

Tuition Reimbursement

This Policy is Applicable to:

Big Rapids, Continuing Care, Corporate, Gerber, Ludington, Outpatient/Physician Practices, Pennock, Priority Health, Reed City, SH GR Hospitals, SHMG, United/Kelsey, Zeeland

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Functional Area:	Benefits, Human Resources

1. Purpose

This policy describes three tuition/certification reimbursement programs: (I) the Standard Tuition Reimbursement Program; (II) the Shortage Tuition Reimbursement Program; and (III) the Reimbursement for Certification Examinations program. Active bargaining agreements supersede this policy.

2. Definitions

General Eligibility Requirements and Program Terms and Conditions

The following eligibility requirements and terms and conditions apply to all of the Tuition/Certification Reimbursement Programs. Employees must satisfy all of these requirements, and any additional requirements described in the program descriptions below.

- Temporary employees are not eligible to participate in these programs.
- Employees must be benefit eligible and classified as at least 0.5 FTE.
- Employees must have at least six consecutive months of service and successfully completed his or her introductory period (if applicable) before the beginning of any course.
- Employees must not have received performance correction at the level of second notice or above in the 12 months immediately preceding the date of issuance of the reimbursement check.
- For programs I and II, the employees must submit an application for pre-approval in the EdAssist system prior to (but no later than 30 days after) the beginning of the course(s) for which reimbursement will be requested. Application forms received more than 30 days after the beginning of the course(s) will be denied.
- Reimbursement requests must be submitted within 60 days from the date the class ends, along with required documentation (detailed invoice, grades, and receipts).
- Reimbursement requests will be processed within 60 days from the date of receipt.
- For programs I and II, Spectrum Health will reimburse only tuition expenses, up to the limits stated below. Spectrum Health will not reimburse employees for books, examination fees, housing or other expenses.
- Tuition costs will be reimbursed after deducting any scholarship or grant payments. The employee is obligated to disclose any scholarship or grant payments or pending payments associated with the program receiving tuition reimbursement.
- Employees may only participate in one of the tuition reimbursement programs (programs I and II) at any time, except with the advance written approval of the vice president of human resources.



Employees may participate in the Reimbursement for Certification Examinations program (program III) while participating in one of the tuition reimbursement programs.

- Educational classes must be taken through an accredited and Spectrum Health approved educational institution. Certifications must be obtained from a reputable professional organization.
- Spectrum Health reserves the right to accept or reject academic or professional certification programs and limit the educational or professional institutions/organizations eligible for reimbursement. Spectrum Health also reserves the right to limit the number/type of degrees or certifications reimbursable under these programs.
- Employees must be employed and actively at work in a 0.5 FTE classification or higher or on an approved leave of absence (12 weeks maximum) while taking the course(s) for which reimbursement is requested (for programs I and II) and through the time of issuance of the reimbursement check (for Programs I, II, and III).
- While enrolled in an approved program, employees may transfer to different departments; however, they must continue to satisfy all eligibility requirements through the date of issuance of the reimbursement check.
- Tuition Reimbursement above \$5,250 per calendar year is taxable income and will be subject to applicable withholding.

Eligibility Determination

Employees are required to consult with the human resources department before applying for reimbursement under any of these programs, and before scheduling classes, to determine if eligibility requirements have been satisfied.

3. Compliance

Managers must notify Human Resources of any change in employment status that affects an employee's eligibility for benefits.

This policy applies to all Spectrum Health employees. If this policy directly conflicts with the provisions of an applicable collective bargaining agreement, the negotiated provision in the collective bargaining agreement will control for covered members.

4. Policy

4.1. STANDARD TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

Program Outline – Tuition Reimbursement – Pursuing Educational Degree

- Employee must be pursuing a degree listed on the organizational related degree list or in an identified eligible shortage program.
- Employee must provide written verification of acceptance/admission into an approved academic program.
- Employee must attain a grade of "C" or better in the course.
- Spectrum Health will reimburse 100% of the employee's tuition expenses, up to a maximum of \$3000 per calendar year for undergraduate, graduate and certification programs (under I.C below) combined.
- Approved doctoral degrees are eligible for reimbursement under this program with executive approval.



Eligible Degrees

- Human Resources determines tuition eligible organizational related degrees.
- A list of approved organizational related degrees is located on InSite.

Exams for Licensure/Registry/Certifications

Employees must take examinations for any required licenses/registrations/certifications as soon as possible after graduation. Employees who fail the examination may be allowed one additional attempt with management approval, provided a position is available in the department.

Employees must take the examination the next time it is offered. If an employee fails on the second attempt, s/he will be required to repay Spectrum Health for any reimbursed tuition costs.

4.2. SHORTAGE TUITION REIMBURSEMENT PROGRAM

Additional Eligibility Requirements

- Employee must be pursuing a degree in an identified eligible shortage program.

Program Outline

- The employee must enter into a contractual arrangement with Spectrum Health, agreeing to work for a period of three years following graduation from the program at a classification of at least .5 FTE over the duration of the entire three-year period. If the employee does not satisfy his/her contractual obligations, s/he will be required to repay Spectrum Health for all reimbursed tuition costs.
- Spectrum Health will reimburse employees up to a maximum of \$5,000 per calendar year for approved undergraduate programs and \$7,500 for approved graduate and doctoral programs.
- Approved doctoral degrees are eligible for reimbursement under this program with executive approval.

Eligible Shortage Positions

- Human Resources determines eligible shortage positions. Employees who enter a program for a shortage position and sign the contractual agreement are allowed to finish the program under the agreement even if the position is no longer considered shortage in subsequent years. If there are no available positions at Spectrum Health when the employee graduates, or if Spectrum Health does not select the staff member for an available position, the repayment provisions may be waived.
- A list of identified shortage positions is located on InSite.

Exams for Licensure/Registry/Certifications

Employees must take examinations for any required licenses/registrations/certifications as soon as possible after graduation. Employees who fail the examination may be allowed one additional attempt with management approval, provided a position is available in the department.

Employees must take the examination the next time it is offered. If an employee fails on the second attempt, s/he will be required to repay Spectrum Health for any reimbursed tuition costs.

4.3. REIMBURSEMENT FOR CERTIFICATION EXAMINATIONS

The purpose of this program is to reimburse employees for the cost of taking professional certification examinations with the recognition that such certifications enhance the professional competence of the employee and the overall reputation of Spectrum Health.



Additional Eligibility Requirements

- Spectrum Health will reimburse only the cost of the certification examination, but not the cost of any preparation courses, books or other expenses.
- The certification must not be identified as a requirement of the employee's current job, but must be related to the employee's current job.
- The certification examination must not be offered by Spectrum Health.
- The employee must pass the examination to obtain reimbursement.

Program Outline

- Employees will be reimbursed only for approved certifications in the employee's assigned work area, and only with advance approval of the employee's director and Human Resources.
- Spectrum Health will reimburse 100% of the cost of the certification examination, up to a maximum of \$400 per examination.
- An employee may be reimbursed for up to two certifications or re-certifications per calendar year.
- Reimbursement requests must be submitted within 60 days from the date of the employee's receipt of the certification test results or the recertification. Reimbursement requests will be processed within 60 days from the date of receipt.

Eligible Certifications

Human Resources determines certifications eligible for reimbursement under this program. A list of approved certifications is located on InSite.

5. Revisions

Spectrum Health reserves the right to alter, amend, modify or eliminate this policy at any time without prior written notice.

6. Policy Development and Approval

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7. Keywords

tuition, tuition reimbursement, education, classes, certifications, degree, shortage