



PA TURNPIKE COMMISSION POLICY

This is a statement of official Pennsylvania Turnpike Policy

NUMBER: 4.01

APPROVAL DATE: 06-05-2012

EFFECTIVE DATE: 06-20-2012

REVISED DATE: 02-17-2015

POLICY SUBJECT:

Tuition Reimbursement Policy

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:

Human Resources

A. PURPOSE:

To provide educational assistance to employees who successfully complete approved courses that are relevant to the needs of the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (Commission) and are not available through in-service programs.

B. SCOPE:

This policy letter applies to all full-time, regular Commission employees that have successfully completed their probationary/introductory period and have at least six (6) months of service, except as provided in Policy Letter 4.6.

C. GENERAL POLICY:

The Commission may, at its sole discretion, provide reimbursement to eligible employees for approved educational courses through an accredited educational institution when it determines that doing so will provide a benefit to the Commission. Employees are required to schedule courses, during non-work hours.

1. Coursework

- a. For courses to be approved, they must meet the following requirements:
 - The course is related to the employee’s current duties with the Commission, or
 - The course will develop new skills that could be applied towards an aspect of the Commission’s operations.

2. Eligibility

- a. All full-time, regular employees who have completed six months of service are eligible for reimbursement, provided:
 - The employee obtains approval to attend the course from their immediate supervisor, department head and the Director of Human Resources prior to attending the course;
 - The employee is registered at an accredited educational institution (e.g. college, university or trade school); and
 - The employee is registered for a course that is a “core” course in a field of study that is job-related to current duties or to the operational needs of the Commission.

- b. The employee must achieve an acceptable passing grade to be eligible for reimbursement.

Examples of an acceptable grade are:

- A “C” letter grade or higher;
- A 2.00 grade point average or higher on a 4.00 system;
- A “Pass” grade on a “Pass/Fail” grading system; or
- A “B” letter grade or higher for graduate-level courses or equivalent.

- c. General education courses will not be eligible for reimbursement.

3. Reimbursement

- a. Employees will be reimbursed for 90 percent of tuition, registration, and books for successful completion of a course from an accredited educational institution up to \$5,250 annually (January 1st – December 31st).
 - Transportation and any other subsequent costs or fees are not reimbursable.
- b. An employee will not be eligible for reimbursement if they withdraw from an approved course or if the approved course is canceled. The employee is required to immediately notify the department head and Human Resources if they withdraw from an approved course or if the course is canceled.
- c. The employee must remain employed by the Commission for a period of one year following the end date of the course. If not, the employee must reimburse the Commission for monies received under the program. The Commission will use its discretion to determine the method to recoup the monies due.
- d. An employee will not receive tuition reimbursement if they terminate employment prior to completion of an approved course.

D. DEFINITIONS:

Accredited Educational Institution - A process of formal recognition from an accrediting agency endorsed by the U.S. Department of Education for a school or institution attesting to the required ability and performance in an area of education, training, or practice.

Full-time Regular Employee – An employee that has successfully completed the probationary/introductory period and who has been assigned to a permanent position. Supplemental employees are not considered full-time, regular employees.

In-Service Training - Courses, training sessions, conferences, seminars, workshops and distance learning programs that are sponsored by the PTC.

E. PROCEDURES:

1. Approval

- a. Employees must complete a tuition reimbursement request form (available in the HR Forms section of the PTC Intranet) prior to attending the course. The supervisor shall review the request and make a recommendation to the department head or his/her designee for approval. The department head shall approve or disapprove the recommendation and forward the request to the Director of Human Resources for approval.
- b. The Director of Human Resources will approve or disapprove the request and notify the department head, supervisor, and the employee of the decision.
- c. Courses that fall outside the scope of work in the employee's current department must be approved for reimbursement by the Chief Executive Officer or Chief Operating Officer in addition to the standard approval procedure.
- d. Approval for coursework taken in a graduate-level degree program by an employee that already possesses a graduate degree in that discipline will be granted on a limited basis and will only be considered when such coursework is deemed necessary to the operations of the Commission. Requests for reimbursement for these types of courses must be accompanied by a justification of the employee's training needs and the resulting benefit to the Commission.

2. Reimbursement

- a. The employee must provide verification of successful completion of the course to the Director of Human Resources within 90 days of course completion. Reimbursement will not be made for requests received beyond the 90 day time limit.

Acceptable forms of verification include:

- The grade report from the institution, or
 - The official transcript from the institution with grade.
- b. Employees may request a **50 percent advance of their tuition, registration and books prior to attending courses** and receive the final 50 percent of their tuition, registration and books upon "successful completion" of the course.
 - c. When all the necessary documentation has been received and approved, Human Resources will forward the reimbursement request to the Finance Department for payment.
 - d. The Finance Department will reimburse the employee directly.
 - e. Employees that received a 50 percent advance and do not "successfully complete" the course, drop the course or the approved course is cancelled, will be required to reimburse the Commission either by payroll deduction (at least 10 percent of his/her pay each payroll period until fully reimbursed). If no longer employed by the Commission the lump sum is required either by direct payment, payroll deduction from final check, accrued leave payout deduction or from his/her SERS retirement account.

The Commission reserves the right to modify at any time the Tuition Reimbursement program, including, but not limited to, terminating the program, lowering the level of reimbursement for participants or changing the requirements for eligibility based on budgetary constraints.

This Policy Letter supersedes all previous Policy Letters on this subject.