



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

APPLICABILITY  
**DEPARTMENT WIDE**

EFFECTIVE DATE  
3/1/15

PAGE NUMBER  
1 of 5

NUMBER  
**DOC 880.130**

**POLICY**

TITLE  
**TUITION REIMBURSEMENT**

**REVIEW/REVISION HISTORY:**

Effective: 12/1/83 DOC 880.025  
 Revised: 11/1/96 DOC 880.130  
 Revised: 1/3/00  
 Revised: 12/19/03  
 Revised: 7/1/06  
 Revised: 10/25/07  
 Revised: 10/28/08  
 Revised: 7/21/09 AB 09-024  
 Rescinded: 7/1/10  
 Effective: 3/1/15

**SUMMARY OF REVISION/REVIEW:**

Reinstated tuition reimbursement with major changes and moved continuing education content to DOC 880.135 Health Services Continuing Education Reimbursement. Read carefully!

**APPROVED:**

Signature on file

\_\_\_\_\_  
**BERNARD WARNER**, Secretary  
 Department of Corrections

2/21/15  
 Date Signed

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**REFERENCES:**

DOC 100.100 is hereby incorporated into this policy; [WAC 357-34](#); [DOC 880.135 Health Services Continuing Education Reimbursement](#)

**POLICY:**

- I. The Department recognizes the value of well-educated and well-trained employees and supports the tuition reimbursement program within available funds. Employees are encouraged to further their personal and professional development goals through appropriate formal education programs.
- II. Continuing education reimbursement for professional health services employees is covered by DOC 880.135 Health Services Continuing Education Reimbursement.

**DIRECTIVE:**

- I. General Requirements
  - A. Tuition reimbursement is available for courses offered by institutions accredited by accrediting organizations including, but not limited to:
    1. Middle States Commission on Higher Education,
    2. New England Association of Schools and Colleges' Commission on Institutions of Higher Education,
    3. North Central Association of Colleges and Schools' Higher Learning Commission,
    4. Northwest Commission on Colleges and Universities,
    5. Southern Association of Colleges and Schools' Commission on Colleges, and
    6. Western Association of Schools and Colleges' Senior College and University Commission.
  - B. Employees must have permanent status, permanent-project status, or be in probationary employment status with the Department from the time of application until reimbursement for payment is submitted.
    1. Employees on a temporary assignment at another agency cannot initiate a tuition reimbursement request with the Department.
    2. Employees whose official work schedule is part-time will receive reimbursement relative to their work schedule (e.g., half-time employees receive 50 percent of allowable reimbursement).

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- C. If the employee leaves Department service before completing the entire reimbursement process, the Department will not provide reimbursement.
  - 1. If the employee moves to another agency on a temporary assignment before completing an approved course, the Department may provide reimbursement upon satisfactory completion of the course.
- D. Participation must not interfere with scheduled work or negatively affect work performance.
  - 1. Attendance in a class is not a valid reason to refuse mandatory overtime.
- E. Tuition reimbursement will not cover training courses, seminars, etc., unless the employee receives accredited college credit for participation.
- F. There must be a relationship between the course(s) and the employee's projected career path within the Department, or attainment of a degree that benefits the employee and Department.
- G. Due to the wide range of class terms, the following schedules will be used. The term in which the class falls will be determined by the date that the class is completed:
  - 1. Winter term – January through March
  - 2. Spring term – April through June
  - 3. Summer term – July through September
  - 4. Fall term – October through December

## II. Request Process

- A. Employees will complete Section A of DOC 03-510 Tuition Reimbursement Request and submit it to their immediate supervisor, who will forward the request to the Appointing Authority.
  - 1. If the employee is receiving a grant, G.I. Bill benefit, or scholarship, s/he will attach a copy to the request.
  - 2. If on approved education leave, the employee will attach a copy of the approval to the request.
- B. If the Appointing Authority concurs, the request will be forwarded to the respective Assistant Secretary, the Deputy Secretary, or the Chief of Staff, as applicable.

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- C. Assistant Secretary, Deputy Secretary, or Chief of Staff approval on DOC 03-510 Tuition Reimbursement Request is required before the class start date.
  - 1. Any request for an exception to the advance approval requirement should be made, in writing, to the Assistant Secretary, Deputy Secretary, or Chief of Staff, as applicable.
- D. Tuition reimbursement requests may be submitted up to 6 months in advance. Requests approved in advance are subject to the policy in effect at the time the class starts, not at the time of approval.
- E. Correspondence courses will be completed within 120 days of the Appointing Authority approval signature date on DOC 03-510 Tuition Reimbursement Request.
  - 1. Any request for an exception should be made, in writing, to the Assistant Secretary, Deputy Secretary, or the Chief of Staff, as applicable.

### III. Reimbursement Amount

- A. The reimbursement rate will be 25 percent of the actual Washington State public college tuition cost for undergraduate or graduate course work.
  - 1. For accredited private institutions of higher education, the maximum reimbursement is limited to 25 percent of the Washington resident undergraduate or graduate tier II tuition rate, as applicable, at the University of Washington's Seattle campus or the accredited private institution, whichever is lower.
- B. Maximum tuition reimbursement for an employee will not exceed \$5,000 in a calendar year.
- C. Other related costs (e.g., lab fees, special administrative fees, videos, books, supplies, travel, parking, other administrative fees, etc.) are not reimbursable.
- D. The tuition reimbursement amount combined with federal or other education reimbursement funds (e.g., G.I. Bill benefit, grant, scholarship) cannot exceed the actual total cost of fees, tuition, and books for any course of study.
- E. The taxable amount will be reported on the employee's W-2 form for the year in which it is paid, as required by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). Within a calendar year, if the employee's tuition reimbursement is more than the IRS maximum waiver for taxation on tuition reimbursement, the employee will pay tax on the excess reimbursement amount at the time of reimbursement.

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#### IV. Reimbursement Process

- A. Employees will pay for the course prior to reimbursement.
- B. Upon course completion, employees will provide the Executive Assistant to the Chief of Staff, as Headquarters Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator:
  1. A copy of the course transcript, or print-off of the grade or pass/fail from the student's personal college website,
  2. A copy of the receipt for tuition payment that shows the course title, number of credit hours, tuition costs, and fees,
  3. Documentation from the college's website or catalog indicating the cost per credit for the timeframe of the course, and
  4. A completed [Form A-19-1 Invoice Voucher](#).
- C. A grade of 2.0 or higher, or pass in a pass/fail structure, is required to receive tuition reimbursement.
  1. Any request for an exception to the grade requirement should be made, in writing, to the Assistant Secretary, Deputy Secretary, or the Chief of Staff, as applicable.
- D. Documentation for payment must be submitted to the Headquarters Tuition Reimbursement Coordinator within 90 days following the course end date.

#### DEFINITIONS:

Words/terms appearing in this policy may be defined in the glossary section of the Policy Manual.

#### ATTACHMENTS:

None

#### DOC FORMS:

[DOC 03-510 Tuition Reimbursement Request](#)