

Educational and Training Opportunities

Responsible Office:
VCU Human Resources

POLICY STATEMENT AND PURPOSE

Virginia Commonwealth University is dedicated to providing training and professional development opportunities for faculty and staff and offers a variety of ways for employees to continue their education and enhance their professional development and growth.

WHO SHOULD READ THIS POLICY

All faculty and staff should read this policy.

RELATED DOCUMENTS

- State Policy 4.10, Annual Leave
- State Policy 4.15, Educational Leave
- State Policy 4.55, Sick Leave
- State Policy 5.05, Employee Training and Development
- State Policy 5.10, Educational Assistance
- VCU Educational Leave Agreement and Promissory Note
- VCU Educational Opportunities Guidelines
- VCU Tuition Reimbursement/Certification Form
- VCU Tuition Waiver Application for Full-time Faculty and Classified Staff
- VCU Tuition Waiver Application for Adjunct Faculty
- VCU Study Research Leave Policy

CONTACTS

VCU Human Resources officially interprets this policy and shall revise or eliminate any or all parts as necessary to meet

Initial Policy Approved: 12/1/93

Last Revised: 1/16/09

Revision History: 8/1/98

11/1/00

1/1/04

11/1/06

11/1/07

the changing needs of Virginia Commonwealth University.
Please direct policy questions to VCU Human Resources.

DEFINITIONS

Educational Leave

A leave of absence to participate in or complete an approved educational course.

Tuition Reimbursement

Reimbursement of costs required for completion of an approved, work-related educational course at an institution other than VCU.

Tuition Waiver

Pre-payment of costs required for completion of an approved educational course at VCU.

PROCEDURES

Guidelines

Detailed procedural information for all educational and training opportunities is available in the Human Resources Educational and Training Opportunities Guidelines.

Classes during Work Hours

Courses should be taken during non-working hours. If a course is taken during working hours because it is not offered at other times, it is important to ensure compliance with the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) as follows:

- If the employee's position is "exempt," the manager may adjust the employee's work schedule to achieve a complete 40-hour workweek.
- If the employee's position is "non-exempt," contact your HR Generalist at hrgen@vcu.edu for guidance.

Tuition Waiver

Tuition waivers are available as described below (see sections on faculty and classified employees and adjunct faculty). They may be used for undergraduate, graduate, or first professional degree courses for academic credit at VCU.

The tuition waiver covers standard undergraduate and graduate tuition, university fee, student activity fee, student government fee, technology fee and capital outlay fee. The tuition waiver does not cover audited courses, individual lessons, private music lessons, nonstandard undergraduate and graduate tuition, books, supplies, program/course fees or English language courses.

The tuition waiver cannot be retroactively applied to previous semesters. Courses do not have to be job-related and should be taken during non-work hours. Before submitting a tuition waiver application, the employee must have on file an "Application for Virginia In-State Tuition Rates" with VCU Records and Registration so it can be determined whether the employee is eligible for in-state tuition rates, pursuant to Section 23-7.4 of the Code of Virginia.

An employee will be responsible for paying the appropriate costs of tuition and fees for tuition waived courses in which he/she withdraws, receives a grade of less than "C", fails in a pass/fail course, or in the event the employee voluntarily separates from employment or is separated for cause by the institution prior to completing a tuition-waived course.

Faculty and Classified Employees: Employees may take a maximum of six credit hours per semester.

Eligibility: The tuition waiver program is available to all full-time (100% FTE) faculty and classified employees who are:

- compensated from funds controlled within the institution, and
- employed and actively working (i.e., not on leave with or without pay) on the first day of classes for any given semester.

Full-time faculty, including those not teaching during the summer, may take a maximum of six credit hours in the summer semester according to "University

Enrollment Services Workload Regulations" provided they are returning to employment with VCU in the fall. Employees on workers' compensation or family and medical leave with pay are eligible for tuition waiver provided they began the course while working full time.

The following employees are not eligible for tuition waiver: hourly; post-doctoral fellows; part-time; those on educational leave with or without pay; and those on conditional, personal, or disciplinary leave without pay.

Application for Tuition Waiver: Participation in this program is by application to the department head, who will approve or deny the request prior to registration. If an ineligible employee is granted a tuition waiver by their department, the department is charged for the cost of tuition and fees.

Adjunct Faculty Employees: Adjunct faculty may take one course (one to three credit hours) after completion of teaching courses equivalent to nine credit hours.

Eligibility: The tuition waiver program is available to adjunct faculty who have completed teaching courses equivalent to nine credit hours. The tuition waiver must be used within the three-semester period immediately following the completion of teaching the nine credit hours. The summer semester counts as a semester. A new adjunct tuition waiver may be earned upon completion of teaching an additional nine credit hours.

Adjunct faculty who have not completed teaching courses equivalent to nine credit hours or who have failed to make use of the tuition waiver within the three-semester period immediately following completion of teaching nine credit hours are not eligible.

Application for Tuition Waiver: Participation in this program is by application to the respective supervisor; Director, Department Head or Chair; Dean; Vice President for Health Sciences (for MCV Campus employees), and Provost or designee (for all), who will

approve or deny the request prior to registration. If an ineligible employee is granted a tuition waiver by his/her department, the department is charged for the cost of tuition and fees.

Tuition Reimbursement

Full-time faculty and classified employees may be reimbursed for job-related courses taken at other educational institutions provided they are not offered at VCU and are directly related to the employee's job.

The employee may enroll in a maximum of six credit hours per semester. If, during any semester, the employee is taking courses through the tuition waiver program, the total amount of credits allowed is six for all courses. Courses are taken for academic credit and should be scheduled during non-working hours.

The employee must complete the Tuition Reimbursement/Certification Form and is responsible for submitting a request to the department head prior to registering for a class. Department head approval verifies both the employee's eligibility and the availability of departmental funds. Upon completion of a course with a grade of "C" or better, or a "pass" in a pass/fail course, the employee submits the receipt and grade to the department for tuition reimbursement from departmental funds.

Educational Leave of Absence (ELOA) with One-Half Pay or Without Pay

This benefit is available for a maximum of one year to full-time faculty and classified employees, regardless of their funding source, who:

- a. have been employed by the University for at least one year;
- b. are in good standing with the University, as determined by the appropriate department head;
- c. have been accepted into an approved course of study at an accredited institution of higher learning; and
- d. obtain the proper approvals at least 30 days in advance as noted below.

The employee must submit to the appropriate vice president a written request for ELOA. The request for leave should include a copy of the school's acceptance for study and recommendation from the department head or dean.

The appropriate vice president may approve the leave with or without pay for staff employees provided there are sufficient department funds and staffing and the planned course work is job related or in the institution's best interest. The Board of Visitors approves educational leave for faculty.

Employees do not accrue annual, sick, or holiday leave while on educational leave. Existing leave balances are retained for use upon an employee's return from educational leave. Consult Human Resources for assistance.

Upon approval of the request, Human Resources completes the calculations of salary and repayment terms and forwards the Educational Leave Agreement and Promissory Note to the appropriate vice president for final signatures. Completion of the Agreement also ensures continuation of benefits.

Repayment to the University is made either by return to employment with the department from which the leave was taken (for a period equal to at least twice the period of absence) or by reimbursing the actual salary paid during the leave (regardless of funding source) plus a pre-determined interest rate.

Departments must notify Human Resources if the employee terminates employment prior to completing the service payback requirement. Human Resources will work with the employee to develop a repayment schedule.

University Training and Development Programs

Human Resources offers a variety of open enrollment training opportunities to faculty and staff during work hours. Departmental consultations and customized training programs also are available.

Employees complete and have their supervisor sign an in-house course registration form. Costs associated with the programs are charged to the employee's departmental budget.

Outside Seminars and Continuing Education

Full-time employees may take seminars through the State Department of Human Resource Management's Personnel Development Services (PDS) or other continuing education resources provided similar training opportunities are not available through University training resources. Information about outside seminars is available through the Human Resource Office of Training and Development.

The employee requests prior approval in writing from the department head to register for an outside seminar and completes the Tuition Reimbursement/Certification Form.

The department handles the employee's registration. Tuition, including books and supplies, may be covered by departmental funds if the course is job-related and required by the manager. (Books and supplies typically are not covered by departmental funds if the course is not job-related or required by the manager.) Employees are paid for attending a seminar during work hours.

Courses at Other Educational Institutions

Full-time faculty and classified employees may be reimbursed for job-related courses taken at other educational institutions provided they are not offered at VCU and are directly related to the employee's job.

The employee may enroll in a maximum of six credit hours per semester. If, during any semester, the employee is taking courses through the tuition waiver program, the total amount of credits allowed is six for all courses. Courses are taken for academic credit and should be scheduled during non-working hours.

The employee must complete the Tuition Reimbursement/Certification Form and is responsible for submitting a request to the department head prior to registering for a class. Department head approval verifies both the employee's eligibility and the availability of departmental funds. Upon completion of a course with a grade of "C" or better, or a "pass" in a pass/fail course, the employee submits the receipt and grade to the department for tuition reimbursement from departmental funds.