Policy 6504

From Human Resources

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PERSONNEL POLICY MANUAL
MoDOT Personnel Policy Title: Educational Assistance **Policy Number**: 6504 **Chapter Title**: Training and Professional Development **Effective Date**: January 15, 2011 **Supersedes Policy Number**: 6504 **Dated**: November 16, 2009
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POLICY STATEMENT

The department encourages employees to continue their education in order to develop their work skills and enhance their ability to compete for promotional opportunities. Educational assistance is provided

through tuition and/or test reimbursement and flexibility in work scheduling to eligible active and inactive employees.

DEFINITIONS

Active Employee: An employee working or on paid leave, such as annual leave, workers' compensation, sick leave, military training, etc.

Inactive Employee: An employee on unpaid leave, such as military leave, educational leave, or extended sick leave without pay. This also includes an employee approved for/receiving a work-related disability through the MoDOT and Patrol Employees' Retirement System (MPERS).

Eligible Active/Inactive Employee: An employee who meets the criteria as stated in paragraphs 1 through 3 under Provisions/Requirements.

Graduate Course: A course taken by an individual to be credited toward a master's degree. Courses to obtain post-graduate doctorate degrees will not be reimbursed.

PROVISIONS / REQUIREMENTS

1. An active employee must meet all of the following criteria to be eligible for the benefits under this personnel policy:

    A. Be a full-time salaried or permanent part-time employee who has successfully completed the department's initial six-month probationary period prior to enrollment in a course.

    B. Be in "good standing" (rated successful or higher on his/her most recent MoDOT Accountability and Performance System (MAPS), is not on disciplinary probation, and has not received suspension or demotion within the last 12 months).

2. An inactive employee must meet all of the following criteria to be eligible for the benefits under this personnel policy:

    A. Was approved for/is currently receiving work-related disability benefits from MPERS and is receiving workers' compensation lost time benefits at the same time.

    B. Was a full-time salaried or permanent part-time employee at the time approved for work-related disability and had successfully completed the department's initial six-month probationary period.

    C. Was in "good standing" (was rated successful or higher on his/her most recent MAPS, was not on disciplinary probation, and had not received suspension or demotion within the last 12 months) when approved for work-related disability.

3. An eligible active or inactive employee who fails to complete a course, terminates his/her employment, or is released from department employment prior to course completion will not be eligible to receive reimbursement for the course.

4. Employees must sign the acknowledgement on Form P-53, "Application for Educational Assistance and Repayment Agreement," accepting the terms and conditions for the repayment of reimbursed expenses. Failure to sign the acknowledgement will result in a denial of eligibility for tuition reimbursement.

5. Educational reimbursement amounts are subject to IRS regulations. Amounts reimbursed to employees in excess of IRS regulations will be included in taxable income and subject to applicable taxes.

6. An eligible inactive employee will not be eligible to receive reimbursement if workers' compensation lost time benefits cease prior to course completion or the employee fails to complete the course.

7. The employee must obtain written approval from his/her supervisor by completing Form P-53 for tuition reimbursement prior to enrolling in a course. However, in cases where the employee is unable to enroll until classes are scheduled to begin due to the school's scheduling constraints, a grace period of up to 10 business days to submit the application will be allowed. The district engineer/division leader/state engineer has the discretion to approve or deny educational assistance and limit the number of credit hours allowed based upon available budgetary funding. In order to qualify for educational assistance, there must be a direct correlation between the degree and the benefit to MoDOT. The degree declared must be one which can reasonably be expected to lead to improved department work performance, increase an employee's ability to assume further responsibilities within the department, further the department's tangible results, and/or provide new skills to an eligible inactive employee.

8. The course work must be taken at an accredited institution as listed by the U.S. Department of Education or the Council for Higher Education. The educational assistance coordinator must determine if the institution is accredited prior to the employee enrolling in a course(s).

9. No overtime will be earned for an "adjusted workday" unless the actual hours worked qualifies an employee for overtime pay as described in Personnel Policy 3000, "Working Hours and Overtime."

10. An active employee who has received additional education or training may compete for available positions. He/she will not be given priority placement consideration over other active employees who earned their degree prior to or during their employment with the department.

11. Reimbursement may be provided for the following:

A. Cost of test up to the department-approved rate relating to general education diploma (GED - high school equivalency) through the in-state program offered through the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) or up to the department-

approved rate for other accredited programs. Employees will be allowed to take the exam three times through DESE at MoDOT's expense.

B. Course work at a vocational/technical school.

C. Graduate (master's degree) or undergraduate course work including correspondence courses through classroom, interactive television, videotape, computer, and other training sources. Courses to obtain post-graduate doctorate degrees will not be reimbursed.

12. Reimbursement will be based on the following:

		UNDERGRADUATE/GRADUATE			EITHER
Active Employee	**Maximum Credit Hours Per Calendar Year**	**"A"Grade**	**"B"Grade**	**"C" Grade**	**PASS a Pass/Fail Course or a CLEP Test**
Full Time Salaried	**12**	**100%**	**75%**	**50%**	**100%**
Permanent Part-Time (Works 75-99% Average 30-39 hours per week)	**9**	**100%**	**75%**	**50%**	**100%**
Permanent Part-Time (Works 50-74% -Average 20-29 hours per week)	**6**	**100%**	**75%**	**50%**	**100%**

A. Reimbursement for the cost of courses may be subject to withholding tax and, if so, will be reported on the employee's W-2 Form.

B. If an eligible active or inactive employee could not elect to take a pass/fail course for a grade, reimbursement for passing the pass/fail course will be at 100 percent if the employee passes the course. If an eligible active or inactive employee fails the pass/fail course, reimbursement will not be made.

C. One College Level Examination Program (CLEP) test is equivalent to three credit hours.

D. The amount eligible for reimbursement will be calculated as follows:

The appropriate percentage rate will be multiplied times the net employee cost before reimbursement. The net employee cost before reimbursement is determined by subtracting financial assistance from either the actual tuition cost or the University of Missouri rate for the credit hours earned, whichever is lower.

Employees are reimbursed the rate in effect at the time the course begins (beginning date as indicated on Form P-53).

13. Reimbursement will not be provided for the following:

    A. Books, travel, meals, or other miscellaneous expenses.

    B. Tuition exceeding the highest prevailing per credit hour tuition rate charged by the University of Missouri-Columbia.

    C. Lab fees, activity fees, or miscellaneous fees.

    D. No reimbursement will be made for pass/fail courses which the eligible active or inactive employee has failed, for graded courses taken as an observer, or for graded courses for which the grade was under a “C.” A “C” grade in graduate courses will be reimbursed one time only, and thereafter only a grade of “A” or “B” will be reimbursed.

    E. Courses to obtain post-graduate doctorate degrees will not be reimbursed.

14. Repayment Provisions:

    A. Subsequent to signing the Form P-53, any employee who voluntarily or involuntarily terminates employment for any reason will be required to repay the department 100 percent of any tuition/educational reimbursement they received within the last 24 months from the employee’s effective date of termination. Per the Form P-53, the employee agrees to repay the department these monies and agrees the repayment amount must be fully paid to the department no later than 30 days after the effective termination date of employment.

    B. The immediate supervisor, upon being notified of a voluntary or involuntary termination, must notify the local HR or support services representative to determine if repayment provisions will apply.

    C. Upon being notified that he/she owes money to the department under this policy, the employee will be allowed a review period of no more than two business days to contest any or all of the repayment expense amounts owed. The department will provide the employee with documentation that supports the repayment expense amounts owed. The employee’s review period of two business days will begin when the department provides the employee with the documentation outlined herein.

    D. An employee may elect to make a personal payment to the department to repay all or a portion of the repayment amount owed the department instead of having money withheld from his/her remaining paychecks and/or remaining annual or compensatory leave balances. However, if the employee requests to pay by personal payment, the payment must be received by the department by the end of the two-day review period. If the personal payment is not for the full repayment amount owed, the remaining amount owed will be withheld from the employee’s remaining paychecks and/or remaining annual or compensatory leave balances.

    E. If the full repayment amount owed is still not recovered by means of salary withholding and/or remaining leave balance withholding, the department may elect to establish a payment plan with the employee for the remaining amount owed.

F. If a payment plan is not entered into, or should an employee fail to comply with the established terms and conditions of the payment plan, the department may elect to pursue any/all lawful means to collect this repayment owed to the department.

G. Any expenses inadvertently reimbursed to an employee in excess of the stated amounts allowed under this policy, unless otherwise previously authorized in writing, may also be recovered from the employee by the department under the procedures outlined herein.

H. The Controller's Division will coordinate the collection of employee repayment on behalf of the department.

CROSS REFERENCE

Personnel Policy 3000, "Working Hours and Overtime"

PROCEDURE

Procedure 6504, "Educational Assistance"

FORM

P-53 Application for Educational Assistance (http://wwwi/intranet/hr/documents/P-53-ApplicationforEducationAssistanceandRepaymentAgreement.docx)

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