Advanced Degree Tuition Reimbursement Policy

The tuition reimbursement policies and procedures to follow are designed specifically for faculty, administrators and professional staff only. The phrase "Tuition Exchange Schools" is meant to refer to any institutions of higher education that are currently involved with King's College in a formal tuition exchange program. At the time of this report those schools include College Misericordia and Wilkes University. In addition, the College participates with Tuition Exchange, Inc. and CIC (Council of Independent Colleges). King's also has an agreement with several Holy Cross Colleges and Universities. These are undergraduate-only agreements and limited to employee dependents.

The College recognizes the importance of continuing education for members of the faculty, administration and professional staff. The College also recognizes that the benefits of an advanced degree tuition reimbursement program will not only benefit the employees but also the institution. With this in mind, the College has worked to develop a plan that will be fair and equitable to all employees regardless of their years of service to the institution. The plan is intended to reward employees with more years of service while still providing sufficient benefit to help attract high quality new employees. Finally, the plan is designed to balance these needs within the financial and budget considerations of the College.

Eligibility

In order to be eligible for the advanced degree tuition reimbursement program, the following minimum requirements must be met:

- The employee must be a full-time member of the King’s College faculty, administration or professional staff for a minimum of 90 days. (Advance degree benefits are not available to dependent children or spouses of employees.)

- The advanced degree that reimbursement is being requested for MUST be directly related to the employee’s current job responsibilities and professional development goals and be approved by the employee’s supervisor or department/program chair, the employee’s Vice President as well as the Human Resources Department. All parties must approve the advanced degree program as it relates to the employee’s current job responsibilities before entry into the advanced degree reimbursement program will be allowed.

- The employee must meet the academic and application requirements as a candidate for the advanced degree of the institution that reimbursement is being requested for.
The employee may not take courses at a different institution that are available already at King’s or other tuition exchange agreement schools. First choice should always be given to King’s College courses, followed by tuition exchange schools.

This program applies to only post baccalaureate programs of study.

Programs of study must be taken at an accredited college or university.

Proof of satisfactory course completion and tuition receipts must be submitted prior to reimbursement.

The employee is exclusively responsible for initiating, submitting, and obtaining approval for advanced degree tuition reimbursement on the required forms in the required time periods prior to beginning school work for each session.

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**Explanation of Benefits**

The Advanced Degree Tuition Reimbursement plan is a three tiered plan. Within each tier there are compensation schedules based on years of service to the institution. Although Tier 1 and Tier 2 are currently the same in this policy implementation, the College felt it was important to retain the three tier plan until further details of advanced degree tuition exchange programs can be investigated and developed.

1. **Tier 1 - Courses taken at King’s College**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Service</th>
<th>Percentage of Tuition Reimbursement</th>
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<tr>
<td>After 90 days</td>
<td>100%</td>
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2. **Tier 2 - Classes taken at institutions that have an active Tuition Exchange agreement with King’s College for advanced degree courses.** This Tier 2 benefit is not relevant at this time since there are not any active Tuition Exchange agreements in place at King’s College currently.

   The employee receives the benefit equal to the lesser of (a) the appropriate percentage of the host college’s tuition OR (b) the appropriate percentage of King’s College’s advanced degree tuition.
Availability of openings in this program may be limited by participation at each institution.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>After 90 days</td>
<td>100%</td>
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3. **Tier 3** - Classes taken at other institutions.

Employee receives the benefit equal to the lesser of (a) the appropriate percentage of the host college’s tuition OR (b) the appropriate percentage of King’s College’s advanced degree tuition:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Service</th>
<th>Percentage of Tuition Reimbursement</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After 90 days</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 or more</td>
<td>74%</td>
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For example: Assuming King’s College’s advanced degree tuition rate is $1,875.00 per 3-credit course and the host institution’s tuition rate is $1,900.00 per 3-credit course and an employee with five or more years of service at King’s taking one course at the host institution will be reimbursed 74% of the lesser amount (which is the King’s College tuition rate of $1,875.00) for a reimbursement of $1387.50 for that course.

**Limits**

The following limits apply to the advanced degree tuition reimbursement program:

- All reimbursement percentages are based on the unpaid balance after all available scholarship, financial aid, and grant monies are deducted. The general policy of the College regarding scholarships, financial aid, and grants shall apply; state monies and other resources must be explored and utilized with the College supplementing the award to the extent of its financial commitment.
• Maximum reimbursement of two courses per session or four courses per year (June 1-May 31) within the financial limits listed below. (Employees need to receive permission from their supervisor or department/program chair concerning the number of classes taken, and the supervisor or department/program chair must indicate approval by signing the supervisor authorization portion of the Advanced Degree Tuition Reimbursement Application.)

• Yearly maximum $5,250.00 per employee (Based on a Jan 1- Dec 31). This rate is geared toward the IRS limits on Education Assistance Programs (Code Section 127) to provide employees with the maximum tax benefits.

• Lifetime Maximum $15,717.60 per non-faculty employee. (This is based on 70% of the typical cost of three years of tuition at the King’s College advanced degree tuition rate— currently $1,875 per 3-credit course.) The Lifetime Maximum benefit for faculty will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the the Office of Academic Affairs.

• Total number of employees participating in the advanced degree tuition reimbursement program may be limited by the availability of professional development funds budgeted for a given fiscal year.

• Reimbursement monies will be in the form of a loan to each employee paid each session for the amount of that session (up to the yearly and lifetime maximums listed above). At the completion of the degree program, the College will forgive 20% of the total loan each year over a period of five years. This is done to ensure a reasonable retention rate of employees seeking their advanced degree via the advanced degree tuition reimbursement funding. If the employee leaves active employment with King’s College, this loan forgiveness ends immediately, and the employee will be responsible for repayment of the balance of the loan at the terms agreed to in the Business Office promissory note.

• Demonstrated progress toward the completion of the advanced degree must be shown. In cases where continual degree progress is not shown and/or the employee decides to take a semester off for non-medical reasons, loan repayment will begin immediately.

• The advanced degree must be completed by employees within a five-year period from the beginning date in order to receive loan forgiveness. For Faculty the advanced degree must be completed within a seven-year period from the beginning date in order to receive loan forgiveness. For doctoral programs this limit is extended to 7-10 years depending on the degree program. This limit will be determined on a case-by-case basis at the time the promissory note is signed.
Educational benefits in all cases pertain to tuition assistance and are exclusive of all fees. Tutorial costs, independent study costs, and off campus programs are not covered by these educational benefits.

The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania views educational assistance payments as taxable compensation to the employee and subject to withholding. Employees are responsible for all tax payments required under federal, state, and local law. (Future investigation and development at King’s College of Code Section 127 tax laws may make this benefit non-taxable.)

All educational benefits are provided during the period of active employment by the College and cease when the employee is no longer employed whether or not the advanced degree or the full amount of the loan forgiveness has been completed over the five years for employees or seven years for faculty. In this case the employee will be held responsible for repayment of the balance of the loan at the terms agreed to in the Business Office promissory note. In cases of a person’s retirement or departure due to poor health, determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Benefits determinations based on change of employment status at the College will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Normally classes are to be taken outside of the employee’s regular work schedule. Special attention should be given to the department’s workload first.

The Director of Graduate Programs will not count employees when determining whether registration in any course is sufficient to offer the course at King’s College.

While completion of a program provides for improved educational background, the accomplishment does not obligate King’s College to reward such completion through promotion, transfer, reassignment, or salary increases.

**Application Procedures**

Applications for benefits of the Advanced Degree Tuition Reimbursement Program must be submitted to the Human Resources Department each semester. Payment of benefits is authorized and coordinated by the Human Resources Department in conjunction with the Business Office. Specific procedures for claiming the educational assistance benefit are set by the Human Resources Department. In general, these procedures will adhere to the following guidelines:
The employee must complete all required paperwork with the appropriate signatures from the Human Resources Department as well as the employee’s supervisor or department/program chair prior to the application deadline dates (April 1st for summer session, June 1st for fall session, and October 1st for spring session). A copy of the advanced degree program outline should also accompany the required paperwork. The employee is also responsible for the submission of all appropriate paperwork required at the end of each session to show course completion and tuition charges.

Serious consideration will be given to those employees with Professional Development goals in their yearly performance appraisal that relate directly to the advanced degree that reimbursement is being requested for.

Serious consideration will be based on an employee’s overall performance, potential for advancement, and long-term commitment to King’s College’s mission.

Serious consideration will be given to employees already on a degree path as part of the advanced degree tuition reimbursement program from a prior year.

Serious consideration will be given to employees with more years of service; however, because of the lower reimbursement rates for employees with fewer years of service, more new employees can be accommodated within a budget limitation as long as care is given to monitor the long-term consequences of this action in the budget.

Serious consideration will be given to employees that have not already completed an advanced degree via the program.

Serious consideration will be given to employees who are not already receiving benefits under the College’s Undergraduate Tuition Reimbursement Program for a dependent child or spouse.

**Benefit Allocation Process / Mediation**

Serious consideration will be given first to candidates who meet more of the various criteria outlined above in the Application Procedures. In cases where there are insufficient funds available to meet the needs of everyone requesting advanced degree tuition reimbursement, the selection will be mediated by the Human Resources Department and the supervisor(s) or department/program chair of the requesting employees. This mediation may be done not only to ensure the program does not surpass the funds budgeted for advanced degree tuition reimbursement, but also to ensure candidates meet the applicable eligibility requirements.
Application Forms

The form used for the application for advanced degree tuition reimbursement very closely matches the forms used for undergraduate/graduate tuition reimbursement for King’s College. Additional forms will be required by the Business Office to initiate and track the five or seven year loan forgiveness program as well as to initiate payment after successful course completion. The application forms for this benefit can be obtained by contacting the Human Resources Department.

Effective Date: 4/1/07