

Shawnee State University

POLICY TITLE:	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (DEGREE AND NON-DEGREE)
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RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER
APPROVED BY:	BOARD OF TRUSTEES

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide eligible administrative employees (administrators and administrative technical support staff) with degree and non-degree professional development opportunities that encourage employees to pursue knowledge and skill enhancements important to career aspirations and that are vital to the success of the University. These programs are consistent with higher education industry standards and are an important component of the University’s overall employee-benefit program.

2.0 UNIVERSITY APPROVED OR REQUIRED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 2.1 The university supports both career and job-related professional development activities. It is expected that employees and supervisors will discuss professional development needs and opportunities during the annual performance evaluation process.
- 2.2 When an employee is required to attend a University-approved development program, training, or other educational activity, the time spent in attendance will be counted as time worked, and the associated fees and costs, (i.e., materials, travel, and per diem, etc.) will be paid by their department.

3.0 ELECTIVE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 3.1 The University will consider a request for an employee to enroll in an elective (not required) training or professional development program. The time attending such training or program will be non-compensable and any related expenditures will not be reimbursable (i.e., materials, travel, and per diem, etc.) unless otherwise specified in this policy.
- 3.2 To participate in an elective professional development program off campus (degree and non-degree), the employee must develop and submit a written plan through the applicable supervisory and management levels, including the President, requesting approval to participate in the program. In addition to providing the information prescribed in this section, approval will be subject to scheduling, staffing, and budget considerations. The written plan must include the following:

- 3.2.1 A description of the program and a concise explanation of the necessity to participate in such program;
- 3.2.2 The expected length of the program;
- 3.2.3 The relation of the program to the employee's current job responsibilities, how the program enhances the employee's department and the University, and how the program will assist the employee's transition into career-related positions at the University; and
- 3.2.4 The impact on the employee's workload and the workload of colleagues within the department.

4.0 ON-CAMPUS TUITION ASSISTANCE (UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE)

- 4.1 The University waives certain Shawnee State on-campus education costs for undergraduate and graduate courses as a means of encouraging administrative employees and their eligible dependents as defined in this policy to further their education.
- 4.2 The on-campus undergraduate education benefit waives instructional, technology, and general fees for courses including those delivered online as outlined in this policy. Where applicable, out-of-state surcharge fees are waived.
- 4.3 Employees and eligible dependents enrolled in a graduate program will be responsible for paying the difference between the on-campus graduate and undergraduate tuition rates for instructional, general, and technology rates, and out-of-state surcharge, if applicable, for one (1) graduate program.
 - 4.3.1 Employees enrolled in a graduate program prior to July 1, 2024 will not be responsible for paying the difference between the on-campus graduate and undergraduate tuition rates.
- 4.4 The on-campus education benefit does not cover the costs of special fees including but not limited to: course fees, program fees, bond fees, late payment fees, books, or supply fees. These costs, including those incurred by eligible dependent(s), are the responsibility of the employee.
- 4.5 If an employee and dependent is eligible for Pell or OCOG grants, such funds will apply against applicable educational expenses as stipulated by the grant.

5.0 ELIGIBILITY FOR ON-CAMPUS TUITION ASSISTANCE (UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE)

- 5.1 Full-time Administrative Employees (Actively employed)
 - 5.1.1 Upon completion of the new-hire probationary period, full-time administrative employees may take two (2) courses per semester (including main campus

courses delivered online). Those who are enrolled in an e-campus or hybrid program are permitted to take one (1) course per sub-session within a semester.

- 5.1.2 Administrative employees who are actively enrolled in a course of study prior to the commencement of an approved leave of absence (does not include involuntary administrative leave), temporary layoff or furlough status may continue that course of study.
- 5.1.3 Administrative employees are prohibited from completing coursework during work hours and are expected to register for classes that meet outside of their regular work schedules. In situations in which the course must be taken during the employee's regular work schedule, with written approval from his/her supervisor, an administrative employee may arrange for a flexible schedule in order to complete the required course. In no case will a schedule that would result in the employee being in overtime work status be approved.
- 5.1.4 The maximum benefit for a full-time administrative employee is 160 attempted credit hours for undergraduate courses and one (1) graduate degree program.

5.2 Dependents of Actively-Employed Full-Time Administrative Employees

- 5.2.1 Upon completion of the new-hire probationary period, dependents of full-time employees may enroll in as many hours per semester as allowed under the University's academic policies.
- 5.2.2 As used in this policy, an eligible dependent is defined as the spouse, or child 25 years of age or younger, and dependent as defined under IRS rulings, of full-time actively-employed administrative employees.
- 5.2.3 The maximum benefit for each dependent under this policy is 160 attempted credit hours for undergraduate courses and one (1) graduate degree program.

5.3 Retired Full-Time Administrative Employees and Dependents

- 5.3.1 A full-time administrative employee who has formally retired (disability or service) under an Ohio state pension system or approved alternative retirement system (ARP), receiving a pension benefit payment, not actively working as a re-employed retiree, and who has served at Shawnee State University for ten (10) continuous years or more in full-time status ("eligible retiree"), is eligible to receive undergraduate fee waiver benefits on a space-available basis not to exceed 160 attempted credit hours.
- 5.3.2 A dependent of an eligible retiree who is enrolled in a degree program at the time of the eligible retiree's retirement may continue to receive waivers for instructional, general, and technology fees and out of state surcharge where applicable in order to complete the current course of study, not to exceed a total of 160 attempted credit hours for undergraduate courses or one (1) graduate degree program.

5.3.3 Re-employed retirees will be eligible for tuition assistance based upon full or part-time status as defined in this policy.

5.4 Dependents of Full-Time Employees Deceased While In Active Status

5.4.1 A widow or widower and/or dependent child of a deceased full-time administrative employee with ten (10) years of continuous service is eligible to receive on-campus education benefits, as follows:

5.4.1.1 Must be enrolled in a degree program within one year of the active employee's date of death;

5.4.1.2 Will be registered on a space-available basis; and

5.4.1.3 Maximum tuition waiver is not to exceed 160 attempted credit hours for undergraduate courses or one (1) graduate degree program.

5.5 Part-time Administrative Employees and Eligible Dependents

Upon completion of the new-hire probationary period, actively-employed part-time administrative employees regularly working at least 20 hours and their eligible dependents may take one (1) course per semester (including main campus courses delivered online). Those who are enrolled in an e-campus program are permitted to take one (1) course during the semester (one of the sub sessions). No special provisions will be made in employees' work schedules to accommodate taking the class. The maximum tuition waiver is 160 attempted credit hours for undergraduate courses or one (1) graduate degree program.

6.0 CRITERIA FOR ON-CAMPUS TUITION ASSISTANCE (UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE)

6.1 Administrative employees, spouses and dependents shall enroll during the regular registration processes.

6.2 Programs or classes which have special admission requirements or limited class sizes will be available for enrollment in the same manner as made available to the general student body; and administrative employees, spouses and dependents will be required to compete for admission into these programs or courses with other student applicants.

6.3 Administrative employees, spouses and dependents must remit payment for special fees and charges as defined in this policy in accordance with University student payment deadlines.

6.4 The administrative employee, spouse or dependent may be required to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and complete the verification process if determined necessary by the Financial Aid office.

- 6.5 All necessary and required forms must be completed according to University policies and timetables. Forms are available on the [Financial Aid](#) webpage.
- 6.6 No employee or his/her dependent will be entitled to on-campus education benefits, nor will the University be required to pay, for any classes that have already been taken by the employee or dependent and failed or otherwise not successfully completed by the employee or dependent.
- 6.7 Applicable educational benefits awarded will be reported as required by IRS regulations.

7.0 ELIGIBILITY FOR OFF-CAMPUS GRADUATE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

- 7.1 The University supports full-time administrative employees with at least two (2) years of continuous service taking graduate courses at other institutions of higher education when the graduate program will increase the skills necessary in their present positions and enhances their contribution to the University. Employees seeking off-campus tuition reimbursement must receive written approval of the degree program, as outlined in Section 3 of this policy.
- 7.2 Any graduate program offered by Shawnee State University (on-campus or online through E-campus) is not eligible for tuition reimbursement at a different institution.

8.0 CRITERIA FOR OFF-CAMPUS GRADUATE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

- 8.1 The off-campus education benefit allows full-time administrative employees to apply for Master's and Doctoral program tuition and fee reimbursement as specified herein after two years of continuous full-time service with the University.
- 8.2 The graduate degree, including online degrees, must be provided by an accredited institution of higher education.
- 8.3 To ensure the proposed course of study meets conditions outlined in this policy, prior approvals by the employee's supervisor, the department budget manager, and concurrence of the appropriate chief officer or vice president are required.
- 8.4 Reimbursement is provided for approved courses with a grade of B or higher. Should the program not provide a grade, the employee must submit evidence of satisfactory progress (e.g., dissertation credits as PR, etc.) Documentation from the institution granting the grade and/or progress report must be attached to the reimbursement request.
- 8.5 The maximum reimbursement tuition rate will be at the appropriate Shawnee State's Master's or Doctoral in-state tuition rate. The rare exception to this maximum rate requires approval of the chief officer or vice president of the employee's division.
- 8.6 Only courses required for the attainment of the degree as identified in the initially approved course of study are eligible for reimbursement.

- 8.7 Reimbursement is limited to one graduate-level program.
- 8.8 An employee awarded this off-campus education benefit will agree in writing to remain employed at the University for at least two (2) years from the end date of the term of the approved coursework. If not, the employee agrees to repay the tuition reimbursement amount received. Employees who are receiving or have received this benefit prior to September 20, 2024, are not required to repay the tuition paid on their behalf if they voluntarily separate from the university on or before June 30, 2025.
- 8.9 Repayment requirements set forth in Section 8.8 shall not apply in cases of: 1) the elimination of the employee's position, or 2) a workforce reduction in which the employee is laid off for at least 21 months duration.

9.0 POSITIONS FUNDED BY EXTERNAL SOURCES

Employees whose positions are funded by external sources are only eligible for off-campus education benefits to the extent allowed and funded by the external source(s).

History

Effective: 01/19/1991

Revised: 09/20/2024; 03/13/2020 (Replaces Policies 4.58, 4.66 and 4.67. Policies 4.58, 4.66 and 4.67 rescinded); 03/15/2008; 02/08/2002