# Tuition Fees Reimbursement Policy

## POLICY STATEMENT
The City of Hamilton (“the City”) recognizes the importance of investing in the learning and development of its workforce to increase employee engagement, career growth, high performance, and innovation. The City supports learning and development of its staff with levels of financial support which vary depending on the relevancy of the Training opportunity.

## PURPOSE
The purpose of this Policy is to provide clear criteria of what employee Tuition Fees qualify for reimbursement to enable consistent approval and reimbursement across the City.

## SCOPE
This Policy applies to all permanent and temporary full-time and part-time employees.

Employees on leaves of absence without pay are ineligible. In order to qualify for reimbursement, an employee must be pre-approved prior to enrolment.

All funds come from Departmental and Divisional budgets.

Where applicable, the governing collective agreement for unionized employees or the employment contract for non-unionized employees addressing learning and development will prevail.

Excludes business travel, seminars, and conferences expenses. See Business Travel / Conference Attendance Policy.

## DEFINITIONS

### Training
Includes an individual course, or a "formal program of study" involving more than one course leading to a degree, graduate degree, diploma, certificate, or professional designation; or an internet course when offered by an accredited educational institution.

### Tuition Fees
Required fees for completing a credit course at an accredited educational institution.

### Non-Tuition Ancillary Fees
A compulsory ancillary fee that is imposed or administered by a given institution, or one of its constituent parts or its federated or affiliated institutions, in addition to regular Tuition Fees, which a student is required to pay in order to enroll in, or successfully complete, a Training.
**TERMS & CONDITIONS**

The City may at its sole discretion, reimburse Tuition Fees for the following Training subject to available funds in the divisional/departmental budget.

For non-mandatory Training, an annual learning and development plan is required to be completed first, prior to submitting reimbursement requests.

The employee must obtain the appropriate approval signatures’ prior to registration in the course or program by filling out a “Tuition Advance Form”. This form can be obtained through Accounts Payable & Activity Based Costing, Financial Services through the External Disbursements Clerk.

1. Mandatory Training is paid for by the City, and the employee is not required to incur the cost of any Tuition Fees.

2. Tuition Fees for reimbursement are directly related to the employee’s current job and/or division/department function. These may be:
   - (a) individual courses taken independently of enrolment in a degree, certificate or diploma program; or
   - (b) courses leading to a college diploma, university bachelor's degree, masters or doctorate degree, professional certificate, diploma or designation.

   *For term & condition #2: with the appropriate approvals, 100% reimbursed upon successful course completion (as evidenced through such things as a credit earned, certificate completed, a pass/fail, or a passing final grade).

3. Tuition Fees that are related to the organization's function but not directly related to the employee's current job or division / department function. These may be:
   - (a) individual courses taken independently of enrolment in a degree, certificate or diploma program; or
   - (b) courses leading to a college diploma, university bachelor's degree, or a professional certificate, diploma or designation.

   *For term & condition #3, with appropriate approvals, 50% will be reimbursed upon successful course completion.
4. All university/college degrees require the approval of the employee’s general manager (or designate) in consultation with Executive Director of Human Resources (or designate). A business case must be provided that outlines how the university/college degree is directly connected to the City of Hamilton’s business needs.

5. A written contract must be signed prior to the employee commencing the degree program whereby the employee agrees to reimburse the City as per this Policy if he or she voluntarily resigns within three years of the degree program completion date.

6. Departments must determine the availability of in-house courses before approving reimbursement for outside Training;

7. Where the employee voluntarily resigns from the City of Hamilton, the employee agrees to reimburse the City for Tuition Fees paid by the City within three years of the Training completion date. The City is authorized to recover funds by means of a payroll deduction from the employee's final pay (s). All exceptions need to be submitted and approved by the Executive Director of Human Resources (or designate).

Repayment is prorated:
- 100% if the employee leaves before 18 months less a day;
- 75% if the employee leaves from 18-24 months less a day;
- 50% if the employee leaves from 24-30 months less a day;
- 25% if the employee leaves from 30-36 months less a day;
- 0% if the employee leaves after 36 months

8. The employee needs to reimburse the City if he or she does not satisfactorily complete the Training by the expected completion date. If the employee does not immediately reimburse the City upon becoming ineligible for the advance, the City is authorized to recover the funds by means of a one time payroll deduction from the employee’s net pay.

- An exception is made for Training expenses that equals or exceeds 20% of net pay. In this case, the City will recover the funds over two or more payroll deductions.
- Course materials (including text books) for mandatory Training qualify for reimbursement. Work time lost due to time spent traveling to class or in class is not deducted from pay.
9. Non-tuition related fees are ineligible for reimbursement. These fees include, but are not limited to the following examples:
   a. Course materials, including text books
   b. Deferred or Late payment
   c. Exam fees
   d. Parking fees
   e. Course credit transfer fees
   f. Student medical insurance
   g. Transportation expenses
   h. Capital projects
   i. Hours spent in class or traveling to class
   j. Meals
   k. Miscellaneous supplies

**COMPLIANCE**

Failure to comply with this Policy will result in the appropriate discipline measure as assessed on a case-by-case basis, up to and including dismissal from employment.

**RELATED DOCUMENTS**

1. *Tuition Advance Form* (hard-copy only)
2. *Tuition Reimbursement for College/University Programs Approval Form*
3. *Business Travel / Conference Attendance Policy*
4. *Professional Fees Reimbursement Policy*
5. *Learning & Development Framework*

**HISTORY**

The following stakeholders were consulted in the revisions made to this Policy:
- Policy Review Group
- Finance & Administration

This replaces the former Tuition Reimbursement Policy, Approval Dates: 1999 March 10, 1992 June 29, and Revision Dates: 1999 March 10, 1992 October 6

This policy was approved by Senior Management Team on 2012-08-23