

Shared Governance Handbook Document

Title: Educational Assistance (AP 862, 864 and 881)

Purpose:

HACC is committed to ensuring its employees, emeriti, and their dependents receive appropriate support in pursuit of their education and professional development.

References:

AP513 Financial Aid Satisfactory Academic Progress and Appeals Policy; AP638 Student Probation, Suspension, and Reinstatement; CP865 Employee Aid Plan; Emeritus standing SGP; Auditing courses SGP

Definitions:

Educational assistance: Tuition assistance for coursework taken at other institutions and tuition waivers for HACC courses taken for credit or audit.

Eligible dependents: Spouses, domestic partners for whom a completed Statement of Domestic Partnership is on file in Human Resources, and biological, step, or legally adopted unmarried children up to the age of 26. Eligibility continues through the end of the semester in which the dependent turns 26 years old.

Active status: An employee is in active status if s/he received a paycheck within the last two years and has not been separated from employment.

Handbook Detail:

Procedure for employees and eligible dependents requesting educational assistance for coursework taken at HACC

1. Full-time employees may submit a request for a tuition waiver for approved job-related credit and job-related noncredit courses immediately upon employment. After one year of continuous full-time service, full-time employees may submit a request for a tuition waiver for any HACC course. After one year of continuous full-time service by the employee, eligible dependents may submit a request for a tuition waiver for credit courses offered by the College.
2. If a regular full-time employee dies while employed at HACC, the employee's eligible dependents will continue to be eligible for a tuition waiver.
3. Eligibility for adjunct faculty and regular part-time employees is as follows:

a. After two semesters of service, an instructor who teaches any HACC credit course or is employed as a counselor or librarian may submit a request for a tuition waiver to enroll in one HACC course for each semester of service in the current academic year including summer sessions.

b. After a minimum of 95 hours of non-credit instruction, an instructor who teaches any HACC non-credit course may submit a request for a tuition waiver to enroll in one HACC course for each semester of service in the current academic year including summer sessions.

c. After one year of service to the College, regular part-time employees may submit a request for a tuition waiver to enroll in one HACC course per semester provided they remain in active status with the College.

4. Eligibility for eligible dependents of adjunct faculty and regular part-time employees is as follows:

a. When an adjunct faculty member teaches credit courses or is employed as a counselor or librarian for ten (10) or more semesters, eligible dependents of such employees may submit a request for a tuition waiver for any credit course offered by the College, provided such employees remain in active status with the College. Enrollment is limited to one course per semester for each eligible applicant.

b. When an instructor teaches non-credit courses accruing a minimum of 475 hours instruction time, eligible dependents of such employees may submit a request for a tuition waiver for any credit course offered by the College, provided such employees remain in active status with the College. Enrollment is limited to one course per semester for each eligible applicant.

c. When a regular part-time employee has at least five years of service (from their initial employment date), eligible dependents of such employees may submit a request for a tuition waiver for any credit course offered by the College, provided such employees remain in active status with the College. Enrollment is limited to one course per semester for each eligible applicant.

5. Employees and their eligible dependents who participate in this program will be subject to all admissions and academic policies of the College.

6. HACC reserves the right to limit the number of courses employees take per semester/session based on the employee's work schedule and work duties. HACC's preference is that employees take classes after or before their scheduled work day.

7. If an employee or eligible dependent fails three or more courses, the employee or eligible dependent who failed the courses will no longer be eligible for this benefit. Appeals of ineligibility may be directed to the Chief Human Resources Officer.

8. Employee and Eligible Dependent Responsibilities:

a. Apply and be admitted to the college prior to applying for a tuition waiver.

- b. Obtain tuition waiver form on myHACC and submit the completed form to his/her supervisor if the employee is applying for a tuition waiver for employee course work. If an eligible dependent is applying for a tuition waiver, the employee submits the form directly to the Human Resources Office.
 - c. Consult federal, state, and local tax publications regarding the effect of a tuition waiver on calculation of gross income and net taxable income liability. The benefit of a tuition waiver is subject to current tax regulations.
 - d. Pay any course specific fees.
9. Supervisor Responsibilities:
- a. Submit tuition waiver form to the Human Resources Office for verification of eligibility.
 - b. Consider the possible exception for one class a semester to be taken during the work day based on the employee's education needs and the operation of the department or division.
10. Human Resources Responsibilities: Verify eligibility and forward tuition waiver form to the Students Account Office for final processing.

Procedure for full- time employees requesting educational assistance for coursework taken outside of HACC:

1. One year of full-time service is required prior to receiving educational assistance for non-HACC coursework under this policy.
2. Full- time temporary employees are not eligible to participate in this plan.
3. Grant funded employees will be eligible for educational assistance after five years of continuous full- time service. Exceptions within the first five years are not normally granted, but requests for exceptions may be directed to the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee.
4. Activities covered under this policy include credit coursework from a regionally accredited college or university including distance learning institutions. Credit course may be taken on either an individual basis in support of professional development or as part of a degree granting program of study resulting in a degree.
5. Other activities covered under this policy may include structured programs of study conducted by recognized educational and training agencies leading to licensure, registry, CEU's (Continuing Education Credit), certifications or other documented recognition in the profession, as long as the program meets for a minimum of 36 hours. Courses, seminars and workshops of shorter duration should be funded through the department's staff development budget.

6. Eligible employees will be reimbursed up to 60% of the attended college's or university's tuition only up to 12 credits (or their equivalent) per fiscal year. Reimbursement may not exceed 60% of the highest graduate tuition rate charged at Penn State Harrisburg.
7. The employee must receive the equivalent of a grade of C or higher to be eligible to receive this assistance.
8. Educational assistance will not be used to fund coursework at other colleges if it is offered by HACC at the time of application (and there are no other classes being offered in the program that the employee is pursuing that semester).
9. The total awarded under the educational assistance plan may be reduced if the request and amount of grant money received by the recipient from other sources (fellowships, tuition reduction, etc.) exceeds the budgeted cost of the formal or informal study.
10. The tuition value of employee educational assistance will be added to taxable salary if applicable by federal, state, or local regulation, unless it can be determined that appropriate exclusions exist. Individuals should consult tax publications for further information on net taxable income responsibility.
11. The recipient of this educational assistance is required to give one year of service to the College upon completion of the educational activity. Recipients must repay the college if they do not complete a subsequent one year of full-time service.
12. In the event of the recipient's death before the required year of subsequent service has been completed, all such indebtedness will be canceled.
13. Employee responsibilities:
 - a. Submit the application prior to the beginning of the formal study or other activities for professional development on the approved form to his or her immediate supervisor. The application must include a copy of the course tuition and fees. The application must be submitted prior to the start of the term for which assistance is requested.
 - b. Submit any material that demonstrates or supports one or more of the factors the supervisor considers when reviewing the application. Factors are included under "Supervisor Responsibilities" below.
 - c. Submit a written exception request to the Chief Human Resources Officer or designee if HACC offers the same course or coursework which the employee has applied to take at another institution and taking the class at HACC would be a hardship.
 - d. Submit an appeal of the administrative level supervisor's denial to the cabinet level administrator if employee so desires.

- e. Obtain prior approval from the administrative level supervisor and appropriate Cabinet level administrator for any change in the recipient's program of study for which the recipient is receiving educational assistance.
 - f. Consult federal, state, and local tax publications regarding the effect of a tuition waiver on calculation of gross income and net taxable income liability. The benefit of a tuition waiver is subject to current tax regulations.
 - g. Forward transcripts, grade reports or certification of course work, and tuition expense receipts to the Office of Human Resources within 30 days following completion of the course(s). Credit card/customer copies are acceptable, as are cancelled checks or other receipts.
14. Supervisor Responsibilities:
- a. Indicate the following primary factors on employee's application:
 - i. The potential enhancement of performance or proficiency of the employee in job responsibilities;
 - ii. The potential to prepare for new responsibilities at the request of the college; or
 - iii. Training or re-training under College policies
 - b. Indicate the following secondary factors on employee's application, if applicable:
 - i. student service
 - ii. college service, or
 - iii. relevant community service.
 - c. Forward the approved application to the appropriate cabinet-level administrator for approval and then to the Human Resources Office for review.
15. Human Resources Responsibilities:
- a. Review the applications
 - b. Verify the employee's eligibility for educational assistance and forward the application to the President's Cabinet.
 - c. Verify availability of funds for educational assistance.
 - d. Review applicant hardship exception requests.
 - e. Upon the President' Cabinet Approval as noted below, submit the approved application to Accounts Payable.
16. President's Cabinet Responsibilities: Review and approve applications to ensure the granting of the educational assistance is consistent with the strategic goals of the College.

Procedures for emeriti taking classes at HACC:

1. Emeriti and their spouses/domestic partners can enroll in any HACC course without payment of tuition, capital outlay fees, or student activity fees.
2. Course fees as set forth in the Scale of Fees as approved by the Board of Trustees shall not be waived.
3. Sponsoring school districts and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will not be assessed for such enrollment.
4. Registration will be handled by the Registration Office, according to the procedures set forth in the Handbook.
5. Enrollment is subject to adherence to course pre-requisites and the person's willingness to commit to the class as if they were a regular credit student.
6. A maximum of six (6) credit hours will be permitted for each emeritus/spouse/domestic partner per semester.
7. Emeriti/spouse responsibilities:
 - a. Apply and be admitted to the college prior to applying for a tuition waiver.
 - b. Contact Human Resources for verification of emeritus status and tuition waiver form.
 - c. Submit completed tuition waiver form to Human Resources.
 - d. Submit completed enrollment form to the Welcome Center.
8. Vice President of Finance Responsibilities:

Prepare a report for the President in January for courses enrolled in by emeriti and/or their spouses from July 1 through December 31 and prepare a report in August for courses enrolled in by emeriti and/or their spouses from January 1 through June 30. The report shall include the name of enrollees, courses taken, and the credit value of each course.