or more advantageous to its employees than the benefit set forth below.

2. UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN COURSES

Full-time staff members are eligible for 75% of the cost of in-state tuition plus registration fees up to 4 credit hours per term, and 12 credits per year. Part-time staff members with a 50% or greater appointment are eligible for tuition support proportional to their appointment fraction. For example, a staff member with an 80% appointment would be eligible for a tuition advance of 80% of 75%, or 60% of the sum of in-state tuition plus registration fees.

3. NON-UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN COURSES

In the past, the amount of tuition support was based on the traditional four-hour course per three-term academic year: fall, winter and spring/summer. Coursework has evolved to a variety of delivery models and lengths, both residential and online, that are no longer tied to a traditional fixed 3 semester definition. Therefore, tuition support for non-University of Michigan courses will not rely on those definitions. Full-time staff members are eligible for tuition support for 75% of the in-state tuition, registration and technology fees up to the annual capped amount for the current year which may be found on the UHR Procedures website at http://hr.umich.edu/procedures/spg201-69.html (http://hr.umich.edu/procedures/spg201-69.html). Part-time staff members with a 50% or greater appointment are eligible for tuition support proportional to their appointment fraction.

4. TAX IMPLICATIONS

The Internal Revenue Code (IRC) requires reporting and withholding of income and FICA taxes for Tuition Support for graduate studies, whenever those payments exceed $5,250.00 annually for each employee. Tuition advances/reimbursements, exceeding $5,250.00 in a calendar year, for graduate level courses, will be considered taxable income and will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service. Federal, state and FICA taxes will be withheld on any amount in excess of $5,250.00.

D. WORK SCHEDULE ACCOMMODATION

To the extent possible, staff members should plan to take courses scheduled at times that will not require absence from work during regular work hours.

In the event attendance at an approved course will necessitate an absence during normal work hours, various accommodations are possible, depending on the needs of the unit and the staff member. Any accommodation, including release time, is granted at the discretion of the unit supervisor. Supervisors are encouraged to make a reasonable effort to find an appropriate work schedule accommodation.

Staff members who meet the requirements for tuition support, but are excluded from monetary participation because of unit budgetary limitations or because they are eligible for other forms of aid (for example, scholarships or military aid) are nevertheless eligible to request an accommodation to their work schedule, including release time, to enable them to take a qualifying course for credit. Such an accommodation is made at the discretion of the unit supervisor.

The following accommodations are possible:

1. REVISED WORK SCHEDULE

A staff member may be granted a revised work schedule to enable him or her to attend a course that could not be scheduled during non-work hours, if the supervisor determines that the staff member will be able to meet all of his or her job requirements under the revised work schedule.

2. EXCUSED ABSENCE WITHOUT PAY OR USE OF VACATION TIME/PAID TIME OFF

In some cases, the needs of the unit and/or the staff member may be better served by permitting a staff member who wishes to take advantage of the tuition support program to use vacation time/paid time off, or to take an excused absence without pay. Any such arrangement is made at the discretion of the unit supervisor. Excused absences, or use of vacation time/paid time off for part-time staff members, are calculated on a pro rata basis according to the staff member's effort.

3. RELEASE TIME WITH PAY

In some instances, a staff member may be granted up to 3 hours per week of release time from work with pay. Any such arrangement is made at the discretion of the unit supervisor. The 3 hours per week of release time includes travel time to and from class and is not cumulative. Release time for part-time staff members is calculated on a pro rata basis according to the staff member's effort.

Paid time off from regularly scheduled work must be recorded using payroll code EDU. Time off work to attend classes is not considered "time worked" in the computation of overtime.

E. REQUEST FOR TUITION SUPPORT

A staff member who wishes to take advantage of the tuition support program must submit a Tuition Support Request, found at http://hr.umich.edu/procedures/spg201-69.html (http://hr.umich.edu /procedures/spg201-69.html), to his or her supervisor. If the staff member needs to have a decision on whether the request is approved before they register for the class, the request must be submitted to the supervisor at least 20 University business days before registration. The supervisor will determine whether they can approve the request and will inform the staff member in a timely fashion.

Tuition Support Requests that are denied should be forwarded to University Human Resources, Staff HR Services (for staff members employed at the Ann Arbor campus) or to the appropriate Flint or Dearborn HR office (for staff members employed at the Flint or Dearborn campus) with an explanation of why it was not possible to grant the request.

As noted above in paragraph II.C. tuition advances/reimbursements, exceeding $5,250.00 in a calendar year, for graduate level courses, will be considered taxable income and will be reported to the Internal Revenue Service. Staff members requesting Tuition Support for graduate level courses must be aware of the tax liability they will incur on any annual amount in excess of $5,250.00.

F. PROCESS FOR PAYMENT: TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

Promptly after the end of the course, the staff member should provide their supervisor with: 1.) an official grade report showing successful completion of the course (as defined in II. A.), and 2.) a paid bill or receipt indicating the amount of tuition and fees the staff member has paid. Upon receipt of these documents, the supervisor initiates a payment to the employee via the Additional Pay Workflow process. Once the transaction is approved the reimbursement is included in the staff member's regular paycheck. Federal, state and FICA taxes will be withheld on any annual amount in excess of $5,250.00, for graduate level courses.

G. PROCESS FOR PAYMENT: TUITION ADVANCE

Promptly after a request is approved, the supervisor initiates a payment to the employee via the Additional Pay Workflow process. Once the transaction is approved the advance will be included in the staff member's regular paycheck. Federal, state and FICA taxes will be withheld on any annual amount in excess of $5,250.00, for graduate level courses.

No later than 60 days after the end of the term, a staff member who has received a tuition advance is responsible for providing the supervisor with: 1.) an official grade report showing successful completion of the course (as defined in II. A.), and 2.) a paid bill or receipt indicating the amount of tuition and fees the staff member has paid.

In accepting a tuition advance under this policy, a staff member agrees that if they do not: 1) successfully complete the class (as defined in II. A.), and 2) provide the unit supervisor with an official grade report and a paid bill or receipt for tuition within 60 days after the end of the term, the full amount of the advance will be deducted from the staff member's paycheck in equal installments over

a 6-month period, as authorized by the staff member's signature on the Request. No additional tuition advances will be paid until all deductions have been processed.

If a staff member leaves the University, either voluntarily or involuntarily, before successfully completing the course or before reimbursing any amounts owing under this policy, or if a staff member does not register for, or stops attending, a course for which they have received an advance, the staff member is responsible for immediate repayment of the full amount of the tuition advance.

H. SOURCE OF FUNDS

The cost of providing tuition support under this program will be borne by the staff member's employing unit.

Tuition support payments cannot be made as direct charges to sponsored projects. For staff members paid from sponsored projects, the staff member's employing unit is responsible for the costs of tuition support. Please note that time off to attend classes is permitted on sponsored projects.

If the Tuition Support Request of a staff member is denied because of budgetary limitations, a subsequent request by the same staff member should be given priority consideration if submitted within one year of the first request. Budgetary limitations may not be used as a reason to deny a Tuition Support Request on an indefinite basis.

When a staff member is transferred mid-term, the original approving department is responsible for payment of the entire amount previously approved by that department.

Participants who are covered by tuition benefits resulting from service in the Armed Forces, government aid, or other form of scholarship moneys are eligible under this program for only that portion of the tuition support to which they would otherwise be eligible less the amount of the other benefit.

I. RECORDS

The completed Tuition Support Request, whether granted or denied, is retained by the unit and forwarded as part of the staff member's file should they transfer to another unit.

Notes

This SPG was reviewed December 2023, no changes were made.

This SPG was changed on May 17, 2017, to reflect a change in calculation of Tuition Support for non-University of Michigan courses (Para C.). Due to the evolution of college course delivery systems and practices, tuition support will be capped at an annual rate rather than a per-course/per-term rate. See http://hr.umich.edu/procedures /spg201-69.html (http://hr.umich.edu/procedures/spg201-69.html) for the current annual cap.

Scholarships provided by UM-Dearborn for U-M Employees:

1. UM Employee Dependent Scholarship (https://umdearborn.edu/students/financial-aid/types-aid/scholarships/university-michigan-employee-scholarship/um-dearborn-dependent-tuition-scholarship)

2. UM Employee Scholarship (https://umdearborn.edu/students/financial-aid/types-aid/scholarships /university-michigan-employee-scholarship)

File Attachments

Printable PDF of SPG 201.69, Tuition Support Program (/sites/default/files/policies /Tuition%20Support%20Program%20_%20Standard%20Practice%20Guides%20-%20University%20of%20Michiga

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Owner:

University Human Resources; Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Primary Contact:

University Human Resources and the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Related Links:

Procedures (http://hr.umich.edu/procedures/spg201-69.html)