	<p><b>Title:</b> Education Assistance Program</p> <p><b>Number:</b> 303</p> <p><b>Effective:</b> October 15, 2020</p> <p><b>Cancel:</b> Resolution No. 2015-06</p> <p><b>Prepared by:</b> LeeAnn McNulty, Administrative Services Manager</p> <p><b>Approved by:</b> Authority Board Resolution No. 2020-27</p>
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**POL-303 EDUCATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

This policy applies to regular, full-time employees with one or more years of employment at Mason Transit Authority (MTA). Probationary, temporary and worker/drivers are not eligible for this program. Part-time employees may be eligible for this program with prior approval of the General Manager. This policy does not apply to seminars, workshops, or other courses MTA directs employees to attend.

**1.0 Purpose**

1.1 The purpose of this policy is to assist employees to obtain additional education or training to increase their competence in their present jobs and to prepare for advancement within MTA.

**2.0 Employees Receive Reimbursement for Approved Courses**

2.1 MTA may reimburse, within the current budget restrictions, the cost of tuition, enrollment fees, lab fees and books for courses which employees take at a recognized institution (includes online institutions). These courses must, in the opinion of management, realistically increase employees’ competence in their present jobs or prepare them for advancement in the Agency. Non-job-related courses do not qualify except for requirements classes which contribute to the degree and are subject to approval by the manager. The fact that a prior course was approved does not guarantee future courses will be approved. Employees must maintain full-time status as an MTA employee through the duration of the course.

**3.0 Courses Must Be from Accredited Schools**

3.1 The course must be provided by an accredited school (i.e., Olympic College, WSU, etc.), correspondence school or professional association. Masters and PhD programs are excluded. Reimbursement for study at other institutions will be subject to the General Manager’s approval.

**4.0 Reimbursement Amounts Are Limited**

4.1 Approval is subject to budgetary constraints existing at the time of the request.



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- 4.2 Maximum reimbursement is \$750 per quarter and \$2,250 per employee per year, approved in one-year increments, with a life-time maximum of \$9,000 per employee. Special exceptions to these amounts may be made for employees pursuing a degree in their professional field or for courses directly relevant to their current job duties.
- 4.3 Tuition must not be reimbursed from any other source (i.e., grants, scholarships, awards, etc.).


**5.0 Employees Who Separate From MTA**

- 5.1 Normally, an employee must be employed with the company when the course is completed in order to qualify for reimbursement. However, an employee who separates during enrollment because of reduction in force or elimination of the job will be reimbursed for all costs incurred up to the date of separation.
- 5.2 Employees who terminate for personal reasons must reimburse MTA for any payment made in the two prior years of employment. Reimbursement of any monies will be taken out of the employee’s last paycheck. The reimbursement schedule is:

Time Elapsed from Reimbursement Date(s) to Termination Date	Percentage of Repayment Applicable to Reimbursement Amounts Received During Last 2 Years
1 Year or less	100%
More than 1 year, but less than 2 years	50%
2 years or more	0%

**6.0 Employees Receive Reimbursement Only Upon Successful Course Completion**

- 6.1 The employee must receive a “C” grade or better (or a “Pass” grade in classes which can only be taken as “Pass or Fail”).
- 6.2 Reimbursement will be made upon completion of the course and submission of course grades.

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**7.0 Time Off from Work to Attend Classes is Limited**

- 7.1 Time off from normal work hours to attend or travel to classes will be allowed with prior authorization from the manager and under the following conditions:
- The employee’s absence will not interrupt the workflow or put an additional workload on other employees;
  - A comparable course must be unavailable outside of normal working hours;
  - The employee will either makeup the time missed, have his or her hours changed through flexible work hours, use accrued vacation time, take time off without pay, or make some similar arrangement with the immediate supervisor or department manager;
  - Time taken off and not made up as outlined above will be without pay;
  - No more than five hours of time lost and not made up will be allowed per week;
  - The number of courses will be limited to the amount that does not interfere with job performance.