



**EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING POLICY PROCEDURES**  
**Procedures**

**1. Eligibility**

a. Educational (Tuition) Assistance and Continuous Learning **Employee Eligibility**

**Criteria:**

- i. Employee Criteria: current full time administrative, professional, and teaching faculty; full time, quasi-full time, and wage classified staff; and adjunct faculty on the college payroll may participate. Certain exceptions apply:

1. Work study students are not eligible.
2. Wage employees who are not actively working during the term for which they are requesting a class are not eligible.
3. Wage employees who are not assigned an average of 15 or more hours per week are not eligible.
4. Adjunct employees who are not scheduled to teach six or more credit hours in the term for which they are requesting a class are not eligible, unless the summer term and scheduled to teach in the fall.

b. Educational (Tuition) Assistance **Program Eligibility Criteria:** Requests for educational assistance must be for courses that are job-related or part of a degree program.

1. Job Related: Education or training related to employee's current position to meet one of the following objectives:
  - a. To provide training in the use of new or modified methods and equipment
  - b. To provide training in skills and knowledge required by changes in the employee's current position

OR

2. Degree Requirement: Academic courses taken at regionally accredited institutions:
  - a. To enable administrative, professional, and teaching faculty to attain advanced degrees for the maintenance of established standards of the college or to meet specific needs.
  - b. To enable classified staff to complete degree programs which will enhance job performance or support the college mission.
  - c. Eligibility is limited to provide an employee educational assistance for only one of each degree type (ie: one associate,

one bachelor, one master, and one doctoral degree) regardless of how the degree was originally funded. If degree is job related, please refer back to 1.

3. Fees associated with auditing courses are not permitted.

**c. Continuous Learning Program Eligibility Criteria:**

- i. Requests for Continuous Learning must be for credit courses offered at LFCC and may be job related or non-job related. Fees associated with auditing courses are not permitted.

**2. Program benefits**

**a. Educational (Tuition) Assistance Benefit:**

- i. For employee-initiated courses, educational assistance funds will be limited for full time employees to \$3,700 per fiscal year for courses. State or local funds may be utilized. Certain exceptions apply:
  1. Wage and adjunct employees will be pro-rated to 75% \$2,775 per fiscal year for courses.
  2. Dissertation continuation courses will be limited to one.
- ii. For college/agency-initiated courses, educational assistance will include the entire cost of tuition and mandatory fees.

b. Continuous Learning Benefit: A maximum of two courses (up to 8 credits) may be taken at no cost to the employee in a semester (Spring/Fall/Summer as defined by the college catalog).

**3. Requesting approval**

Complete the Educational (Tuition) Assistance and Continuous Learning form. Requests must be approved by the employee's direct supervisor and human resources prior to the start date and registration for the course. The employee must ensure all requested information is included as an attachment when submitting the request.

- a. Requests for coursework at another accredited institution must include documentation that shows the current tuition rate for the course at the school as well as the acceptance letter or verification of the degree in pursuit of degree-required courses.
- b. Allow at least two weeks for the approval process to take place, keeping registration deadlines in mind. Incomplete or inaccurate information will result in delays and may prevent approval.
- c. Employees will be notified upon approval of requests. Employees are responsible for ensuring management takes action on the request until it reaches human resources.

- d. A promissory agreement is required for Educational (Tuition) Assistance and Continuous Learning. The employee will need to complete the promissory note before any payment is made.

#### 4. Payment Options

##### a. Educational (Tuition) Assistance:

- i. **Employee pays:** The employee pays the required tuition and fees and is reimbursed for the eligible costs when the course is completed and final grade of "C" or higher is submitted.
- ii. **Up-front Payment to course provider:** The College will pay for the course at the time of registration. The employee is responsible for providing the invoice for payment from the institution and payment for tuition will be transmitted to the institution. At course completion the employee will need to provide proof of final grade of "C" or higher.

##### b. Continuous Learning:

- i. Requires no payment from the employee.

#### 5. Repayment obligation

a. **Promissory note:** Employees receiving Educational (Tuition) Assistance or Continuous Learning for an employee-initiated course must execute a promissory note for the total amount of costs to be paid by the college. The note will be executed prior to the first day of the course. The employee's signature on the promissory note records an agreement that the employee will reimburse the college for any tuition paid in the event the employee does not satisfactorily complete the course (i.e.: receives less than a "C" in the course, withdraws from the class), or leaves the college.

- i. When Educational Assistance and Continuous Learning is provided for employee-initiated courses, the employee incurs an obligation to the College to work for the College for up to six months following course completion, and to repay tuition assistance costs incurred by the agency, in certain situations (ie: adjunct must be willing to accept a contract as assigned during the six months following course completion). This requirement shall be evidence by a signed Educational Assistance Promissory Agreement that includes conditions under which repayment of educational assistance may be required.
  1. Employees shall repay tuition when they are dismissed for cause or voluntarily separated within six months of course completion. The amount to be repaid shall be pro-rated as stated in the educational assistance agreement.
  2. Employees shall repay tuition when the employee does not successfully complete the class or receive a passing grade.
  3. Employees shall repay tuition when the employee does not withdraw from the class by published deadlines.
  4. If an employee receives an "I" (incomplete) grade, the promissory agreement will be extended through the next full semester, after which time a final grade should be submitted to human resources.

## 6. Responsibilities

- a. Employees are:
  - i. Responsible for submitting the required electronic form and documentation weeks prior to course registration. Please see form linked in procedure header above. If any employee elects to proceed with course registration prior to receiving approval, they must accept personal responsibility for the cost, in the event the course is not approved.
  - ii. Responsible to notify human resources within five business days of any change to the agreement, such as dropping the course, not enrolling, receiving other funding to cover the course, or when the employee does not obtain a satisfactory grade. Failure to do so may forfeit option for up-front payments and only be approved for reimbursement payments thereafter. Approval prior to the course start date still applies.
  - iii. Responsible to submit the final grade or any other documentation, within 5 business days to human resources upon course completion to avoid repayment collections in accordance with the promissory agreement.
- b. The supervisor is responsible for reviewing required forms and documentation for initial degree or non-degree associated course(s) only within 5 business days of receipt of the form. Supervisor approval confirms both the program and the employee eligibility criteria are met. \*Please note, further requests that fall under the approved degree, will bypass supervisor approval.
- c. The chief human resources officer is responsible for confirming supervisor signature for new degree programs or individual courses and will approve eligible reimbursement costs for payment to the employee or to the course provider as the educational assistance budget manager within 3 business days.
- d. The assigned purchase card holder will then initiate payment on a weekly basis as needed.

## 7. Time allowance and work schedules

Any modifications to an employee's work schedule should be approved and documented in writing between the employee and supervisor. Adjustment to work schedules may include requiring the employee to use leave if available. The supervisor shall maintain the employee's revised work schedule and notify the time and labor HR analyst.

- a. Faculty are required to ensure that courses do not conflict with teaching and college responsibilities.
- b. Exempt employees will adjust their work schedule to fulfill their normal work hours per week or request leave to account for class time.
- c. Non-exempt employees
  - i. Time spent in educational courses during scheduled work hours is considered hours of work for computing any overtime liability.
  - ii. Education time outside scheduled work hours is not considered hours of work for computing overtime, if the employee's attendance is voluntary (employee-requested) and the employee performs no productive work during such attendance.

#### **8. Authority to adjust when necessitated by budgetary constraints.**

The President may waive or interpret the eligibility requirements in the interest of the effective and efficient operation of the college. When eligibility requirements are waived or denied, an explanatory justification statement shall be attached to the Educational & Continuous Learning Enrollment Form and maintained in College files. The President may at their discretion, award additional tuition reimbursement to employees in June of the fiscal year if funds are available to do so. Conversely, the president may reduce award amounts when necessitated by budgetary constraints. Any such reductions shall be conveyed to personnel as timely as possible.

#### **9. Appeals**

When a mitigating circumstance arises, an employee may request an appeal or exception to this policy and procedure with appropriate documentation within two weeks of decision being appealed. Appeals must be received in writing to the Chief HR Officer.

#### ***Document History:***

*Approved: Kim Blosser, May 4, 2021*

*Revised: HR Policy Committee, March 25, 2022*