

## **Training and Educational Reimbursement Policy**

It is the policy of the Texas Board of Nursing to provide education and training for eligible staff members in accordance with the State Employees Training Act (Texas Government Code, §§656.041 - 656.104).

The education and training program benefits both the board and the participating employees by: (1) preparing for technological, nursing, and legal developments; (2) increasing work capabilities; (3) increasing the number of qualified employees in areas for which the board has difficulty in recruiting and retaining employees; and (4) increasing the competence of agency employees.

Training or education must be related to the essential functions or prospective duties of an employee. Board employees may be required to complete an education or training program related to the employee's duties or prospective duties as a condition of employment.

### **A. Eligibility for Tuition Reimbursement**

1. The employee must have been continuously employed by the Board for six months at the time of application unless the employee is taking the course at the request of the agency.
2. An employee who has a performance evaluation below 3.0 or a current employment disciplinary record may not be considered for tuition reimbursement unless the employee is taking the course at the request of the agency.
3. The employee must be employed on a full-time basis.
4. An employee approved for tuition reimbursement is agreeing to a service commitment of one (1) year continuous employment with the Board of Nursing.

While participating in the tuition reimbursement policy, an employee may apply for and accept other positions within the agency. Transferring to another position does not invalidate the participant's eligibility for tuition reimbursement.

### **B. Tuition Reimbursement Requirements**

1. The employee must maintain a satisfactory grade of "C" or better for undergraduate courses or courses not credited towards a degree, "B" or better for graduate courses, or "passing," if a pass/fail activity.
2. Nontraditional and online courses not credited for a degree will be considered. However, a course of questionable value to the agency will not

be reimbursed. A decision will be made by the Executive Director with a recommendation from the Department Director.

3. The employee must observe and comply with all Board policies and work rules.
4. The Executive Director may deny an employee further participation in a professional development program if the employee fails to meet performance, program, or academic requirements and expectations, or if the Executive Director determines that participation is no longer in the agency's best interest.
5. Tuition reimbursement is not a contract for any duration of continued employment, and the employee is guaranteed no special rights or privileges in addition to those granted to other Board employees. Continued employment is subject to the same policies and employment practices that govern all Board employees.
6. Employees may not use work hours for attending classes, studying, taking exams or other activities associated with their coursework or exam. When such activities fall within an employee's normal work schedule, the employee must use leave hours to compensate for time away from the job.
7. The employee must remain employed, by the Board, through the entirety of the course.
8. Employees who do not comply with the length of service requirement must reimburse the Board for both the cost of the training activities, prorated to credit any full calendar month of employment following completion of the course, and any reasonable expenses incurred by the Board in obtaining restitution, including reasonable attorney's fees.

#### C. Tuition Reimbursement Amount

Tuition Reimbursement only includes tuition, building fees, lab fees and student service fees. Tuition will be reimbursed up to half of the cost with a maximum of \$1,000 per fiscal year contingent upon availability of agency resources (receipts required).

#### D. Procedures for Tuition Reimbursement

An employee must submit the Tuition Reimbursement Request form to the Operations Director indicating the tuition they paid (receipts required). Verification of successful completion must be submitted to the Operations Director within 30 days of completing the course(s).

The Operations Director will attach the verification to the Tuition Reimbursement request and submit it to the accounting department for processing. Grades, official grade reports or transcripts with the college/university's name must be submitted to the

Operations Director within 30 days after completion of the course. The Executive Director must authorize the reimbursement payment.

#### E. Tuition Reimbursement for Training Requiring 3 Month Absence

Before an employee intends or expects to receive training paid for by the agency, and during the training period the employee cannot perform the employee's regular duties for three or more months as a result of the training, the employee must agree in writing to:

- Work for the agency following the training for at least one month of the training period; or
- Pay the agency for all costs associated with the training that were paid during the training period, including any amounts of the employee's salary that were paid that were not accounted for as paid vacation or compensatory leave.

#### F. Appeal Process

If the employee is denied Education and Training Reimbursement, the employee may appeal by following the grievance procedure set forth in the Human Resource Manual.