

 PA TURNPIKE COMMISSION POLICY <i>This is a statement of official Pennsylvania Turnpike Policy</i>		NUMBER: 4.06 APPROVAL DATE: 01-17-2015 EFFECTIVE DATE: 03-05-2015 REVISED DATE: 05-07-2019
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 policy is designed to assist Impacted Classification Employees in their employment transition by offering them additional educational allowances to those available through In-Service Training and Policy 4.01.

B. SCOPE:

This policy letter applies to Commission Impacted Classification Employees hired on or before December 31, 2020, 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 December 31, 2020 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 Impacted Classification Employees for Approved Courses. Impacted Classification Employees are required to schedule courses during non-work hours. Coursework may be completed through traditional classes or through non-traditional programs such as on-line or other distance-learning programs.

Ongoing participation in this tuition reimbursement program is contingent on continued satisfactory job performance.

If any provision of this Policy is inconsistent with the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, the terms of the collective bargaining agreement shall control.

1. **Eligibility**

Impacted Classification Employees hired on or before December 31, 2020 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 written pre-approval to participate in an Approved Course from their immediate supervisor, department head and the Director of Human Resources;
- The employee is registered at an Educational Institution; and
- The employee provides written proof of Successful Completion of the Approved Course.

For CDL Training - Employees must be enrolled in a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) Training Program to receive tuition reimbursement. Costs associated with license renewals and physical examination renewals are not eligible for reimbursement.

2. **Reimbursement**

- a. Employees will be reimbursed for 100 percent of tuition, registration, lab fees, textbooks and other required course materials for Successful Completion of an Approved Course from an Educational Institution up to \$5,250 annually (January 1st - December 31st).

Note: Reimbursable costs shall not include tools and supplies that may aid the employee with the course, but which are not specifically required (e.g., computer hardware, software, calculators, instructional tapes), parking fees, transportation or other optional expenses.

- b. Employees may request a 50 percent advance of their tuition, registration and required course materials prior to attending an Approved Courses and receive the final 50 percent of their tuition, registration and required course materials upon Successful Completion of an Approved Course.
- c. An employee will not be eligible for reimbursement if they fail to provide written proof of Successful Completion of an Approved Course.
- d. 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.
- e. An employee will not receive tuition reimbursement if their employment with the Commission is terminated prior to completion of an Approved Course. The employee's status must be "active" on the date tuition reimbursement is paid. For example, if an employee is active when the application for tuition reimbursement is approved, the employee will not be eligible for the reimbursement payment if the employee terminates employment before the reimbursement is actually paid.

- f. The amount of tuition reimbursement received through this policy will be reduced dollar for dollar by the amount of grants, scholarships and other financial aid or course discounts which are paid directly to the institution and which the student does not have to pay back.

D. DEFINITIONS:

Approved Course – a course that earns credit towards an associate, bachelors, masters, doctoral degree; including degrees and certificates earned from technical schools; or an academic certificate from an Educational Institution. Approved Courses also include education courses that increase general competency skills (arithmetic, reading, writing, basic computing) offered by an Educational Institution. A program through which an employee obtains a license or certification from an Educational Institution or as a result of passing a uniform examination, such as a CPA, PHR, or PE, may also be submitted for consideration as an Approved Course under this policy.

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).

Educational Institution – A reputable school or institution possessing an acceptable level of ability and performance in an area of education, training, or practice.

Impacted Classification Employee - All full-time regular employees assigned to the Fare Collection Department, including Supplemental Toll Collectors, Compliance Department Ticket Systems Audit employees, or other positions that may be impacted by the bumping process of these employees, hired on or before December 31, 2020.

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

Successful Completion - The employee’s receipt of a license, certification, degree, or, in the case of a course, an acceptable passing grade. 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.

E. PROCEDURES:

1. Approval

- a. Impacted Classification Employees must complete a Tuition Reimbursement Request form (available in the HR Forms section of the Commission Intranet) prior to participating in an Approved 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 review.

- b. The Director of Human Resources will approve or disapprove the request and notify the department head, supervisor, and the employee of the decision in writing.
- 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 written verification of Successful Completion of an Approved 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;
- A certificate or license; or
- The official transcript from the institution with grade.

Note: The Commission may also ask the employee to sign a release authorizing the Commission to solicit the required documentation and/or information from a designated third party. Providing false information may result in loss of eligibility for tuition reimbursement and/or disciplinary action in accordance with the Commission's Code of Conduct and Employee Handbook.

- 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.

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.