

**Southwest Virginia Community College (SWCC)  
Educational Assistance Policy  
System Office Supplement**

Purpose:

To establish an educational assistance policy for SWCC employees taking graduate or undergraduate courses under the VCCS Educational Assistance Policy contained in Section 3.10 of the VCCS Policy Manual (Professional Development).

Eligibility:

- Any employee who is employed on a full-time basis will be eligible for educational assistance for tuition and mandatory fees.
- Part-time employees will be considered if funds are available.
- P-14 employees must be working at least 20 hours per week and they must be employed at least 6 months to qualify for educational assistance.
- Adjunct Faculty members must be employed at SWCC for at least two semesters during the current and previous academic year. It is preferable that the classes being taken be related to the adjunct's teaching field but is not required.
- For educational assistance that includes educational leave with or without pay, employees should have completed three (3) years of service with the VCCS.

Types of Support

SWCC will support eligible staff members for the following:

- any successfully completed coursework (Grade C or better) required for a degree;
- any successfully completed coursework required for a formal award such as a certificate, if the formal award is work related and has the prior approval of the supervisor;

- Any successfully completed coursework not related to obtaining a degree or other formal award, only if it is work related and has the prior approval of the supervisor.

### Course Approval Procedure

Staff must complete the available form (VCCS-16) to request approval from their supervisor for support **prior to registering for the class**. **Employees will complete a VCCS-16 and submit the form with appropriate approvals to the President's Office no later than one week before the start of the class(es)**.

### Supervisory Responsibility

Supervisors are responsible for requesting that sufficient funds for each staff member be included in the SWCC "Professional Development" account at the beginning of each fiscal year. Otherwise, sufficient funds must be available in the section budget in order for the supervisor to approve the course request. For restricted employees, the grant administrator shall determine the eligibility of the appropriate grant funds to be used for such purposes. For any class(es) that are not part of a degree program, the supervisor must certify that it is directly related to the employee's current position responsibilities.

Education and training commitments should be reflected in the annual performance planning and evaluation documents agreed to by the supervisor and staff member each year.

### Financial Support Limits:

SWCC will support employees with the cost of tuition and mandatory fees for successfully completed coursework as follows:

- From the associate level through the baccalaureate will be reimbursed at a rate equal to the SWCC in-state rate. **For FY 2023-2024, the rate is \$163.36 per credit hour.**
- Graduate courses will be reimbursed at a rate equal to 125% of the SWCC in-state rate. **For FY 2023-2024, the rate is \$204.20 per credit hour.**
- Mandatory fees can be paid only when the total amount of support does not exceed the total amount of the six credits for tuition.

- No support will be provided for expenses other than tuition and mandatory fees (i.e. no support is provided for books, supplies, travel, or other related costs).
- **Support will be limited to six credit hours per semester.**
- Tuition support for staff on restricted funding can only be paid from the restricted funds, therefore eligibility of a staff member for payment of tuition and mandatory fees should be determined by the grant administrator. For staff supported partially by restricted funding, the source of funds for the tuition support can be prorated accordingly.

#### Additional Funding:

Divisional OTPS may be used to provide funding if available in addition to the reimbursement amounts in the Financial Support Limit section.

#### Duplicate Degrees:

Unless required or recommended by SWCC, support will not be approved for coursework needed to obtain a "second" degree at the same level already.

#### Work Hours:

Courses may not be taken during work hours if they are available during the employee's non-work hours. 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.

#### Additional Conditions:

An employee may be required to commit to repayment of tuition reimbursements if the employee should decide to leave the employment at SWCC within a 6-month time frame after a reimbursement.

#### Taxes:

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 \$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. Based on the current reimbursement schedule this should not be an issue for the College or the student.

Payment Options:

1. Reimbursement: Employees will pay the required tuition and fees and are reimbursed for the costs when the course is completed and appropriate documentation is submitted. **Reimbursement requests must be submitted to the President's Office within ten days of receipt of course grades.** Submissions must include documentation of the successful completion of coursework (grade C or above) a copy of the original request form and a copy of the student's account which shows payment for the class was made and received by the institution that is offering the class.
2. Up-front Payment: SWCC will not pay for the course at the time of registration.

Exceptions to Policy

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

Please complete and sign below then submit this page of the SWCC Educational Assistance Policy with the VCCS Educational Assistance Request Form (VCCS-16).

I have read, understand, and will comply with the SWCC Educational Assistance Policy.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date