

MIAMI BEACH CITYWIDE PROCEDURE	DATE ISSUED: MAY, 2015	Page: 1 of 4	SEQUENCE NUMBER: HR.20.01
	DATE UPDATED: DECEMBER, 2016		
	SUBJECT: EMPLOYEE TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM		
RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT: HUMAN RESOURCES			



PURPOSE:

The City of Miami Beach Employee Tuition Assistance Program ("Program"), which was revised in 2015 per Resolution 2015-28891, is established to provide financial assistance to eligible employees voluntarily participating in training or educational programs from accredited institutions of higher learning designed to improve their effectiveness which directly benefits City operations, activities and objectives; provide professional development; and help prepare employees for other opportunities within the City's service.

Tuition is the fee for instruction and lab fees only, and does not include textbooks, exams, audit fees, or any other expenses except for those executive degree programs where the tuition is inclusive of fees for books and other expenses.

An accredited institution of higher learning, as defined in the Higher Education Act, is an educational institution that awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a two (2) year program that is acceptable for full credit towards a degree; is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education; and is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted pre-accreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary of Education.

PROCEDURES:

Reimbursement

1. Tuition assistance for undergraduate courses taken at Miami-Dade College (or a similar community college) will be reimbursed up to \$118.22 per credit hour. This rate will be updated by the Human Resources Department, as needed.
2. For traditional undergraduate and graduate courses, tuition assistance shall be based upon and not exceed the Florida International University (FIU) established credit hour tuition rate in the published State University System at the time of enrollment. This rate is updated each July and posted on the web at <http://www.flbog.edu/about/budget/current.php>.
3. For nontraditional graduate programs, (Corporate/Executive) tuition assistance shall be reimbursed up to \$714 per credit hour. This includes Executive programs at FIU, Barry, Nova, etc.
4. There is no reimbursement for PhD's.
5. Approved non-degree, work-related courses shall be reimbursed at 70% of the course cost, exclusive of fees for a "Pass" grade.
6. Approved certification courses shall be reimbursed at 70% of the course cost, exclusive of fees for a "Pass" grade.

Tuition assistance shall be limited to six (6) credit hours per semester, and eighteen (18) credit hours per year. At no time shall the annual tuition assistance for each employee exceed \$5,250, the federal government cap for withholding tax exemption. (This amount is subject to change based on updates to the federal guideline.)

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Upon successful completion of approved coursework, the assistance schedule is based on the following levels of achievement:

- Grade A = 90% reimbursement
- Grade B = 80% reimbursement
- Grade C = 60% reimbursement; except for graduate level courses which are not eligible for reimbursement at this level of performance
- A passing grade on a pass/fail basis = 90% reimbursement

Employees receiving financial assistance including scholarships, fellowships, grants, special discounts and/or Veteran's benefits, will be eligible for tuition assistance after the financial assistance has been applied to the tuition costs.

The City reserves the right to determine and amend the number of courses, the number of credit hours, and the level of tuition assistance prior to the beginning of a school semester.

Employee Eligibility

Tuition assistance is available to full-time City of Miami Beach employees who have completed their respective probationary periods:

- Unclassified/Other employees must have completed six (6) months of continuous service and receive the approval of his or her supervisor.
- Classified employees must meet requirements stated in their respective Collective Bargaining Agreement in order to be eligible.

Note: Time served in provisional/temporary status is not included when determining eligibility.

Coursework Eligibility

Guidelines for establishing eligible coursework are as follows:

- Degree programs at accredited institutions which relate directly to career opportunities within the City of Miami Beach are eligible for approval.
- For those employees who have been approved for a degree program, all general education courses specifically required by the school will be approved.
- All courses must be taken outside of working hours unless the employee's Department Director approves the use of annual leave.
- Non-degree, work related courses (or City of Miami Beach career path).
- Certification, work related courses (or City of Miami Beach career path)

Department Director

Department Directors shall be responsible for verifying that all approved coursework is in compliance with this administrative procedure, as well as all other aspects of the program.

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Department Directors shall approve or disapprove all reimbursements for degrees, programs, and coursework for employees within their departments.

Employee Obligations

There is a repayment requirement if the employee separates from employment from the City of Miami Beach within two years of having received assistance, with the exception for those employees who have been laid off.

Employees separating from City service prior to the expiration of the two (2) year period will reimburse the City for the assistance received during the final year of employment through deductions from their final payroll check. If the final paycheck is insufficient, the employee will be responsible for making arrangements to reimburse the City or their separation papers shall be coded as not having left the City in good standing.

In the event the employee fails to reimburse the City, the services of an attorney required to collect such debt shall be sought and such attorney's fees and court costs shall be added to the amount owed the City.

Application Procedure

Employees wishing to participate in the Program shall submit to their Department Directors the attached Tuition Assistance Program Application Form along with the supporting documentation stated in Part I of the application no later than 30 days prior to the start of classes.

Coursework, Degree Review and Approval

The Department Director shall approve or disapprove the employee's request after verifying the employee's eligibility for participation in the Program.

Reimbursement

Employees seeking reimbursement shall submit their pre-approved application form along with the supporting documentation stated in Part I and II of the application, no later than 30 days from receipt of their grades. Departments shall submit all applications to the Human Resources Department with the supporting documentation for final review and reimbursement approval.

Penalty

Should an employee submit documentation which the employee knows is false or intentionally misleading in order to receive benefits to which the employee is not entitled, the employee shall be deemed ineligible to continue to participate in the Program and shall repay City of Miami Beach for any tuition assistance received while in the City's employ. The employee may be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, dismissal from the City service.

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Prepared by:

Director, Human Resources Department

Reviewed by:

Internal Auditor

Assistant City Manager

Approved by:

City Manager

Date

DRAFT

Tuition Assistance Program Application Form

FOR HR USE ONLY:

General Information

Date: _____

Name: _____ Date Employed: _____ City ID #: _____

Department: _____ Classification _____

Phone: _____ Course Schedule Dates: _____

Name of Educational Institution: _____

Educational Objectives ☐ Non Degree ☐ Undergraduate Degree ☐ Graduate Degree

Academic Degree ☐ Non Degree ☐ Associate's ☐ Bachelor's ☐ Master's

Major (Area of Concentration): _____

DO NOT WRITE IN SHADED AREAS

COURSE(S) REQUESTED	TOTAL CREDITS	ELIGIBLE Y/N	DATE GRADES RECEIVED	GRADE	AMOUNT	INITIAL FOR APPROVAL
1.						
2.						

State how coursework meets the objectives of the Tuition Assistance Program:

Part I: Coursework, Degree Review and Approval

Department verification: ☐ Approved ☐ Denied, reason: _____

Documents provided: ☐ Tuition Assistance Application
☐ Class Schedule
☐ Catalog Description(s) for course(s) listed above

Department Director's Signature

Date

Part II: Reimbursement

Attach the following supporting documentation and submit to the Human Resources Department no later than 30 days after grades have been posted:

- ☐ Supporting documentation provided with Part I
- ☐ Course Registration Statement
- ☐ Receipt of Payment in full
- ☐ Grade(s) received for course(s) listed above

Employee Signature

By signed below, I am affirming that I have read and agreed to comply with the requirements set forth in the Administrative Procedure No. HR.20.1 - Employee Tuition Assistance Program.

Date