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**Owner:** Wynne Holmes: SUPERVISOR-LEAVE MANAGEMENT  
**Area:** Human Resources  
**References:**  
**Applicability:** All Entities

## Tuition Assistance Program

### PURPOSE:

This policy defines the support, staff eligibility, criteria and payment process of HonorHealth tuition benefits for college degree program credits.

### POLICY:

HonorHealth supports a continuing education program by offering reimbursement for tuition expense for all eligible employees who successfully complete college credit courses from a college accredited by the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) or a regional affiliate. Nursing degree programs are required to be recognized by the National League for Nursing (NLN) or the Commission for Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation, in addition to regional accreditation. The accreditation requirements may be waived at HR Leadership discretion to meet organizational business needs.

### DEFINITION

A credit course is a course or lab where an individual earns "hours of credit "rather than a program that awards clock hours for successful completion.

### PROCEDURES:

#### 1. ELIGIBILITY

At class start and through class end, including the reimbursement process, the employee must:

- A. Be actively employed in a full-time or part-time position working a schedule of thirty-two (32) hours or more per pay period for at least six (6) months from the most recent hire or status change date, exclusive of PRN (on-call) or temporary status; and
- B. Be in good performance standing; not in restrictive status or in violation of HonorHealth policies and procedures.

#### 2. CONDITIONS

- A. The Tuition Assistance program is only for tuition for credits, and clinical program lab fees only. It does not cover textbooks, e-books, course packets, course materials, equipment, site fees, distance learning fees, non-clinical course lab fees, personal expenses, and additional surcharges.

Employees receiving tuition assistance are responsible for paying any tuition or fees not covered by this policy directly to the school and adhering to the school's guidelines and policies surrounding payment and payment timelines. Payment may be required prior to course start date or at the time of course registration. If a student does not comply, the student may not be eligible for continued Tuition Assistance Program participation and will be held to the terms and conditions of the payback agreement (see Clause C below).

- B. Hourly compensation will not be paid for the hours of course work, except use of paid time off (PTO). The total paid hours in any pay period should not exceed the employee's regularly scheduled number of hours.
- C. Employees receiving tuition assistance must continue their employment with HonorHealth in a regular position working a minimum of 32 hours per pay period, exclusive of PRN (on-call) or temporary status, for a period of twenty-four (24) months after receipt of funds.

Any employee who receives tuition assistance funding and terminates their employment (or does not fulfill the worked hours or successful course completion requirements) prior to the completion of twenty-four (24) months of continued employment after receipt of such funds will be obligated to repay HonorHealth according to the repayment schedule described below.

- If an employee terminates their employment or reduces their hours below thirty-two (32) per pay period for any reason (except position elimination) within 12 months of a tuition assistance payment, the employee will be required to repay 100% of the tuition payment.
- If an employee terminates their employment or reduces their hours below thirty-two (32) per pay period for any reason (except position elimination) within 13-24 months of a tuition assistance payment, the employee will be required to repay 50% of the tuition payment.

Employees will be required to sign a payback agreement and must comply with the terms of the agreement.

Nothing in this policy constitutes a commitment or guarantee on the part of HonorHealth to provide continuing employment to the employee for a specific period of time or duration. Employment with HonorHealth is on an "at-will" basis.

- D. Tuition assistance funds will not be paid for repeated classes that were previously paid by HonorHealth.
- E. Non-credit classes, special executive development programs, workshops, seminars, and similar programs are not eligible for reimbursement through the Tuition Assistance Program.
- F. All courses that are part of an outlined/planned curriculum of a degree program that the employee has been accepted into, and all credit courses, are reimbursed. All courses and degree programs must be related to a career at HonorHealth.
- G. Exceptions to the requirement of being enrolled in a formal degree program, to take a single class; may be approved by SVP and Human Resources.
- H. To participate in the Tuition Assistance program, employees must visit, review and adhere to program guidelines available on the Tuition Assistance website which can be found on the company intranet.

### **3. TUITION REIMBURSEMENT FOR ALL ACADEMIC MAJORS**

- A. A Tuition Assistance Program Purchase Authorization (application) request must be submitted and approved within sixty (60) calendar days prior to course start date(s). The request cannot be submitted more than 60 days prior to the course(s) start date.
- B. Reimbursement is paid for the calendar year, provided the course is successfully completed with a "C" or better grade, or "pass". The tuition rate is paid at current in-state resident rate; other tuition types are not covered and will not be reimbursed. Reimbursement is limited to a maximum reimbursement schedule for qualified employees as maintained by the Human Resources. To receive reimbursement of your approved courses, grade reports must be submitted within forty-five (45) days of course completion.

Audited courses are not reimbursed.

- C. Other reimbursement sources (i.e., scholarships and grants) must be utilized first. The amount not reimbursed by other sources is eligible for reimbursement, provided all other criteria have been met.
- D. It is the responsibility of the employee to file tax forms accordingly for a reimbursement.
- E. Distance learning degree programs that are accredited by the HLC or its regional affiliates may be considered for reimbursement of college tuition, excluding added distance learning/provider fees.
- F. Performance equivalency exams are reimbursed provided all other criteria have been met.
- G. Non-clinical research or surveys, which are part of any course requirement, must be approved by the Chief Human Resources Officer and Vice President of Talent and People Development and subsequently by the Vice President responsible for the data, prior to initiation of the research or survey. The Research Committee (IRB) must approve all clinical research projects.

### **4. PREPAYMENT FOR CLINICAL MAJORS**

- A. HonorHealth offers up-front tuition payments, paid at an in-state resident rate, for those enrolled in college courses leading to professional certification, licensure or ability to practice in clinical areas for a position we utilize within our facilities. Pre-paid tuition assistance may also be offered to employees participating in a HonorHealth academic partnership program or an academic course or program that is delivered within a HonorHealth facility.
- B. Prepayment Applicants are still required to meet program eligibility requirements and conditions.
- C. A Prepayment Application form and itemized fee statement can be submitted up to ninety (90) calendar days prior to course start dates; however, must be submitted and approved no later than five (5) calendar days prior to course start dates.
- D. If an employee does not submit a grade within 45 days, any prepaid tuition provided to the employee must be returned to HonorHealth.
- E. If an employee receives a grade lower than a "C" for a prepaid course, any prepaid tuition provided to the employee must be returned to HonorHealth.
- F. If an employee terminates participation within a prepaid course, prior to the course's end date, any prepaid tuition provided to the employee must be returned to HonorHealth.

## ATTACHMENTS/FORMS:

- Application for Tuition Assistance Program (On-line application process via the Tuition Assistance program site located on the company intranet).
- Course Receipt(s).
- Grade report.
- Proof of financial aid (if applicable).

## CONTRIBUTORS/AUTHORS:

Human Resources

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### Attachments

No Attachments

### Approval Signatures

Step Description	Approver	Date
Final Approval	Wayne Frangesch: SVP, CHIEF HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER	12/21/2020
HR Leadership	Wynne Holmes: SUPERVISOR-LEAVE MANAGEMENT	12/21/2020
Management Review	Wynne Holmes: SUPERVISOR-LEAVE MANAGEMENT	12/17/2020
Policy Owner	Wynne Holmes: SUPERVISOR-LEAVE MANAGEMENT	12/17/2020

### Applicability

Deer Valley Medical Center, HonorHealth Foundation, HonorHealth Network Services, John C. Lincoln Medical Center, Neighborhood Outreach Access to Health (NOAH), Osborn Medical Center, Physician Network/Outpatient Sites, Shea Medical Center, Sonoran Crossing Medical Center, Thompson Peak Medical Center