



PA TURNPIKE COMMISSION POLICY

This is a statement of official Pennsylvania Turnpike Policy

NUMBER: 4.06

APPROVAL DATE: 01-17-2015

EFFECTIVE DATE: 03-05-2015

REVISED DATE: 01-03-2017

POLICY SUBJECT:

**Tuition Reimbursement
Policy for Impacted
Classifications**

RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT:

Human Resources

A. PURPOSE:

As the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (Commission) continues to advance towards a cashless tolling system, operational changes resulting in job displacements may occur. This transitional policy is designed to extend additional educational allowances to those employees holding a position defined as an “impacted classification.”

This policy is designed to provide educational assistance to impacted classification employees who successfully complete approved courses to assist in employment transition within the Pennsylvania Turnpike Commission (Commission), a Commonwealth agency or a private sector employer and are not available through in-service programs.

B. SCOPE:

This policy letter applies to Commission employees hired on or before 12/31/2018 and are designated as impacted classification employees, who have successfully completed their probationary/introductory period and have at least six (6) months of service with the Commission.

Any new impacted classification employee hired after 12/31/2018 will not be eligible for tuition reimbursement under this policy.

All full-time, regular employees that are not designated as impacted classification employees are not eligible to receive tuition reimbursement under this policy.

C. GENERAL POLICY:

The Commission may, at its sole discretion, provide reimbursement to eligible employees for approved educational courses through an accredited educational institution. Employees are required to schedule courses during non-work hours.

1. Eligibility

- a. Impacted classification employees hired on or before 12/31/2018 and who successfully complete their probationary/introductory period and have at least six months of Commission 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; and
 - The employee is registered at an accredited educational institution (e.g., college, university or trade school).
- 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. Education courses that increase general competency skills (arithmetic, reading, writing, basic computing) will be eligible for reimbursement.

2. Reimbursement

- a. Employees will be reimbursed for 100 percent of tuition, registration and books for successful completion of an approved 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. 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. 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.
- 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.

Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) Training Program – A specialized instructional program or course designed to prepare a student to obtain a commercial driver’s license (CDL).

Impacted Classification Employee – All full-time regular employees assigned to the Fare Collection Department, including Supplemental Toll Collectors or Compliance Department Ticket Systems Audit employees hired on or before 12/31/2018.

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

E. PROCEDURES:

1. Approval

- a. Employees must complete a tuition reimbursement request form (available in the HR Forms section of the Commission 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.

Employees must be enrolled in an approved CDL Training Program to receive tuition reimbursement. Costs associated with license renewals and physical examination renewals are not eligible for reimbursement.

- c. 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 requesting a 50 percent advance must submit a formal invoice or proof of cost prior to receiving the advance.
- 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.

Employees that received a 50 percent advance and do not “successfully complete” the course, drop the course or the approved course is canceled will be required to reimburse the Commission by payroll deduction (at least 10 percent of his/her pay each payroll period until fully reimbursed). If no longer employed by the Commission, a 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 for Impacted Classifications, 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.