

**TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM  
FOR  
UNITED NURSES AND ALLIED PROFESSIONALS  
LOCAL 5019**

**I     PURPOSE**

The purpose of this document is to provide a useful framework and reference for the provision of ARTICLE XIII of the Collective Bargaining Agreement between the State of Rhode Island and the United Nurses and Allied Professionals, Local 5019, which will facilitate the establishment and implementation of objective criteria for employee and course eligibility, and application procedures for degree and continuing education programs.

**II    AUTHORITY**

Collective Bargaining Agreement entitled Agreement Between the State of Rhode Island and the United Nurses and Allied Professionals, LOCAL 5019.

MHRH Policies and Procedure Manual

**III   ELIGIBILITY**

A. Employee Eligibility

1. Any Registered Nurse who is a member of the United Nurses and Allied Professionals, and who has completed the probationary period, and who

a. is a full time employee, is eligible for full reimbursement

b. is a part-time employee, working no less than sixteen (16) hours per week, is eligible for a pro-rata award

(1) Pro-rata awards are computed by dividing the number of hours worked per week by forty (40) which is multiplied by the total reimbursable expenses for the semester.

*Example: Employee works 20 hours per week  
Semester expenses \$1000  
20 divided by 40 = 1/2  
1/2 multiplied by \$ 1000 = \$500*

B. Course Eligibility

1. Only courses which are within an approved curriculum leading to a Bachelors, Masters, or Doctoral degree in Nursing or nursing related disciplines (including free electives) are eligible.

2. Prior to enrollment in a baccalaureate program, an eligible employee may be reimbursed for a maximum of three (3) Nursing or nursing related courses.

3. Prior to enrollment in a masters program, an eligible employee may be reimbursed for a maximum of three (3) Nursing or nursing related courses; however, the credits earned must be applicable to a Nursing or nursing related masters program.

\*At the discretion of the committee, an employee may exceed the maximum number of Nursing / nursing related courses prior to matriculating into a degree program.

#### **IV. REIMBURSEMENT PRIORITY**

A. In the event the amount of reimbursement requested by eligible employees exceeds the amount stipulated in the collective bargaining agreement, reimbursement will be prioritized in accordance with seniority provisions of the collective bargaining agreement, by semester.

#### **V. TUITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM COMMITTEES**

A. The Units covered by the collective bargaining agreement shall have a unit review committee to review and approve unit employee applications. This committee shall be comprised of the following:

Director of Nursing and/or designee

Union appointed delegate and/or designee

This unit review committee membership may be the Employer-Nurse Committee membership as defined in ARTICLE XXXVIII of the collective bargaining agreement.

B. For Units where there is no Director of Nursing, an MHRH department director or designee and the Local president shall serve as the unit review committee

C. The Tuition Assistance Committee shall be comprised of all unit review committee members, the Local president, and an MHRH director. This committee will meet at least annually, no later than May 15, and be on call at the request of unit review committee members at any time during the fiscal year, July 1 - June 30.

#### **VI. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE COMMITTEES**

A. The responsibilities and duties of the committees are as follows:

1. To review all applications for tuition assistance and approve or reject such applications based on established criteria.
2. To promptly notify applicants of review outcome in

writing within seven (7) days of review.

3. To review all nursing related courses and programs for eligibility criteria.
4. To review all free electives to ensure that they are related to the demands of the curriculum.
5. To maintain records of all applications with dispensation noted.
6. To coordinate seminars and contract for instruction.
7. To expedite reimbursement for courses and submit approved course reimbursement documents to agency business office for payment.
8. To monitor the amount of reimbursement for the Local by semester and unit.
9. To promote continuing education for employees and facilitate the spirit of the collective bargaining agreement in order to benefit the greatest number of employees as practicable.
10. To re-evaluate the Tuition Assistance Program on at least an annual basis in order to improve policies, procedures, and accessibility.
11. Distribute all revisions of this document to all eligible and new employees.
12. To obtain course catalogs from educational institutions as required.

## **VII. PROCEDURE -APPLICATION FOR DEGREE PROGRAM REIMBURSEMENT**

A. Eligible employees are responsible for providing the following for tuition reimbursement:

1. Completed application form no later than August 30th (January 30th, for second semester) and no later than 10 days before the start of summer session. Late applications will be considered if funds are available.
2. Evidence (letter) of matriculation at the time of program acceptance or admissions
3. Evidence of successful completion of the course no later than thirty (30) days after the end of the semester, along with the following:
  - a. Copy of tuition bill
  - b. Copy of receipt of payment of tuition
  - c. Copy of receipt(s) for course text(s)
  - d. Copy of grade(s)

B. Employees are responsible for submitting the required documentation to their designated unit review committee members, and for keeping original copies of all documents.

C. Unit Review Committee members are responsible for the following:

1. Review all unit applications for employee and course eligibility criteria, for all required documents, and determining the total estimated reimbursement by October 15 and March 15.
2. Notify applicants of review outcome in writing within seven (7) days of review.
3. Request a meeting of the Tuition Assistance Program Committee for any clarification or conflict resolution.
4. Monitor the total reimbursement amount for each semester.
5. Report, at least annually, to the Tuition Assistance Program Committee on the activities of the unit review committee, and the amounts of reimbursement, at the May meeting.
6. Submit completed and approved requests to the agency business office for payment no later than seven (7) days after receipt of those items in VII, A, 3.

N.B.: In the event an eligible-employee transfers from one agency to another, the tuition reimbursement expense will be borne by the agency where the employee is working at the time the request for reimbursement payment is made, providing course eligibility requirements have been reviewed and approved by the unit review committee of the first agency.

D. MISCELLANEOUS

1. An employee requesting tuition reimbursement must complete the course with a minimum grade of "C" for undergraduate courses, and "B" for graduate courses; or their equivalent in the Particular grading system used. When a "Pass/Fail" system is employed, only "Pass" demonstrates successful completion of the course. No reimbursement will be made for grades below those secured.
2. Incomplete courses may be eligible for reimbursement when made up successfully, no later than the date required by the policy of the institution.
3. Costs incurred for challenged credits will be reimbursable upon presentation of documentation of successful completion of requirements.
4. Employees successfully completing any course work are encouraged to submit transcripts, certificates, diplomas and any other documents to be placed in the employee's

personnel file in the Personnel office.

### **VIII. PROCEDURE - CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAM REIMBURSEMENT**

A. After payment of approved tuition requests, requests for payment of continuing education programs (e.g. conferences, workshops, seminars) will be reviewed for full or partial reimbursement contingent on remaining funds.

B. Eligible employees are responsible for providing the following for program reimbursement:

1. Completed application
2. Brochure or program description
3. Cost of program and receipt of payment
4. Evidence of attendance or certificate

Documentation must be submitted within forty-five days of completion of the program.

C. Continuing education programs must be related to an aspect of Nursing, work assignment or area of specialty.

D. All applications (with complete documentation) will be reviewed and approved by the Tuition Assistance Program Committee at the annual May meeting no later than May 15th and submitted to the appropriate agency business office by June 1st, for payment.

Any eligible courses taken after the May meeting will be considered for reimbursement at the May meeting of the next fiscal year.

E. In the event the amount of reimbursement requested by eligible employees exceeds the amount stipulated in the collective bargaining agreement, reimbursement will be prioritized in accordance with seniority provisions of the collective bargaining agreement.

*REVISED - 1987*

*REVISED - 1999*