

## Medical Center Education Assistance Program

### I. Overview

To recruit, develop, engage and retain a quality workforce requires investment in the ongoing career and educational goals of employees. The Medical Center provides centrally funded Education Assistance for professional credentialing certification and academic coursework that includes two components: **Tuition and Professional Certification**. These are two separate offerings with different requirements and financial amounts. In addition, departments may choose to offer additional education benefits through departmental funding.

Education Assistance is paid through your paycheck within two pay periods from the date of approval. Employees are encouraged to submit requests far enough in advance to obtain approval prior to registering for courses.

The final date for annual submission is posted on the UVA HR Education Benefits page.

### II. Regulations and Definitions

#### A. Eligibility

An employee is eligible for Education Assistance if the following conditions apply:

- Regular full-time, part-time (20+ hours/week), flex staff, and management employees who have completed six (6) consecutive months of employment with the Medical Center (or combination of Academic and Medical Center) prior to the beginning of a course for which they are requesting assistance
- RN Clinician 1s are eligible at date of hire, with no waiting period
- Earn While You Learn participants enrolled in the following programs, with no waiting period
  - EMT
  - Phlebotomy
  - Sterile Processing Technician
- Temporary, wage, and other non-benefited employees are ineligible for Education Assistance
- House Staff are ineligible for Education Assistance

Eligible service time for this benefit:

- Includes prior employment at the University or affiliated Health System employer (e.g..Novant, Community Health, etc.)
- Does not include employment at previous state agencies

Temporary, wage, and other non-benefited employees are ineligible for Education Assistance

## **B. Qualifying Education Expense**

To qualify for the **Tuition Benefit**:

- The Team Member must be enrolled in for-credit courses working towards Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral degree.
- Courses must be taken at nationally recognized (U.S. Department of Education or American Council on Education) accredited colleges, universities, or technical schools.
- The Team Member must receive a grade of "C-" or better for undergraduate courses, or a "B -" or better for graduate courses. If the course is not graded, documentation of pass (if pass/fail) shall serve as evidence of course completion.

To qualify for the **Professional Certification Benefit**:

- The professional credentialing certification must be job-related , and of value/benefit to the Medical Center, as determined by the department supervisor
- Confirmation of mastery or competency must be awarded by a third party, standard-setting organization (e.g. ANA, AMA, AAP, etc.) which results from an assessment process with ongoing requirements to maintain the credentialing certification (ex. Certification in Critical Care Nursing (CCRN)
- Eligible courses must meet one of the following applicable criteria:
  - English as a Second Language (ESL), literacy, and related classes
  - Lean or other related classes
  - Review course for a professional credentialing certification that is of value/benefit to the Medical Center

**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. U.S. Department of Education and American Council on Education Courses will be sources used to verify approval. Visit <https://www.ed.gov/accreditation> for resources about accreditation.

**Non-Eligible Programs or Expenses.** Examples of non-eligible programs and expenses include but are not limited to: CEU fees, personal enrichment courses, sports, games, hobbies, workshops, seminars, management development programs, special examinations for admission to degree programs, private consultant refresher courses to take examinations, and admission examinations are not eligible for reimbursement. Courses related to mindfulness, yoga, and other similar-related courses should be supported through Hoos Well or other vendors, and are not part of the Education Benefit program. Books, materials, travel, lodging, and food are not eligible expenses.

## **C. Amount of Support**

**General Terms.** The amount of the benefit is calculated based on credentialing certification fees and tuition only. Other fees and expenses are not covered under this program (student activity, library fee, etc.). Tuition is calculated using the in-state tuition rate (where applicable), regardless of the residency status of the employee, and is based on the current tuition rate at the time of the request.

### **Amounts.**

Education Assistance covers fees that are needed to successfully complete:

- Academic coursework (e.g. technology fees, lab fees, supplemental/differential charges for tuition, online course fees, etc.) up to \$5,250, fees unrelated to academic coursework are not covered.
- Professional Certification
  - Up to \$375 for required professional credentialing certification exams
  - RNs may receive up to \$500 for their initial professional certification. This applies only to RNs and only to the initial certification.
  - Up to \$5,250 for eligible courses (see II.B above)

**Tax Implications.** The Internal Revenue Code (IRC) requires reporting and withholding of income and FICA taxes for Tuition and Professional Development Benefits whenever those payments exceed \$5,250 annually for each employee, to include scholarship funding. Information regarding federal tax regulations is available from various sources such as, but not limited to, the Internal Revenue Service, certified public accountants, accounting firms, and other companies providing individual tax services. Employees should refer to [IRS Publication 970: Tax Benefits for Education for more information](#).

Education Benefits are accrued in the calendar year that are received and cannot cross over calendar years. Examples:

- An employee requests a \$1,500 tuition benefit in November 2022 for classes that begin in January 2023. The \$1,500 is paid in 2022 and accrues in the 2022 calendar year
- An employee requests a \$1,500 tuition benefit in January 2023 for classes that began in December 2022. The \$1,500 is paid in 2023 and accrues in the 2023 calendar year

### **D. Request for Education Assistance**

An employee who wishes to take advantage of the Education Assistance Benefit must submit the request through Employee Self-Service in Workday.

Note: Requests can only be approved within a quarter of the start date (e.g. January requests can cover course start dates from October of the previous year to April of the current year), and can only be requested once for each class/program (e.g. cannot request funding in December, and funding balance in January).

## **E. Process for Payment**

Upon approval, funding will be deposited through the employee's payroll on the next available pay period. Please allow up to two pay periods to receive payment.

In accepting Education Assistance under this program, the employee will provide (within thirty (30) days following the end of course or credentialing certification) documentation through employee self-service. This will include:

- An official grade report or copy of transcript (Tuition Benefit) or appropriate credentialing certification document (Professional Certification Benefit)
- Itemized invoice
- Proof of payment (paid bill or receipt)

Failure to complete all documentation requirements will result in the full repayment of the benefit as a deduction from the employee's next available paycheck. No additional benefits will be paid until all deductions have been processed.

Employees who leave employment at the Medical Center and are not transferring to the Academic Division will be required to repay any education assistance received within six (6) months prior to their termination. Appropriate deductions will be made to recoup the full amount of the assistance payments from the employee's final pay.

If an employee does not register for, or stops attending, a course for which he or she has received an education benefits disbursement, the employee is responsible for immediate repayment of the full amount of the benefit disbursement.

## **F. Source of Funds**

Educational Assistance is centrally funded, and is administered by Human Resources. Additional departmental funding may be provided by the employee's department if applicable.

Education Assistance payments can only be made to the employee.

Participants whose tuition is covered resulting from service in the Armed Forces, government aid, or other form of scholarship monies 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.

## **G. Appeals Process**

Employees may appeal an Education Benefit denial. The appeal must be submitted to [AskHR@virginia.edu](mailto:AskHR@virginia.edu) within two weeks of the denial, and should include:

- Subject line: Tuition/Professional Certification Appeal
- An explanation how the requested course or credentialing certification applies to current UVA work-related role or duties.
- A copy of the curriculum and activities for the course or credentialing certification that is being requested.
- Any additional supporting documentation that further demonstrates how the requested course or credentialing certification would directly support responsibilities for UVA work-related duties.

A decision will be provided within two (2) weeks following receipt of appeal.