

VIII. TUITION REFUND

A. POLICY

AURA supports an environment conducive to continuing education for all staff members. AURA employees are encouraged to participate in appropriate training and education programs. Such programs may be reimbursed through this policy when it can be demonstrated that such training is in the best interest of AURA and the employee. Each supervisor is responsible for guidance, training, and development of personnel and their skills within his or her boundaries of responsibility. While this program is available to all staff members, women and minority group members are especially encouraged to take advantage of such areas of opportunity. The Director or a designee will approve tuition refunds.

B. TUITION REFUND

The tuition refund policy applies to regular, full time staff. Two different types of studies are covered: The first is formal course work, for which academic credit from an accredited college or university is granted. The second includes instruction at trade schools, non-accredited institutions and training classes. An employee requesting tuition refund as covered by this policy may be reimbursed according to the schedule below. In some cases, based on the IRS guidelines, reimbursement may be considered a taxable income benefit. The following are AURA guidelines for reimbursement under this program:

1. Academic

- a. Permission to enroll in the course or to be absent from work shall be secured prior to enrollment. Permission will be granted based on the needs of AURA and the employee and shall not be based on any non-work related reason.
- b. The course must be related to the mission of AURA or to work the employee is doing or may be expected to do for AURA, or must be required for a degree which is so related (see below).
- c. Approvals for tuition reimbursement will be limited to six (6) credit hours per semester (or equivalent for non-semester based programs).
- d. Dollar limits for reimbursements in a calendar year may be established by each Center. Exceptions to the dollar limits require Center Director approval.
- e. A grade equivalent to 2.0 (C), awarded to the employee upon the completion of the course taken, qualifies for tuition reimbursement of 50% of the tuition assistance approved by the Center. A grade equivalent to 3.0 (B) or higher must be awarded to the employee to qualify for tuition reimbursement of 100% of the tuition assistance approved by the Center. In both cases, evidence of the grade awarded must be presented to the appropriate Center department for processing.

Leave for the purpose of attending such classes shall not exceed three hours per week for lecture courses and four hours per week for a single laboratory or science/mathematics course at a time and requires prior authorization from the employee's direct supervisor or manager.

- f. Employees eligible as veterans of the U.S. Armed Services for education benefits under the G.I. Bill or any similar legislation shall be reimbursed for not more than the amount by which the tuition fee exceeds the benefits to which the employee is already entitled.
- g. Permission to enroll, or for time off from work will not be granted unless there is reasonable expectation that the course or degree requirements will be successfully completed and in time to be of benefit to AURA.
- h. Exceptions to this policy must be requested in advance in writing and require Center Director approval.

2. Vocational and Non-Accredited

- a. Permission to attend vocational or non-accredited courses shall be secured in advance. Permission will be granted based on the needs of AURA and the employee and shall not be based on any non-work related reason.
- b. The course must be directly applicable to work which the employee normally does or may be expected to do for AURA.
- c. The employee must show evidence to the Human Resources Manager that he/she has satisfactorily completed the course in which he/she enrolled.