

POLICY

Human Resources  
Effective Date: 06/17/2019

Tuition Reimbursement

Version: 2.0

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# Introduction

## Purpose

The Tuition Reimbursement Program is intended to afford DIR employees the opportunity to further their professional development through continuing education.

## Scope

This policy applies to all DIR employees. It addresses under what circumstances the agency will reimburse an employee for tuition costs, and eligibility requirements

This policy applies only to college-level courses attended at an accredited institution of higher education; and where college credit hours are given to the student for successfully passing the course.

For information pertaining to other forms of training, e.g. workshops, seminars, certifications, and other special programs refer to the agency’s Training and Development policy located on the Drop Zone.

## Reference Authority

Texas Gov. Code §§ 656.101–104; Agency Policy.

# Overview

The Texas Department of Information Resources provides tuition reimbursement to employees when eligibility criteria are met. All reimbursement approvals are contingent upon availability of funds. Additionally, the approval of any single course does not imply the approval of any subsequent courses in the future. This program is not designed to aid an employee in the completion of a particular academic degree, but rather to allow employees to gain proficiency for current or prospective positions by taking job related courses.

# Reimbursement of Costs

DIR will only reimburse the tuition costs for college-level courses successfully completed at an accredited institution of higher education. Tuition reimbursement must be job related and approved by the Human Resources, Employee’s Manager, Division Director, Executive Director.

The employee may be reimbursed for the actual cost of tuition for one college-level course per semester, not to exceed $600.00 per semester and $1,200.00 per fiscal year. Employees may be reimbursed only for the cost of tuition for classes where the employee receives a grade of C or better. Employees will not be reimbursed for items that are not part of tuition, such as course or institution fees, textbooks, workbooks, and lab supplies. In addition, any part of tuition covered by scholarships, grants or other awarded funds will not be reimbursed

# Eligibility

The Texas Department of Information Resources may reimburse full-time employees for tuition at an accredited academic institution if all of the following criteria are met:

* The employee must have completed 12 consecutive months of full-time employment with DIR prior to requesting approval to receive tuition reimbursement.
* The employee should be in good standing and have no disciplinary action during the 6 months prior to applying. Employees who are in counseling, on probation, or restricted from merits or promotions as a result of a terms stated in a formal reprimand (written or verbal) are not eligible to apply for assistance. The employee should maintain satisfactory job performance with a minimum rating of “meets expectations”
* The course work must be undergraduate or graduate and related to the employee's current or prospective position within the agency. A prospective position may include a position within the agency to which the employee aspires, subject to the approval of the DIR management chain with final approval resting with the Executive Director.
* The employee's participation must not adversely affect workload or performance, including travel requirements.

# Approval and Reimbursement Process

Approval of tuition reimbursement will be granted on a semester-by-semester basis.

An employee is required to submit the Tuition Reimbursement Application, the course description, degree plan, and fee schedule to Human Resources to review for eligibility and compliance with the policy. Human Resources will review for approval prior to forwarding the request via Docusign to an employee’s manager, division director and executive director. The Tuition Reimbursement Application should also be submitted to the agency’s budget office to certify there are funds are available to reimburse the employee for the cost of the course.

Human Resources will maintain all requests for tuition reimbursement to ensure compliance with this policy and reimbursement when appropriate.

After successfully completion of the course, the employee should submit a receipt of payment and copy of the final grade report to Human Resources. Upon approval, Human Resource will scan all documentation to Accounts Payable to process reimbursement. Within normal processing guidelines, the employee should receive reimbursement within ten working days. The employee is required to request reimbursement as soon as practical after receiving a final grade report.

An employee must immediately notify their manager and Human Resources if the employee ceases to be enrolled in a class for which reimbursement has been requested.

\* Retain a copy of the request submitted and approved and final grade report for your records.

# Provisions

DIR employees that are reimbursed for tuition costs should be aware of the following employment provisions.

## Repayment Agreement

DIR’s agreement to reimburse for such costs is made contingent upon a reasonable return on investment and continued employment with the Department. Employees are expected to continue working at DIR for at least 12 months immediately preceding the completion of each semester in which DIR-paid for courses as referenced in TGC 656.103. Employees are required to sign and attest on the Tuition Reimbursement Application that they understand and will comply with TGC 656.103. If an employee terminates within the 12-month period, the employee must reimburse DIR for the tuition paid on the employee’s behalf within 90 days.

If an employee terminates employment because of a reduction in force (not due to unsatisfactory performance or conduct), the employee does not have to reimburse DIR for the tuition and fees paid on the employee’s behalf.

## No Affect on At Will Status

Any obligation to work for DIR for a specified period of time following reimbursement does not constitute an employment agreement, contract, or a guarantee of current or future employment and shall not in any way affect the employee’s at-will status.

# Policy Compliance

All DIR employees shall comply with this policy when requesting reimbursement for tuition costs.

# Roles and Responsibilities

| Role | Responsibility |
| --- | --- |
| Employee | Responsible for submitting request for approval to reimburse tuition costs and for submitting final grade report with a passing grade of C or better in order to receive reimbursement for tuition costs. |
| Human Resources | Responsible for ensuring employee meets eligibility criteria before forwarding request for approval to the employee’s management chain and Executive Director. Also responsible for reviewing the employee’s final grade report prior to authorization of payment to reimburse the employee’s tuition costs. |

# References

Tuition Reimbursement Application is located in the ConvergePoint Policy site.

# Document Management

The Human Resources department will make changes to this policy when necessary. A review of this policy will occur every two years.

## Data Classification

The following Data Classification (see [SOP 705.300](https://dir1.sharepoint.com/sites/portal/drop-zone/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=%7BF2122983-8BC1-491B-B322-90DE493BE5B4%7D&file=Data%20Classification%20Standard%20Operating%20Procedure.docx&action=default&DefaultItemOpen=1)) applies to this document (check one):

PUBLIC – Intended or required for public release as described in the Texas Public Information Act. Often posted publicly or widely available. No distribution restrictions; distribute upon request.

AGENCY SENSITIVE – Contains sensitive data that may be subject to disclosure or release under the Texas Public Information Act, but that requires additional levels of protection. Requires executive director guidance upon distribution request.

CONFIDENTIAL – Contains sensitive data that must be protected from unauthorized disclosure or public release based on state or federal law. Requires executive director approval upon request for distribution to protect agency security; private, personally identifiable information; or other assets.

## Records Retention

While executing this policy, various records are created or modified. These records are stored, maintained and disposed of in accordance with DIR’s [Records Retention Schedule](https://dir1.sharepoint.com/sites/portal/drop-zone/Documents/DIR-Specific%20Records%20Retention%20Schedule.PDF). Questions related to records retention should be directed to DIR’s General Counsel.

This policy is stored on the DROP Zone.

## Metadata

### File Abstract

This policy provides information and guidelines on the Tuition Reimbursement.

### Enterprise Keywords

Tuition reimbursement; college courses; education.

## Revision History

This table summarizes the major edits, i.e., edits affecting transition points, process changes, system changes, and/or role changes.

| Version | Date | Revision Summary |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2.0 | 06/17/2019 | Updated policy language and requirements. |