

**CALIFORNIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
STAFF PERSONNEL MEMORANDA**

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| Subject: <p style="text-align:center">Tuition Reimbursement Plan</p> | Memo No. 15-15 Pages: 5 Date: December 4, 2006 |
| Approved by: Thomas W. Schmitt, Associate Vice President for Human Resources | |

(This supersedes Memo No. 15-15, dated January 1, 2003)

1.0 Policy

The Tuition Reimbursement Plan (Plan) provides eligible employees with the opportunity to obtain, maintain, or improve job-related or career related skills and competencies through participation in courses of study at accredited colleges and universities or organizations specializing in job and career-related education and training.

2.0 Employee Eligibility

Tuition reimbursement is available to regular, benefit basis employees who have been employed continuously for at least six months of service. Tuition reimbursement for graduate courses is limited to full-time, regular, benefit basis employees.

3.0 School Eligibility

3.1 Baccalaureate and graduate level courses must be taken for academic credit through colleges and universities accredited by the following regional organizations:

- 3.1.1 Western Association of Schools and Colleges
- 3.1.2 Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges
- 3.1.3 Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
- 3.1.4 North Central Association of Colleges and Schools
- 3.1.5 Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
- 3.1.6 New England Association of Schools and Colleges

3.2 Courses leading to certification must be taken at a school or through an organization that is authorized by the certifying authority to provide such educational programs.

4.0 Course Eligibility

4.1 Professional Certification

Programs leading to professional certification must in a specific job-related field or professional discipline, and should provide the participating employee with skills, knowledge and competencies applicable to their current position. The maximum tuition and fee reimbursement for professional certification programs is \$3,000 per calendar year.

4.2 Academic Courses for Career Development

Undergraduate and graduate level academic courses taken as part of a career development program should provide an employee with skills, knowledge and competencies which can be applied to and/or support specific career development plans. For undergraduate, graduate, university extension, university continuing education, and audited courses, tuition and eligible fees may be approved for reimbursement up to a maximum of \$5,250 per calendar year.

4.3 Graduate Programs

Job-related graduate level academic programs, up to and including those leading to a doctoral degree, must provide an employee with skills, knowledge, and competencies that are specifically applicable to his/her current position classification. The maximum tuition and fee reimbursement for graduate level courses at an accredited university is \$10,000 per calendar year.

5.0 Reimbursable Tuition and Fees

In order to be eligible for reimbursement, an employee must first obtain the supervisor's approval for the program prior to enrollment. The employee's supervisor must review and certify that the program for which the employee is applying meets the specified criteria. Following certification by the employee's supervisor, the proposed course(s) must be assessed and approved in advance by Staff Education and Career Development section of Human Resources.

- 5.1** For courses that are taken for credit as part of a degree program, tuition and eligible fees are reimbursed only for successfully completed courses with a final grade of "C" or equivalent, or higher.
- 5.2** For courses leading to professional certification, course registration costs will be reimbursed only after the employee submits evidence of having successfully completed the course requirements leading to professional certification.
- 5.3** Graduate tuition reimbursement is generally limited to one master's degree and one doctoral degree per employee. Tuition reimbursement for an additional graduate degree will be handled as an exception and requires approval of the chief human resources officer or designee.
- 5.4** Approval of graduate tuition reimbursement for a law degree may be granted only if the employee's supervisor certifies that the program is specifically relevant to duties and responsibilities of the applicant's current position classification. Approval of tuition reimbursement for courses taken as part of a law degree will not be granted for "career development" programs.
- 5.5** Employees who are completing graduate courses that are not part of a Masters or Ph.D. program, or who are graduate students granted "special status" (e.g., completing undergraduate deficiencies due to a change in field of study), may be approved for reimbursement of tuition and eligible fees up to a maximum of \$5,250 per calendar year.
- 5.6** The maximum reimbursement for all courses of study, including certification, career development and job-related graduate study combined, will not exceed \$10,000 per calendar year.

- 5.7** Required fees eligible for tuition reimbursement subject to the limitations set forth in 5.1 through 5.5 above include the State of California's equivalent to tuition fees (i.e., state education fees, state university fees, state college fees, junior and community college enrollment and registration fees for California residents), continuous enrollment fees for thesis/dissertation, microfilming or binding of dissertation or thesis fees, computer fees, and laboratory fees charged to all students and are directly applicable to the approved course(s).
- 5.8** In the event of a layoff, work hour reduction, or leave of disability, reimbursement will cover courses that are in progress, provided that the employee successfully completes them with a final grade of "C" or equivalent, or higher, and fulfills the other provisions of this policy.

6.0 Non-Reimbursable Tuition and Fees

- 6.1** Except for courses leading to professional certification as described above, the following do not qualify for tuition reimbursement: professional seminars and workshops, symposia, short (non-credit) courses; college/university entrance exams; review programs for entrance exams; or courses at non-accredited institutions.
- 6.2** Itemized fees not reimbursable to employees include, but are not limited to, application/pre-admission registration fees, transcript fees, test preparation fees, admission testing fees, placement fees, course waiver or challenge fees, book costs, travel costs (i.e., transportation, housing, meal, etc.), parking fees, equipment/kit purchase costs, tutoring fees, deferred tuition fees, registration fees, late registration fees, course addition, deletion or transfer fees, student activity fees, student union fees, petition fees, recreation fees, health coverage costs, dissertation or thesis typing fees, development or foundation fees, institution fees, alumni fees, and other similar fees.
- 6.3** Tuition and eligible fees are not reimbursable in the following situations:
- 6.3.1** The employee receives duplicate or comparable fees from another institution or agency, grant, scholarship, Veterans' Education Benefit, or other financial aid.
 - 6.3.2** The employee voluntarily terminates employment, or is terminated for cause, prior to course completion.
 - 6.3.3** The employee has not received advance approval, particularly those associated with a degree program.
- 6.4** An employee normally is not reimbursed for a course tuition which was previously reimbursed under this Plan. Exception may be granted for some courses involving research or extended study, but reimbursement for them will require advance approval of the chief human resources officer or designee.

7.0 Tax Considerations

The taxability of payments under the tuition reimbursement plan is in accordance with Internal Revenue Service guidelines applicable at the time an employee applies for reimbursement of tuition expenses.

8.0 Work Schedule Limitations

- 8.1** Participation in the tuition reimbursement program should not in any way interfere with the employee's ability to perform her or his job.
- 8.2** Unless approval of both the employee's supervisor and the Compensation Office in Human Resources is obtained in advance, an employee may not take a course during scheduled working hours unless the course is offered on Campus or at JPL as part of each entity's on-site education program. When an employee's educational program requires being away from his/her job during normal work hours, the employee and the supervisor must agree on such a schedule in advance and make necessary arrangements to assure that expectations for ongoing work assignments are met. No legal or contractual obligations for overtime premium can be incurred as a result of employees taking a course that will be reimbursed under this policy during his/her scheduled working hours. For additional information on Caltech's wage and hour policy, see Personnel Memoranda 11 and 11-1.

9.0 Plan Administration

- 9.1** To apply for tuition reimbursement, an employee should complete Form 15-15A (Academic Program Approval for Tuition Reimbursement Plan) and submit it to their supervisor for certification that the proposed program and course(s) meet criteria for reimbursement. After obtaining supervisory approval, but prior to enrolling in the course of study, the employee must forward Form 15-15A, along with material describing the program and course(s), to the Staff Education and Career Development Office in Human Resources. The employee's supervisor may include amplifying documentation in support of program or course approval.
- 9.2** Following its review of the employee's application for participation in the Tuition Reimbursement Plan, the Staff Education and Career Development Office in Human Resources will notify the employee in writing as to whether the application has been approved. Upon receiving written confirmation of approval, the employee must submit the following items at the beginning of each term:
 - 9.2.1** Request for Reimbursement of Tuition (Form PM 15-15B)
 - 9.2.2** A copy of the course syllabus

9.3 Within 30 days of completion of the course, the employee should submit the following documents to the Staff Education and Career Development Office:

9.3.1 A copy of the final grade

9.3.2 A copy of the receipt for payment of tuition and eligible fees

10.0 **Exceptions**

Any exception to this policy requires the approval of the Institute's chief human resources officer or designee.