DEPARTMENT OF
DEFENSE, VETERANS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
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DVEM Policy and Procedure Statement 19-02

August 1, 2019

TO: All Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management Employees

FROM: Major General Douglas A. Farnham, Commissioner and Adjutant General

SUBJECT: Tuition Reimbursement

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1. This policy supersedes DVEM 13-10, dated December 12, 2013, subject as above. It is effective immediately and remains in effect until renewed or rescinded. This policy **does not** apply to DVEM federal employees.

2. References:

   a. Bureau of Human Resources Policy and Practices Manual 13.2 Tuition Reimbursement

3. Tuition Reimbursement is defined as partial repayment to Department employees for the cost of attending academic courses that are related to Department goals and are reasonably related to the employee's job or advancement.

4. It shall be the policy of the Department of Defense, Veterans and Emergency Management (hereinafter DVEM) to encourage State of Maine employees (hereinafter employee(s)) to further their self-development through participation in Tuition Reimbursement for a cooperative continuing education program. Courses may be taken at (or via ITV or internet) accredited colleges/universities, School Administrative Districts and adult education centers during off-duty hours. The Department reserves the right to establish deadlines for receipt of applications and to establish budgetary limits, as appropriate.

5. This policy applies to courses DVEM employees have chosen to take for professional development purposes. It does not apply to course work DVEM employees are required to take. Tuition assistance for required courses is provided separately by the Department.

6. The purpose of this policy is to establish a means whereby the Department's goals and objectives can be achieved and the quality of services sustained and improved through additional education provided to staff. The Department will not pay for courses for any employee already receiving other forms of educational benefits such as GI Bill, Veterans Dependents, or other Tuition Assistance.

7. Under no circumstances will attendance at voluntary professional development courses be considered as overtime worked. Travel expenses related to voluntary attendance or participation in such training or educational courses will not be reimbursed.

8. Tuition reimbursement programs shall be available to all State Departmental staff in accordance with the needs of the Department and the limitations imposed by funding; and

9. Written requests for tuition reimbursement using the Tuition Reimbursement Request Form, must be made prior to the beginning of the semester: late August for the fall semester, late November for the spring semester, and mid-April for the summer semester. Direct Supervisors will review requests based on the availability of funds, make recommendations with respect to each request and forward the requests with endorsement to the appropriate Director. A copy of the approved request will be forwarded to the employee, the supervisor and the DVEM Financial Analyst.

10. Relationship of course(s) to job.

a. A course may be approved if it is part of a specifically planned degree program for which the applicant has been accepted if the degree program is related to a career within the Department.

b. A course, which is not part of a specific degree program for the employee, may be approved if the course content relates specifically to the employee's current position or to a promotional opportunity in a related career ladder within the Department.

c. A course not part of a degree program which relates to a possible promotional opportunity in a new career ladder may be considered but will require strong justification in terms of Departmental needs and the candidate's potential for promotion to the new career ladder.

d. A course or program that affords the applicant the ability to obtain a General Education Diploma (GED) will be approved.

11. Continued Participation

a. Once an employee has Departmental approval for a particular degree program, the employee need not justify required course content within that degree program. However, the employee's continued participation in the degree program must have approval each semester of attendance and is subject to denial as is any employee's participation.

b. An employee not enrolled in an approved degree program will be expected to justify each course taken.

12. Eligibility criteria for receiving tuition reimbursement have been established to ensure consistency in the application of this policy:

a. Applicant must be a permanent full-time or permanent part-time employee of DVEM for at least one year prior to making application for assistance. Summer work experience in the Department may be included in the one-year requirement. They also must:

b. The course must be reasonably related to the applicant's current job duties or potential advancement opportunities within DVEM.

c. The content of the course must not be available through in-service training.

d. Applicant must have a satisfactory performance rating, as recorded on the most recent performance evaluation with no record of disciplinary action within the last year.

e. Applicant must relate how the course will improve performance and/or prepare applicant for higher responsibility.

f. Applicant must be recommended for approval by their immediate supervisor and get final approval from their Director and the Deputy Commissioner.

g. Any and all time away from the job requires prior approval in accordance with existing guidelines.

h. Employees may receive a maximum tuition award of $10,000 over the length of their tenure with the Department. DVEM Senior Financial Analyst will maintain a database for the purpose of tracking maximum benefits for employees.

i. Each employee will be limited to Continuing Education support for no more than two courses per semester.

j. Any application may be denied, regardless of whether the employee is in degree program status, if the program of study is not in keeping with Departmental needs, if sufficient funds are not available, if the work schedule is a problem, or if the employee's job performance is poor.

k. Awards will be made for the cost of one university level academic course to include tuition and course related fees. The cost of books and other course related expenses will not be included in Department tuition reimbursement awards.

l. Tuition awards will be based upon University of Maine system tuition rates as of the time of the applicant's enrollment.

m. Tuition awards will be made as a reimbursement of applicants based upon successful completion (grade C or better) of the course. Payment will be made by the Accounting Office upon receipt of a copy of the applicant's transcripts or grade.

n. In the event that an employee leaves the Department's employ, for any reason, before the completion of a course to be reimbursed under this policy, the Department is not obligated to make the reimbursement.

13. Point of Contact is the Deputy Commissioner at (207) 430-5997.

Encl

Major General Douglas A. Farnham
Commissioner and Adjutant General