THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

STANDARD PRACTICE GUIDE

SECTION:	Human Resources	**Number:**	201.69
		Revised:	8/1/06
SUBJECT:	Tuition Support Program	**Date Issued:**	
	(effective for courses beginning May 1, 2000)	**Review Date:**	8/1/07
		Attachment(s)	0

APPLIES TO: Regular full-time and part-time (50% or more) staff members with the exception of those represented by a bargaining unit

ISSUED BY: Human Resources and the Office of the Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

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I. Policy

In order to increase the career opportunities available to staff members at the University of Michigan, enhance the performance of staff members and of their units, and encourage professional growth, the University offers a tuition support program. To qualify for tuition support under this program, a staff member must take the course for credit and must successfully complete the course as defined below (see section II. C.). Tuition support under this policy may be paid as either a reimbursement or an advance, at the option of the staff member (see sections II. F. and G.).

II. Regulations and Definitions

A. Eligibility

A staff member is eligible for tuition support if he or she:

- is currently employed at the University of Michigan in a regular non-bargained-for full-time appointment, or part-time appointment of at least 50%, in Allied Health, Office, Primary Archivist, Curator, Librarian, Researcher, Professional/Administrative, or Technical Classifications, and
- has been employed at the University of Michigan in one of the above classifications for at least six consecutive months at the time of enrollment for the class, and
- intends to, and does, remain on the active payroll in one of the above classifications during the entire term of the class at the same or at a greater appointment fraction than that held by the staff member at the time of enrollment, and
- takes the course for credit, and
- successfully completes the course, which is defined for purposes of this policy as receiving a grade of "B" or better for graduate level courses and a grade of "C" or better for all other courses, and
- provides the required documentation in a timely fashion (see sections II. F. and G.).

B. Qualifying Courses

Job-Related. To qualify for tuition support, the course must be job-related. For purposes of this SPG, a job-related course is a course that meets any of the following requirements:

- will contribute toward enhanced performance in the staff member's present position, for example by updating and improving knowledge and skills that will enable the staff member to more effectively perform his or her current duties
- will help the staff member qualify for consideration for a higher level position at the University to which the staff member may reasonably aspire and for which there is probable opportunity for advancement
- is taken to complete the requirements for a high school diploma
- is a basic course in reading, writing, or mathematics
- is a required or elective course taken to complete the requirements for an associate degree or bachelor's degree, including a second bachelor's degree
- is a required or elective course taken to complete a Master's degree in a field related to the staff member's current job duties or to the job duties of a position to which the staff member aspires and for which there is probable opportunity for advancement at the University, including courses that will lead to a second Master's degree, subject to the above job-related requirement

Accredited Educational Institutions. Courses must be taken from educational institutions accredited by recognized accrediting agencies and institutions, including those approved under government education and training programs such as those under the Veterans Administration Program.

Non-eligible Programs. Workshops, seminars, management development programs, special examinations for admission to degree programs, and private consultant refresher courses to take examinations such as C.P.A. certification and admission examinations are not eligible for reimbursement under this policy. Support for these programs may be provided by unit policies; staff members should consult with their supervisors for more information.

Courses in graduate professional programs in Law, Medicine, and Dentistry and courses in any degree program beyond the Master's level are specifically excluded from this program.

C. Amount of Support

General Terms. The amount of tuition support is calculated based on tuition and registration fees only. Other fees and expenses are not covered under this program. Tuition support is calculated using the in-state tuition rate (where applicable), regardless of the residency status of the staff member, and is based on the tuition rate in effect at the time of the request. For part-time employees, tuition support is calculated on a pro rata basis according to the staff member's appointment fraction on the date the request for tuition support is approved.

The decision to grant tuition support and/or a work accommodation is discretionary with the unit supervisor and is based on the supervisor's assessment of a number of factors, including

anticipated needs of the unit, available resources of the unit, and the motivation and potential of the staff member making the request.

An employing unit may, in its discretion, offer a Tuition Support Policy that provides a benefit greater or more advantageous to its employees than the benefit set forth below.

There is no limit on the number of terms for which a staff member may receive tuition support under this policy. However, a compelling case would need to be made for a staff member to be permitted to take courses for all three terms in a given year because of the likelihood that a continuous absence would cause an undue hardship on the employing unit.

University of Michigan Courses. Full-time staff members are eligible for 75% of the cost of in-state tuition plus registration fees for up to 4 credit hours per term. Part-time staff members with a 50% or greater appointment are eligible for tuition support proportional to their appointment fraction. For example, a staff member with an 80% appointment would be eligible for a tuition advance of 80% of 75%, or 60% of the sum of in-state tuition plus registration fees.

Non-University of Michigan Courses. Full-time staff members are eligible for the lesser of 75% of the cost of in-state tuition plus registration fees or $1,192 per term. Part-time staff members with a 50% or greater appointment are eligible for tuition support proportional to their appointment fraction. For example, a staff member with an 80% appointment would be eligible for tuition support of the lesser of $715 (80% of 75% = 60% x $1,192 = $715) or 60% (80% of 75% = 60%) of the sum of in-state tuition plus registration fees. The $1,192 ceiling is in effect through July 31, 2007. Thereafter, it will be adjusted annually each July by a percentage equal to the average percentage increase in the resident undergraduate tuition at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor campus for that academic year. The new ceiling will be published each July 31. Tuition support is calculated based on the ceiling and tuition rate in effect at the time of the Request.

D. Work Schedule Accommodation

To the extent possible, staff members should plan to take courses scheduled at times that will not require absence from work during regular work hours.

In the event attendance at an approved course will necessitate an absence during normal work hours, various accommodations are possible, depending on the needs of the unit and the staff member. Any accommodation, including release time, is granted at the discretion of the unit supervisor. Supervisors are encouraged to make a reasonable effort to find an appropriate work schedule accommodation.

Staff members who meet the requirements for tuition support, but are excluded from monetary participation because of unit budgetary limitations or because they are eligible for other forms of aid (for example, scholarships or military aid) are nevertheless eligible to request an accommodation to their work schedule, including release time, to enable them to take a

qualifying course for credit. Such an accommodation is made at the discretion of the unit supervisor.

The following accommodations are possible:

Revised work schedule. A staff member may be granted a revised work schedule to enable him or her to attend a course that could not be scheduled during non-work hours, if the supervisor determines that the staff member will be able to meet all of his or her job requirements under the revised work schedule.

Excused absence without pay or use of vacation time/paid time off. In some cases, the needs of the unit and/or the staff member may be better served by permitting a staff member who wishes to take advantage of the tuition support program to use vacation time/paid time off, or to take an excused absence without pay. Any such arrangement is made at the discretion of the unit supervisor. Excused absences, or use of vacation time/paid time off for part-time staff members, are calculated on a pro rata basis according to the staff member's effort.

Release time with pay. In some instances, a staff member may be granted up to 3 hours per week of release time from work with pay. Any such arrangement is made at the discretion of the unit supervisor. The 3 hours per week of release time includes travel time to and from class and is not cumulative. Release time for part-time staff members is calculated on a pro rata basis according to the staff member's effort.

Paid time off from regularly scheduled work must be recorded using Code 8 on campus biweekly and monthly time reports. For hospital timesheets, record the time in the daily section with a "K" and extend to the Code columns using Code 8.

Time off work to attend classes is not considered "time worked" in the computation of overtime.

E. Request for Tuition Support

A staff member who wishes to take advantage of the tuition support program must submit a "Tuition Support Request" (see attachment 1) to his or her supervisor. If the staff member needs to have a decision on whether the request is approved before he or she registers for the class, the request must be submitted to the supervisor at least 20 University business days before registration. The supervisor will determine whether he or she can approve the request and will inform the staff member in a timely fashion.

Tuition Support Requests that are denied should be forwarded to HR/AA (staff members employed at the Ann Arbor campus) or to the appropriate Flint or Dearborn HR office (staff members employed at the Flint or Dearborn campus) with an explanation of why it was not possible to grant the request.

F. Process for Payment: Tuition Reimbursement

Promptly after the end of the course, the staff member should provide his or her supervisor with: 1.) an official grade report showing successful completion of the course (as defined in II. A.), and 2.) a paid bill or receipt indicating the amount of tuition and fees the staff member has paid. Upon receipt of these documents, the supervisor completes a Special Payment Form and submits the form to Payroll. The tuition reimbursement is then processed by Payroll and included in the staff member's regular paycheck. If the staff member is paid from a sponsored project, the supervisor should forward the documentation to DRDA for processing and payment.

G. Process for Payment: Tuition Advance

Promptly after a request is approved, the supervisor will complete a Special Payment Form and submit the form to Payroll. A tuition advance is then processed by Payroll and included in the staff member's regular paycheck. If the staff member is paid from a sponsored project, the supervisor should forward the approved Request to DRDA for processing and payment.

No later than 60 days after the end of the term, a staff member who has received a tuition advance is responsible for providing the supervisor with: 1.) an official grade report showing successful completion of the course (as defined in II. A.), and 2.) a paid bill or receipt indicating the amount of tuition and fees the staff member has paid. If the staff member is paid from a sponsored project, the supervisor should forward a copy of the grade report and of the paid receipt to DRDA.

In accepting a tuition advance under this policy, a staff member agrees that if he or she does not: 1) successfully complete the class (as defined in II. A.), and 2) provide the unit supervisor with an official grade report and a paid bill or receipt for tuition within 60 days after the end of the term, the full amount of the advance will be deducted from the staff member's paycheck in equal installments over a 6-month period, as authorized by the staff member's signature on the Request.

If a staff member leaves the University, either voluntarily or involuntarily, before successfully completing the course or before reimbursing any amounts owing under this policy, or if a staff member does not register for, or stops attending, a course for which he or she has received an advance, the staff member is responsible for immediate repayment of the full amount of the tuition advance.

H. Source of Funds

The cost of providing tuition support under this program will be borne by the staff member's employing unit.

Tuition support payments cannot be made as direct charges to sponsored projects. For staff members paid from sponsored projects, the supervisor should review the Tuition Support Request and if approved, submit a copy of the Request to DRDA for processing and payment. A copy of the transcript and paid receipt should also be forwarded to DRDA at the completion of the course. Please note that time off to attend classes is permitted on sponsored projects.

If the Tuition Support Request of a staff member is denied because of budgetary limitations, a subsequent request by the same staff member should be given priority consideration if submitted within one year of the first request. Budgetary limitations may not be used as a reason to deny a Tuition Support Request on an indefinite basis.

When a staff member is transferred mid-term, the original approving department is responsible for payment of the entire amount previously approved by that department.

Participants who are covered by tuition benefits resulting from service in the Armed Forces, government aid, or other form of scholarship moneys are eligible under this program for only that portion of the tuition support to which they would otherwise be eligible less the amount of the other benefit.

I. Records

The completed Tuition Support Request, whether granted or denied, is retained by the unit and forwarded as part of the staff member's file should he or she transfer to another unit.

Procedures: **http://www.umich.edu/~hraa/procedures/spg201-69.htm**