

Number 15.2 - TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

Effective Date: March 1, 1996
Revised Date: October, 1, 1999

Applicable To: All permanent status classified employees in non-management and supervisory bargaining units, as well as exempt, confidential and managerial employees with the Executive Branch of the State of Vermont.

Issued By: Department of Personnel

Approved By: Kathleen C. Hoyt, Secretary of Administration

PURPOSE AND POLICY STATEMENT

The Tuition Reimbursement Program was established in 1986, in conjunction with the Vermont State Employees' Association, Inc. (VSEA), under the Collective Bargaining Agreements to provide financial support to State employees who wish to further their education for career development and job advancement.

The program provides financial assistance for post secondary and/or graduate level courses which are directly related to an employee's current job or other career related positions in State service. Courses that are required as part of an employee's degree program may also be reimbursed if the degree meets the same criteria.

Managers, Confidential and Exempt employees are covered by a separate tuition reimbursement program not governed by the labor contract.

GENERAL INFORMATION

The provisions of the Tuition Reimbursement articles of the contract must be adhered to. Courses must be post-secondary and/or graduate level courses taken at a properly accredited educational institution.

Non-credit courses, classes, or seminars which are job related, but not mandatory or required by the employee's department may also be approved, at the discretion of the Commissioner of Personnel (or designee).

Mandatory courses that are required by an employee's agency/department are not covered under this program.

Money is allocated to the Tuition Reimbursement funds through contract negotiations and the Pay Act. Reimbursement will be made for applications submitted during the appropriate time period. For the contractual tuition

reimbursement programs, one-half of the available fund money for each fiscal year will be made available for courses that begin between July 1 and December 31, and the remaining half will be available for courses that begin between January 1 and June 30.

ELIGIBILITY

Classified employees in the Non-Management and Supervisory Bargaining Units who have completed original probation are eligible for tuition reimbursement. Managerial, confidential and exempt employees are also eligible under a separate funding source, after completion of original probation. An employee must have a written career plan approved by the appointing authority and the Commissioner of Personnel. Employees who are on paid educational leave may not receive tuition reimbursement.

APPLICATION PROCESS

The employee must complete a Tuition Reimbursement Application Form (Attachment A) and submit it for approval first to the employing department and then to the Department of Personnel, prior to the start of the course.

The employing department will determine what, if any, amount of its own funds will be allocated to the employee, and then forward the application to the Department of Personnel for processing.

The application shall be submitted to the Department of Personnel and postmarked during the appropriate time period for consideration. For courses beginning between January 1st and June 30th, applications must be submitted by U.S. mail and be postmarked no earlier than November 24th and no later than December 7th. For courses beginning between July 1st and December 31st, applications must be submitted by U.S. mail and be postmarked no earlier than May 25th and no later than June 7th. Applications will indicate which course is the employee's first priority and which course is the second priority. If there are insufficient funds to cover all of the first priority course applications, all timely submitted applications will be combined and one representative each from the State and the VSEA will draw out applications until all of the available funds for that semester are committed for first priority course tuition reimbursement. If all first priority courses are funded, the above drawing process will be used to determine which second priority courses will receive tuition assistance.

REIMBURSEMENT

The employee must provide proof of passing grades or repay the funds within a three month period. The maximum reimbursement to the employee cannot exceed 80% of the actual out-of-pocket costs for tuition only, up to \$250 per credit for Non-Management bargaining unit employees, and \$350 per credit for

Supervisory Bargaining unit employees, managerial, confidential, and exempt employees. Books, fees, etc. are **not** covered under this reimbursement program and should not be included in the tuition amount. When combined with other sources of reimbursement (federal grants, department contribution, etc.) the maximum amount of reimbursement to an employee cannot exceed 90% of the total costs for tuition, up to the \$250 (or \$350) limit.

An employee may not be reimbursed for more than twelve (12) college credits per fiscal year, and shall not be reimbursed for more than two (2) courses, (for a maximum of eight (8) credits) within a six (6) month period (July - December, January - June). Subject to availability of funds, reimbursement for more than 12 credits in a fiscal year may be made at the discretion of the State. The employee must make such request in writing in advance of taking the courses. Monies not spent for courses beginning July 1st through December 31st shall be available for tuition reimbursement for courses beginning January 1st through June 30th.

The Tuition Reimbursement Article of the current Agreements between the State of Vermont and the VSEA provides further clarification regarding tuition reimbursement.

DIRECT PAYMENTS TO EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION

Tuition Reimbursement payments are normally in the form of direct payments to the educational institution. If an employee drops a course for which direct payment was made, or does not attain a passing grade, the Tuition Reimbursement Fund must be repaid in full by the employee. The Department of Personnel will initiate action to collect the money if the employee fails to repay the Department of Personnel, or to arrange for repayment within three (3) months. The employee will be barred from future participation in the program until the State has been repaid in full.

For further information, contact the Business Manager of the Department of Personnel, 802-828-3605.

EMPLOYEES WHO LEAVE STATE STATUS

Employees who are in Reduction-in-Force (RIF) status and were approved for tuition reimbursement funds prior to their RIF are permitted to complete their course of study and obtain reimbursement in certain circumstances. Reimbursement will be paid to employees if they are re-employed within a period of four (4) months. If pre-payment to the school was made, no re-payment to the employee is necessary. Employees who voluntarily terminate after pre-payment to a school has been made are expected to make repayment to the Tuition Reimbursement Fund. Arrangements for repayment must be made directly with the Department of Personnel.

Signed by Kathleen C. Hoyt, October 25, 1999

Approved, Secretary of Administration

ATTACHMENT A

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT APPLICATION / INSTRUCTIONS

ATTACHMENT B

**DEPARTMENT OF PERSONNEL TUITION REIMBURSEMENT CAREER
PLAN**

[Go to Virtual Library for tuition forms](#)