

PASCO COUNTY TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM POLICY AND PROCEDURE

I. PURPOSE

To provide a policy and procedure for refunding tuition costs to employees who successfully complete approved courses of instruction.

II. OBJECTIVE

To enhance service to the citizens of Pasco County by providing encouragement and financial assistance to employees who successfully complete courses of instruction, which may improve their effectiveness in their current positions, or which may enable them to attain promotional advancement within their present career field, or other career fields of Pasco County Government.

III. POLICY

A. Eligibility: All regular full-time employees who meet the following criteria are eligible for tuition reimbursement:

1. Employee has completed at least one (1) year of service immediately preceding the commencement of classes.
2. Courses that are a part of the school's core (required) courses for a degree or are elective courses which are required as part of a degree-seeking program, or are prerequisite courses for core or required electives, or are directly related to the employee's current position or higher level position within their career field or other career fields of Pasco County Government. Nondegree or adult education courses may also be considered if they are directly related to the employee's current position or higher level position within their career field and could contribute to increased competency in that field. Internet classes with an approved college or university may be considered for reimbursement. Final determination will be made by the Personnel Director. Correspondence courses and Continuing Education Units (CEU) are not considered eligible for the Tuition Reimbursement Program but may be reimbursed at the department level based on the discretion of the respective Assistant County Administrator.
3. Application was approved by the department/division head and was received by the Personnel Department within thirty (30) days of the registration for a course(s).
4. Employee is on the payroll at the time the tuition reimbursement is made.
5. Employee has achieved a final grade of an A, B, C, S, or P.

B. Types of Courses Covered: The courses covered by this policy are those given by an accredited college or university, reputable business or vocational school, or other educational institution approved by the Personnel Department. Note: Only courses offered by colleges or universities that are accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the official

accrediting agency for educational institutions in the South, or comparable accrediting agencies, including the Accrediting Commission of Career Schools and Colleges of Technology are acceptable. If you are in doubt concerning accreditation, contact the Personnel Department prior to making a commitment.

- C. Attendance at Courses: All course work must be accomplished outside of employee's normal work schedule.
- D. Benefits: Employees whose applications are approved will be entitled to tuition reimbursement (not to exceed maximum amount charged by State institutions) for each approved course in accordance with the following schedule:

<u>Course Grade</u>	<u>Refund</u>
A	100%
B	75%
C	50%
S (Satisfactory)	75%
P (Passed)	75%

Employees entitled to educational benefits under other programs or legislation; i.e., G.I. benefits, scholarships, grants, etc., shall not be approved for tuition reimbursement until such benefits have been expended. No employee will receive tuition refunds greater than actual expenditures paid by the employee.

This program covers tuition and scheduled lab costs only. No reimbursement shall be made for books, travel, or other materials.

- E. Service Obligation: Employees who request tuition assistance must agree to remain in the employ of the County for at least one year following course completions. Employees who retire, resign, or are terminated for cause within the one-year period, after completion of the course, shall be obligated to reimburse the County for tuition benefits applicable to courses completed during the affected period. Reimbursement shall be by cash payment or deduction from any monies due at the time of separation.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. Employee submits a Tuition Reimbursement Application to the Personnel Department via their department/division head and within thirty (30) days of the registration for a course(s) in order to ensure prior approval or rejection of such application. Submission of the request after the date of registration does not obligate the County to approve the request. It is recommended that first time enrollees contact the Personnel Department prior to enrollment to ensure eligibility. The application must state if and how each course is job related. Graduate courses are subject to withholding employment tax.
- B. The Personnel Department will send a memorandum to the employee indicating approval or rejection of the course(s) for which reimbursement is requested.

- C. Employee must pay tuition costs directly to the college/school sponsoring the course(s).
- D. Official notice of grades and the original tuition receipt must be submitted to the Personnel Department within thirty (30) days of the date of notice of the grade. If the tuition payment is by check, a copy of the check or bank statement is required. If the tuition payment is by credit card, a copy of the credit card used and the credit card statement or credit card receipt are required. If the tuition payment was made by someone other than the employee, who is requesting reimbursement, an additional form is required by the Clerk's Office. Ask the Personnel Office for this form.
- E. As revisions are made regarding Tuition Reimbursement, the Personnel Department will send an updated memorandum highlighting the changes.

Authority: *Career Service Manual*, Section A 7.02, Tuition Reimbursement Program.