

LOUISIANA COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM
Policy # 6.038

Title: Tuition Assistance for Full-Time Employees

<u>Authority:</u> Board Action	<u>Original Adoption:</u> December 10, 2014
	<u>Effective Date:</u> December 10, 2014
	<u>Last Revision:</u> December 10, 2014

With this policy, the Board of Supervisors establishes a practice of educational assistance for full-time unclassified employees of Louisiana's Community and Technical College System (LCTCS). To be eligible to receive educational assistance, the employee must have been employed at least one year in a full-time, permanent position and receive approval from his or her supervisor and the college chancellor, or the system president as applicable, or his or her designee. This policy meets the Board's commitment to employing highly qualified and educated faculty and staff. This policy is intended to guide LCTCS colleges in the development of college policy designed to provide tuition assistance. The college policy will determine allowances based on the Chancellor's/Director's or System President's discretion factoring financial circumstances of the college.

DEFINITIONS:

- Full-time Employee: An employee working 40 hours a week or 80 hours in a pay period; or, faculty placed under contract or under a letter of appointment to a permanent position for a period encompassing most or all of the entire academic year (i.e., faculty contracts or appointments of not less than 9 months). A student is not eligible if the individual's primary status is as a student, or the individual works in a student designated position, since this is intended as an employment benefit.
- Educational Assistance: Financial support for approved job related educational courses, professional certifications or licenses, or the acquisition of a degree. Financial support consists of the costs of tuition and applicable mandatory attendance fees.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS:

- Course Criteria: Requests for educational assistance must be for courses that are job related or part of a degree program. All academic courses must be taken at a Louisiana state college or university that is a regionally accredited institution.
- Employee Eligibility: Participation is limited to a full-time employee who has been employed at least one year in a full-time permanent position and who receives approval to register for the course(s) from his or her supervisor and chancellor (or president in the case of the board).
- Submission of Requests: Employees must request education assistance and receive approval prior to the start of class.
- Course Limits: Employees may take up to six credit hours of course work per semester (or the equivalent under other than regular semester systems).

- **Reimbursement:** Colleges and the board office should use the following procedures when reimbursing employees upon completion of appropriate courses.
 - Employees pay the required tuition and applicable mandatory attendance fees initially and are reimbursed for the costs when the course is completed and appropriate documentation is submitted.
 - The course must be completed satisfactorily with a grade of “C” or better, or “Pass” if a Pass/Fail course, to be eligible for reimbursement.
 - The employee must produce documented proof of successful completion of the course before reimbursement.
 - This benefit does not cover fees or financial penalties associated with a dropped course, a course from which the student withdraws, or other types of financial penalties due to failure by the student to meet set deadlines.
- **Continuation Requirements:** Any employee receiving tuition assistance will be required to sign an employment continuation agreement. When the tuition reimbursement payment is made, the employee will be required to sign an agreement to remain an employee of LCTCS for at least two months from the date of receipt (of the reimbursement payment) for each credit hour reimbursed. (For example, if 6 credit hours are taken, a continuation agreement of 12 months will be required.) If the employee separates from LCTCS prior to the end of the continuation period, the amount due back to the employer will be pro-rated.

EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

The employing institution can determine by policy whether to offer educational leave for a chosen course if it is taken during the employee’s work day. However, employees are encouraged to schedule courses with minimal disruption to their regular work schedule by taking courses outside of regular work hours, on-line, or making up work hours missed with the supervisor’s approval. In all such situations, the employee’s taking of a course should not adversely affect department services.

TUITION WAIVER

Employees taking courses at a Louisiana college or university are encouraged to first consider using LCTCS Human Resources Policy #6.037, “Tuition Exemption for Employees”, before requesting tuition assistance under this policy.

COLLEGE AGREEMENTS

To the extent possible in implementing this policy, LCTCS colleges should maximize the use of any available tuition/fee agreements with other four year universities or colleges in providing discounted tuition or fee rates for employees attending these institutions.

EXCEPTIONS

The college chancellor or president, as applicable, shall approve a policy exception if it is in the best interest of the college and/or LCTCS. Exceptions shall be justified, documented and kept on file at the college.