

Article 29 - Educational Reimbursement

A. Tuition Assistance: To assist bargaining unit employees in their efforts to increase their effectiveness in their current jobs and/or help them establish eligibility for additional responsibility for positions at UVMCC by helping them to defray the costs of higher education.

B. Eligibility:

1. Full and part time bargaining unit employees are eligible for tuition reimbursement after six (6) months of service.
2. Bargaining unit employees are eligible to receive standard tuition reimbursement of three thousand two hundred dollars (\$3,200.00) per fiscal year upon meeting procedural criteria (see "procedures" below). Reimbursement for part time bargaining unit employees is pro-rated based on paid hours from the preceding twelve (12) months prior to the approval date.
3. Bargaining unit employees who have been employed for more than five (5) years are eligible for additional tuition reimbursement up to one thousand eight hundred dollars (\$1,800.00) per fiscal year. Reimbursement for part time bargaining unit employees is pro-rated based on paid hours from the preceding twelve (12) months prior to the approval date.

C. Course Criteria:

1. Course(s) only at an accredited post-secondary institution:
 - a. Courses that are required to attain an Associates, Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral level degree.
 - i) matriculating students must provide proof of degree enrollment with their application;
 - ii) non-matriculating students may receive coverage for up to 6 courses until they are formally enrolled in a program. The courses must be required for the degree;
 - iii) matriculating students are encouraged to enroll in elective courses that are job-related.
 - b. College Level Examination Program (CLEP) offering credits may be approved. Each exam may count as one course.
 - c. Courses must:
 - i) maintain or improve the employee's skills in their present position or
 - ii) directly relate to the attainment of another position in the department to which the employee may reasonably aspire or
 - iii) provide requisite training for the employee to reasonably expect promotion or transfer to another department or type of work to the end that the employee and UVMCC may mutually benefit.
2. An organizationally sanctioned study program that prepares a bargaining unit employee for nationally recognized certification/licensure exams. The Director of the bargaining unit's Department must approve the program.
3. Workshops, seminars and programs with CEU's attached are not reimbursable under the tuition policy.

D. Application Procedures:

1. Applications must be originated by the bargaining unit employee prior to the course start date and the bargaining unit employee must obtain practice supervisor/manager signature approval and Director level signature approval prior to submitting the form to Organizational Development (OD).
 2. Notification of approval will occur within two (2) weeks of receipt of all required paperwork.
- E. Course Completion/Reimbursement Procedures:
1. A grade of "C" or better and/or "Pass" for undergraduates is required for reimbursement.
 2. A grade of "B" or better and/or "Pass" for graduate courses is required for reimbursement.
 3. Reimbursement is on a fiscal year basis (October 1st - September 30th). Grades must be received in OD prior to September 25th in order to receive reimbursement. Requests for extension of the September 25 deadline, which are due to reasons beyond the control of the bargaining unit employee, will not be unreasonably denied. Tuition reimbursements will not be carried over from one fiscal year to another.
- F. Compensation for Training and Education:

Any hourly paid bargaining unit employee required by UVMMC to participate in or attend training or educational programs which are held at times other than during a bargaining unit employee's scheduled work hours shall be paid the applicable hourly rate of pay.

Continuing Education

Annually UVMMC will budget \$100,000 and 450 conference days of eight (8) hours to cover the cost of conferences and training reasonably related to bargaining unit employee's area of practice. The budget items under this section will not be frozen and will be available during the fiscal year. As long as the continuing education funds provided under this Section are available, requests to attend a conference will not be unreasonably denied. If a cost center has unused funds at the end of any fiscal year, the funds may be used to reimburse technical bargaining unit employees for professional society dues or any unused funds will roll-over to the next fiscal year, but must be spent in the subsequent fiscal year.

G. Scholarship Program

UVMMC and the VFNHP agree that the retention of bargaining unit employees is an important goal of the parties. The Scholarship Program is intended to support career development at UVMMC. Scholarship funds may be used toward the cost of tuition, books, applications and other academic expenses for those pursuing degrees in a related health care field approved through the Allied Health Scholarship Program. Four scholarships will be awarded annually for seven-thousand, two hundred and fifty dollars (\$7,250).

Bargaining unit employees who participate in the Scholarship Program will be required to sign a Work Agreement and agree to the following commitments:

Criteria:

Bargaining unit employees would apply on an annual basis, and all qualified applicants would be reviewed by Organizational Development. The scholarship would be awarded on the following criteria:

- a. Employment by UVMMC for one year or more.

- b. Acceptance or ongoing enrollment in an Associate's, Bachelor's, Master' or Doctorate Degree in a related health care field, or Advanced Practice Concentration.
- c. A history of solid job performance.
- d. A completed application with two professional letters of recommendation, one from the bargaining unit employee's immediate supervisor.
- e. Review of a personal written essay.

Recipient Commitments:

Any bargaining unit employee receiving the scholarships would make the following commitments:

1. Bargaining unit employees would be required to sign an agreement to work at UVMMC for a minimum of three years following course completion. Should the employee voluntarily terminate employment for any reason other than incapacitating ill health before the three year commitment is met, they would be required to pay UVMMC a prorated portion of the tuition.
2. Bargaining unit employees must be continually enrolled during the scholarship award period, taking a minimum of six credits per semester.
3. Bargaining unit employees would be ineligible for any future scholarship dollars if commitments were not met.
4. Grades of C or better would be required each semester for undergraduate courses and a B or better for graduate courses.
5. Bargaining unit employees would be required to work a minimum of 20 hours per week and would be required to work with their manager for any proposed reduction in hours.

Scholarship Funding:

Scholarship dollars would be determined annually based on the annual fiscal budget review and approval. The scholarship awards will be given to the recipient in two installments, one at the beginning of the fall semester and one at the beginning of the winter/spring semester. Administration of the scholarship funds will be administered by Organizational Development. Applications for the Scholarship dollars would be available from Organizational Development.