



**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
POLICIES & PROCEDURES**



POLICY NUMBER	
PRS:02	
EFFECTIVE DATE: 10/16/2009	ORIGINAL ISSUED ON: 10/03/1988
REVISION NO: 8	

SUBJECT: TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

1.0 PURPOSE

It is the purpose of this policy to establish a basis and a standard for the reimbursement of college level tuition costs for Department of Public Safety employees.

2.0 POLICY

It is the policy of the Department of Public Safety to encourage its employees to enhance their job skills and career growth through higher education. To support this development, the Department is providing funds, as available, to pay for tuition for eligible employees.

3.0 APPLICABILITY

This policy applies to all eligible employees of the Department of Public Safety.

NOTE: This policy supersedes previous department of public safety policy PRS:02 and any other policies, directives or orders dealing with tuition reimbursement.

4.0 REFERENCES

- A. CALEA Chapter 22 – Compensation, Benefits, and Conditions of Work
- B. §29-2-6 NMSA, 1978 – State Police Qualifications

5.0 DEFINITIONS

- A. **Eligible Employee** - All temporary employees are ineligible to participate. Any non-temporary person employed by the Department of Public Safety in a full-time capacity, may participate in the program.
- B. **Eligible Coursework** - Any college or university level course work which is part of the core curriculum of a degree program and is deemed by the Reimbursement Committee to be directly related to the employee's job class or job responsibility or coursework that is part of a degree program which professionally benefits the employee and the Department of Public Safety. If an employee is directed by a supervisor to attend a course or a course is part of an employee's certification or job requirement, then the division for which the employee works may pay for the course instead of using Tuition Reimbursement funds. Coursework that is paid with college grants and scholarships is not eligible for tuition reimbursement from the department.
- C. **Tuition Reimbursement Committee** - A committee consisting of one (1) employee from each division of the Department of Public Safety (known as the Tuition Reimbursement Committee Division Representative) appointed by each division director.
- D. **Institution** - Any accredited institution of higher learning; either physical or over the World Wide Web. Attendance (or participation online) at accredited institutions will be required for eligibility, unless the employee can demonstrate to the committee that a

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non-accredited institution maintains educational standards equal to those of an accredited institution.

- E. Satisfactory Completion** - Completed course work with a grade of C or better for undergraduate level classes, or B or better for graduate level classes, as indicated by a transcript or grade notice issued by the college or university.
- F. Term** - Semester or academic quarter.
- G. Temporary Employee** - Any employee hired for less than one year.
- H. Attendance** - Physical attendance at an institution of higher learning or participation in classes over the World Wide Web.

6.0 PROCEDURE

- A.** Coursework eligibility will be determined by the Tuition Reimbursement Committee. The Committee will annually elect a chairperson, whose individual responsibilities will include: coordinating tuition reimbursements with the Financial Management Bureau, scheduling and conducting committee meetings, participant reconciliation by term, and the handling of applicant and/or participant inquiries and problems. The committee will implement this policy through administrative guidelines distributed to committee members.
- B.** Attendance (or participation online) at accredited institutions will be required for eligibility, unless the employee can demonstrate to the committee that a non-accredited institution maintains educational standards equal to those of an accredited institution.
- C.** All tuition costs are reimbursable up to 100 percent, if sufficient funds are available, but may not exceed the highest tuition cost of a state-operated institution of higher learning. No employee will be eligible to be reimbursed for more than twelve (12) semester hours in any fiscal year, or six (6) credit hours in a single term. No other associated fees (e.g., registration or matriculation fees, lab fees, textbooks, meals, activity fees or travel costs, etc.) are reimbursable.
- D.** Employees who are approved for this program are eligible for up to four (4) hours of educational leave, with pay, per week, while enrolled in eligible course work. Employees who are enrolled in college and/or graduate level degree programs but have not requested or been approved tuition reimbursement are also eligible for educational leave. The college and/or graduate level degree programs must meet the guidelines set forth in this policy. This leave will only be granted for attendance at class, thesis work, or independent study courses. Educational leave must be approved by the employee's supervisor. Any additional leave time for educational purposes, including homework assignments and study group meetings, must be deducted from accumulated annual leave, compensatory time, or leave without pay, and must be approved in advance by the employee's immediate supervisor.
 - 1. Employees who are enrolled in college and/or graduate level degree programs but have not requested or been approved tuition reimbursement and wish to request educational leave must complete and sign a "Request for Educational Leave" form.
- E.** All employees whose applications have been approved must complete and sign a "Receipt of Tuition Payment Request and Agreement".
- F.** Only applications submitted for the term forthcoming at the time of the application will be considered.
- G.** Allocation Priority:

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1. **First priority** - will be given to employees who are requesting reimbursement for college level courses to meet the statutory requirement in 29-2-6 NMSA 1978, or which are part of the core curriculum of an Associate or Bachelor's degree program and are deemed by the Reimbursement Committee to be directly related to the employee's job classification or the courses are part of an Associate or Bachelor's degree program that professionally benefits the employee and the Department of Public Safety. If funding is available for all participants in Associate or Bachelor's programs, these requests will be fully funded. If requests exceed funds available, amounts will be prorated accordingly.
2. **Second priority** - will be given to employees who are requesting reimbursement for job-related courses in graduate level degree programs, or courses that are part of a graduate level degree program that professionally benefits the employee and the Department of Public Safety. After first-priority participants have been funded, any remaining funds will be applied to second-priority participants. If requests exceed funds available, amounts will be prorated accordingly.
3. **Third priority** - will be given to employees who are not pursuing a degree, but who are requesting reimbursement for job-related courses. After first and second priorities are funded, any remaining funds will be applied to third-priority participants. If requests exceed funds available, amounts will be prorated accordingly.

H. Procedure for requesting tuition reimbursement:

1. Employee
 - a. Completes "Receipt for Tuition Payment Request and Agreement" form, "Request for Participating-Tuition Reimbursement Program" form, and "Employee Reimbursement" form. The employee should attach a receipt indicating the tuition paid, a copy of the course catalog description, tuition cost schedule, and a letter from the institution being attended stating that the employee is pursuing a degree and the major. The letter will only have to be provided to the Tuition Reimbursement Committee once, as long as the degree plan or institution does not change. Once the form is completed, employee forwards it to his/her immediate supervisor.
2. Employee's Supervisor
 - a. Approves or disapproves the forms and returns to the employee.
3. Employee
 - a. Forwards original forms to the employee's Tuition Reimbursement Committee Division Representative, and one copy to the appropriate division director in the chain of command. The forms must be received by the Tuition Reimbursement Committee Division Representative according to the following deadlines:
 1. **FALL TERM – August 20th**
 2. **SPRING TERM – January 20th**
 3. **SUMMER TERM – May 20th**
 - b. If the forms are not received by the appropriate deadline, the employee will be denied participation for that term.

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4. Tuition Reimbursement Committee Division Representative signs and dates "Receipt for Tuition Payment Request and Agreement" form to verify if received by application deadline.
 - a. If not received by the deadline, the Tuition Reimbursement Committee Division Representative immediately informs applicant of denial of participation for that term.
 - b. If received by the deadline, the Tuition Reimbursement Committee Division Representative verifies that proper signatures appear and that all forms have been received then holds application for presentation to the committee.
 5. Tuition Reimbursement Committee
 - a. Meets within three (3) business days of deadline to review and vote on applications presented by each division representative. The committee votes to approve or disapprove each application and determines the amount of reimbursement to be provided. The committee must document the reason for approval or denial of application.
 6. Tuition Reimbursement Committee Division Representative.
 - a. Notifies division applicants of approval and amount of reimbursement, or of disapproval and reason.
 7. Employee
 - a. If not approved, the employee may appeal the decision by notifying the chairperson in writing within three (3) business days.
 8. Chairperson
 - a. Presents appeal to the appropriate Deputy Secretary within two (2) business days of receipt.
 9. Deputy Secretary
 - a. The Deputy Secretary of Operations (State Police Chief) will consider both commissioned and non-commissioned employee appeals of employees under his/her program.
 - b. The Deputy Secretary of Administration will consider non-commissioned employee appeals of employees under his/her program.
 - c. Reviews appeal and renders a decision within five (5) business days of receipt of appeal and provides decision in writing to applicant and chairperson.
 - d. If appeal is denied, the process stops.
 - e. If appeal results in acceptance of application, the process continues.
 10. Financial Management Bureau
 - a. Processes Employee Reimbursement Form for payment and forwards warrant to employee or institution.
- I. Procedure for submitting final grades:
1. Employee

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- a. Provides Tuition Reimbursement Committee Division Representative with copy of grade notice as soon as they are made available by the institution, but no later than the following deadlines:
 1. **FALL TERM – January 20th**
 2. **SPRING TERM – May 20th**
 3. **SUMMER TERM – August 20th**
2. Tuition Reimbursement Committee Division Representative
 - a. At the end of the term, obtains copies of grade notices from each participant within his/her division and forwards to co-chairperson for reconciliation.

7.0 ATTACHMENTS

- A. Receipt of Tuition Payment Request and Agreement Form**
- B. Request for Participating-Tuition Reimbursement Program Form**
- C. Tuition Reimbursement Guidelines**
- D. Employee Reimbursement Form**
- E. Request for Educational Leave Form**

8.0 APPROVAL

APPROVED BY: s/ John Denko
DPS Cabinet Secretary

DATE: October 16, 2009