

# PIEDMONT VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

## VIII – HUMAN RESOURCES / PERSONNEL POLICIES

### VIII – 3.0 EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

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<b>Policy #:</b>	VIII – 3.0
<b>Effective:</b>	
<b>Revised:</b>	2/1/07 8/5/08
<b>Responsible Dept.:</b>	HR

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#### I. PURPOSE

To provide educational assistance to full-time PVCC employees taking graduate and undergraduate courses or pursuing job related degrees, professional certification or licensure under the VCCS Educational Assistance Policy. Educational assistance is neither a guaranteed benefit nor an entitlement of employment at PVCC, and is limited by the availability of funds.

#### II. EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE WITHOUT LEAVE

##### 1. Eligibility

**Meeting eligibility requirements does not guarantee approval for receipt of educational assistance.**

- 1.1. Full-time classified staff and teaching, professional and administrative faculty are eligible for financial educational assistance under the policy.
- 1.2. New employees are immediately eligible for financial educational assistance under the policy.

##### 2. Financial Assistance

- 2.1. Requests for financial assistance must be submitted each semester, even for multi-year programs.
- 2.2. The college will pay up front for courses taken at PVCC.
- 2.3. The college will support employees on a reimbursement basis for the cost of tuition and mandatory fees for successfully completed coursework as follows:
  - 2.3.1. The benchmark for the maximum allowable reimbursement on tuition and mandatory fees for undergraduate and graduate courses will be based on courses offered at public Virginia institutions of higher education.
  - 2.3.2. No assistance will be provided for expenses other than tuition and mandatory fees (i.e. no assistance is provided for books, supplies, travel, or other related costs)
  - 2.3.3. Tuition for faculty and staff on restricted funding can only be paid from the restricted funds. Therefore, the grant administrator should be consulted on the eligibility of the employee for payment of tuition and mandatory fees. For employees supported partially by restricted funding, the source of funds for the tuition assistance can be prorated accordingly.
- 2.4. Financial Educational Assistance will be awarded on a reimbursement basis, subject to:
  - 2.4.1. The satisfactory completion of the course. Satisfactory completion requires a grade “C” or higher for undergraduate courses and a grade of “B” or higher for graduate courses, or the minimum specified by the institution for graduate credit. In the event that a letter grade is not awarded for an undergraduate or graduate credit course, the designation of “Passed” is

- sufficient;
- 2.4.2. Submission of the grade report, and
- 2.4.3. A paid receipt verifying the cost to the employee
- 2.5. Financial assistance will be limited to six (6) credit hours per semester.

### 3. Course Approval Procedure:

- 3.1. Employees should complete the form **VCCS-16-Educational Assistance Request** *and* either the **PVCC Educational Assistance Request** form to request approval from their immediate supervisor for educational assistance. The immediate supervisor should review requests carefully and consult with Human Resources on eligibility. The supervisor must forward requests to appropriate president staff member for further processing.
- 3.2. The Supervisor should submit requests to the appropriate president staff member ***no later than July 1 for Fall semester, December 1 for Spring semester, and May 1 for Summer semester.***
- 3.3. Employees are limited to not more than six (6) credit hours of course work per semester. The President may approve course work in excess of six (6) credit hours provided it is in the interest of the effective and efficient operation of the college.
- 3.4. The employee must submit documentation of acceptance to a degree granting program, including the entire program requirements, from an accredited institution if the class is part of a degree requirement.
- 3.5. The course must be job-related as determined by the immediate supervisor for classes not part of a degree program.
- 3.6. The approval process goes from the immediate supervisor to the appropriate President's Staff member to the President. The immediate supervisor and President's staff member decide whether to make a recommendation to the President for approval of the request. If a recommendation is not made, the reason must be stated.
- 3.7. The President will make the final decision on each request, based on the recommendation.
- 3.8. All approvals for educational assistance are subject to the availability of funds. If there are more requests for educational assistance than there is money budgeted:
  - 3.8.1.1. first priority will be given to previous college commitments (multi-year degree/award or education plans)
  - 3.8.1.2. job required courses
  - 3.8.1.3. job related courses
  - 3.8.1.4. required courses for the completion of a degree
  - 3.8.1.5. appropriate professional development
- 3.9. PVCC will commit to a multi-year degree or educational plan on a case-by-case basis. The entire degree program requirements must be presented for consideration. If a multi-year degree or educational plan is approved, the employee must sign the Multi-Year Educational Aid Agreement and remain with the college at least one (1) year after completing the degree/award/plan or repay the entire amount for all courses.
- 3.10. The employee will be notified in writing of the costs to be covered by the college and those to be borne by the individual, if any. HR will return copies of the requests and related documentation to employees. Original documents will be maintained in the employee's personnel file.
- 3.11. Educational and training commitments should be reflected in the annual performance planning and evaluation documents agreed to by the supervisor and employee each year.

### 4. Work Hours

- 4.1. Courses may not be taken during work hours if they are available during the employee's non-work hours.
- 4.2. For courses offered only during work hours, the employee's supervisor has the option of approving or disapproving the course. For courses taken during work hours, employees must use appropriate leave or, if approved by their supervisor, adjust their work hours.

4.3. Faculty are required to ensure that courses do not conflict with teaching and college responsibilities.

## 5. Payment

Employees pay the required tuition and fees and are reimbursed for the costs when the course is completed and appropriate documentation is submitted.

## 6. Additional Conditions

6.1. Employees receiving educational assistance for a degree/award or educational professional plan are required to repay the amount in full if they terminate employment at PVCC within one (1) year of completion of the course. For employees receiving a tuition waiver for a PVCC course, no repayment is required upon termination of employment.

6.2. PVCC will commit to a multi-year degree/award or educational plan. The employee must remain with the college at least one (1) year after completing the degree/award/plan or repay the entire amount for all courses.

## 7. Taxes

7.1. Taxes will be deducted from tuition reimbursements in accordance with existing federal and state policies. Currently, reimbursements up to \$5,250 in a calendar year for courses that are job related or part of a degree program are not taxed. Additionally, reimbursements above the \$5,250 may not be taxed if the education is deemed by the supervisor and approved by the President to be courses or part of a program that will maintain or improve skills needed in the job. This determination must be made in writing prior to the employee's registration in the class.

## III. EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE WITH LEAVE

### 1. Eligibility

**Meeting eligibility requirements does not guarantee approval for receipt of educational assistance.**

1.1. Classified employees should normally have completed at least three (3) years of service with the VCCS.

1.2. Teaching faculty, counselors, and librarians should normally be eligible for, or have received a multi-year appointment.

1.3. Administrative and other professional faculty should normally have completed a minimum of three (3) years of service in the VCCS.

1.4. The President may waive the eligibility requirements in the interest of the effective and efficient operation of the college. When eligibility requirements are waived, an explanatory justification statement approved by the President shall be attached to the VCCS-16.

### 2. Leave Approval Procedure

2.1. For educational assistance that includes educational leave with full pay, partial pay or without pay:

2.1.1. Employees must request in writing educational assistance with paid or unpaid leave at least one semester prior to the start of the leave. The request should identify the length of time and the amount of pay being requested.

2.1.2. The base salary in effect on the last workday prior to the period of educational leave will be used to compute the partial pay. The base will be adjusted for merit increases at the time the increases become effective for all state employees.

2.1.3. The first day of the fall or spring semester will be the effective date when placing nine (9) month faculty on educational leave with or without pay. The last day worked before the leave period start will be used for placing other employees on educational leave with or

with out pay.

- 2.1.4. For educational leave, the college will prepare a letter stating the terms and length of the employee's leave. It will address the effect of the leave period on salary, benefits, retirement, and the timeframe to notify the college of the return to full-time employment.
- 2.1.5. Employees going on leave with pay will execute a promissory note. The promissory note will be adjusted to reflect any merit increases which occur during the leave period.
- 2.1.6. Educational leave with or without pay is limited to twelve (12) months. An extension of twelve (12) months may be granted by the president.
- 2.1.7. Employees receiving leave with pay must execute a promissory note for the total amount of salary to be paid and/or costs paid by the college. The note will be executed on the first day of the leave and interest will begin to accrue on the day study is terminated.
- 2.1.8. Employees receiving educational leave with pay will be required to work a period twice that of the leave period.

#### **IV. EXCEPTIONS**

Exceptions to this policy will be made only by the President.