

**Tennessee Technological University  
Policy No. 630**



Effective Date: July 1, 2014

**Policy No.:** 630

**Policy Name:** Educational Assistance for Tennessee Tech Employees

**Date Revised:** July 1, 2017; January 1, 2019; January 1, 2020; July 1, 2020

## **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish the process and procedures regarding educational assistance for Tennessee Tech employees.

## **II. Review**

This policy will be reviewed every four years or whenever circumstances require review, whichever is earlier, by the Associate Vice President for Human Resources in consultation with the Vice President for Planning and Finance, with recommendations for revision presented to the Administrative Council and University Assembly.

## **III. Definition**

Fees: includes maintenance Fees, registration Fees, tuition, debt service Fees, technology access Fees, online course Fees, TN eCampus Fees, and service charges

## **IV. Policy**

- A.** Tennessee Tech is committed to the need for continued professional growth and development of employees. As such, Tennessee Tech provides support for educational assistance to employees and their dependents.
- B.** Courses should be scheduled at times other than during regularly scheduled work hours unless the use of annual leave or an alternate work arrangement is documented and approved by the supervisor prior to enrolling in the course.
- C.** If an employee wishes to attend during regular work hours, the supervisor must review the request to ensure that the employee's job performance receives priority and that the requested flexible schedule is appropriate for business needs. Only upon approval of the request may the employee register for courses during regular work hours.
- D.** Undergraduate and graduate course tuition up to \$5,250 per year paid by Tennessee Tech for their employees is excluded from the employees' gross annual income. Tuition and fees paid over \$5,250 will be included in the employees' gross annual income.
- E.** The President may approve additional fee waivers or tuition aid for employees not enumerated in this policy.
- F.** With the exception of the fee waiver which is mandated by the State of Tennessee, the classes and programs for TTU employees and dependents are available subject to funds being budgeted and available within the institution.

#### **G. Fee waiver for Tennessee Tech employees**

1. Full-time regular employees of Tennessee Tech are eligible to enroll in one credit course per term, undergraduate or graduate, at any state of Tennessee public school with Fees waived for the employee (“fee waiver or waiver”).
2. Employee status is determined on the first day of class for each term. Any change in employment after the first day of classes shall not affect eligibility for that term or the amount of assistance received.
3. Employees are responsible for special course fees, books and supplies, application fees, applied music fees, lab fees, off-campus facility fees, parking fees, traffic fines, and similar fees.
4. The waiver is limited to one class, not to exceed 4 credits or 120 clock hours per term with a maximum of four (4) terms per year; however, it may apply for partial payment of classes of more than 4 credit hours or 120 clock hours.
5. Employees are not eligible for Fee waivers at more than one institution per term.
6. Employee enrollment is limited to available space with the intent that tuition paying students shall not be denied enrollment by a student using a Fee waiver. Employees may register only within four weeks prior to the start of the academic term.
7. If applicable, the Fee waiver should be used before other forms of educational assistance that may be offered by the institution.
8. Payback provisions do not exist.

#### **H. Faculty and staff tuition reimbursement**

1. This program’s general goal is to encourage faculty and staff members to develop their skills and knowledge through participation in educational programs and is intended to serve as a means of job-related career development.
2. Tuition reimbursement should be used in the employee’s pursuit of a degree that is judged by Tennessee Tech, in its sole discretion, to be beneficial to the institution and to provide assistance for an employee who takes credit courses in a degree program while continuing work responsibilities.

3. Tuition reimbursement is limited to courses/programs at Tennessee Tech, absent extraordinary circumstances.
- a. Employees who wish to pursue a program at another institution must:
  - i) Determine that the program is not available at Tennessee Tech and no similar program exists at Tennessee Tech; and
  - ii) Identify how the program is directly related to their job and is needed to enhance their skills in their current position; and
  - iii) Acknowledge that the reimbursement will be paid at the current in-state rate for Tennessee Tech; and
  - iv) Receive approval from their supervisor who certifies that the degree is needed for the employee's current position.
  - v) Reimbursement applications shall be conditionally approved and held until the employee requests reimbursement and provides evidence of satisfactory course completion.
4. Any regular part-time or full-time employee who has been continuously employed by Tennessee Tech for at least six (6) months is eligible to participate in Tuition Reimbursement.
5. Regular part-time employees receive a prorated portion of assistance based on their percentage of employment.
6. Tuition reimbursement allows for maintenance and tuition-related fees for a maximum of six (6) credit hours per term with a maximum of four (4) terms per year.
- 7.

Tuition reimbursement will only pay tuition and Fees that are not covered by any other free aid (e.g. grants, scholarships).

8. Employees are responsible for required deposits, special course fees, books and supplies, application fees, applied music fees, lab fees, off-campus facility fees, parking fees, traffic fines, and similar fees.
9. Employees must meet the requirements for admission and the regular academic rules and regulations of the institution offering the course.
10. After completion of the course(s), an employee must be employed for not less than one (1) month of full-time employment for each month in the term of participation. Failure to do so may result in repayment of tuition reimbursement.

11. In order to receive future reimbursement, recipients must satisfactorily complete all course requirements as defined by the academic program in which they are enrolled. A grade of incomplete or withdrawal from the course is not considered satisfactory completion.

a. An employee who does not satisfactorily complete all course requirements must satisfactorily complete an equivalent credit hour course before being eligible for future tuition reimbursement.

12. Employees who drop a course after the 100% refund deadline will be required to repay Tennessee Tech a percentage of the tuition reimbursement based on the number of days successfully completed unless the employee enrolls in another course on the same day that he/she dropped the original course.

**I. Employee audit/non-credit program**

1. Any regular part-time or full-time employee who has been employed by Tennessee Tech for at least six (6) months is eligible to participate provided that the audit/non-credit program is job-related or wellness-related.

2. The employee audit/non-credit program allows for maintenance and tuition-related Fees for a maximum of six (6) credit hours per term with a maximum of four (4) terms per year.

3. Employee audit/non-credit enrollment is limited to courses at Tennessee Tech.

**V. Interpretation**

The Associate Vice President for Human Resources or his/her designee has the final authority to interpret the terms of this policy.

**VI. Citation of Authority for Policy**

T.C.A. § 49-7-116; T.C.A. § 49-8-203(a)(1)(E)

**Approved:**

Administrative Council: November 13, 2013; April 5, 2017; November 14, 2018;  
October 2, 2019

University Assembly: November 20, 2013; April 19, 2017; November 28, 2018;  
November 20, 2019