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**I. PURPOSE:**

This document describes the policies and procedures regarding eligibility for and access to benefits under the Educational Assistance Plan and the Professional Membership Reimbursement Program. This policy is intended to provide a description of recommended courses of action. It is recognized that there may be specific circumstances not contemplated by this document that will require additional interpretations and guidance.

When a provision in this document differs from a union contract, the contract shall take precedence. For employees covered by a union contract, please refer to Appendix A for a quick reference guide to sections of the applicable contracts that contain provisions that differ in certain respects from this policy.

**II. POLICY:**

Stanford Health Care (SHC) is committed to supporting staff development and fostering a climate that encourages learning. This policy is designed to accomplish that objective by encouraging employees to maintain and improve skills and knowledge used in their present positions and/or assisting them with Career Development.

For employees covered by a union contract, see Appendix A.

This policy does not apply to employees based at The Risk Authority Stanford Global Service Center, as designated by SHC.

**III. PRINCIPLES:**

Regular and Fixed-Term employees who work 40 hours or more per pay period and have completed the trial period are eligible for the Educational Assistance Plan. Temporary and Relief employees and employees on leave of absence are not eligible. Eligible status must be maintained throughout the entire course or assistance will not be granted.

As an exception, an individual who started an approved class prior to a leave of absence is eligible to receive reimbursement for that class when they return from leave to a benefit-eligible position. Request for reimbursement must be received within 90 days from the date employee returns from leave.

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External and internal courses not pre-approved for transfer of funds must be submitted within 90 days after successful completion of the course/purchase with acceptable documentation. Exceptions require the approval of the Vice President of Human Resources or designee.

For employees covered by a union contract, see Appendix A.

#### **IV. PROCEDURE:**

##### **A. Maximum Benefits**

The maximum reimbursement is \$2,000 per fiscal year (September 1 - August 31) for eligible full-time employees (80 hours per pay period), with pro-rated amounts of that maximum, based on scheduled hours, for eligible part-time employees. The end date of the course determines the fiscal year in which the funds are applied. A change in the employee's FTE during the fiscal year will not change the maximum funds for which the employee is eligible as long as the employee remains benefit eligible. Transfers to a relief position will terminate this benefit and any courses in progress will not be reimbursed.

For employees covered by a union contract, see Appendix A.

##### **B. Covered Expenses (requires appropriate receipts or documentation)**

1. Tuition costs, seminar fees, lab fees, textbooks, CDs/DVDs/media, journals and/or reference books
2. Prep materials (in place of taking a course)
3. Certification exam/renewals
4. Work-related conferences
5. Prep exams required for certification
6. Membership in a Professional Nursing Organization and/or membership in professional organization that is relating to employees' present positions and/or assisting them with career development
7. Fees for high school equivalency tests
8. Fees for exams in lieu of coursework that are part of an approved degree program
9. Travel & Lodging:

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- a. Local travel (within the state of California) in excess of the employee’s one-way commute based on his/her residence of record as documented in Employee Self Service.

Travel and lodging within the Continental United States may be approved by the employee’s manager. Travel and lodging outside the Continental United States will require approval by the employee’s Vice President or his/her designee.

Travel reimbursement will not be made for enhanced travel arrangements (i.e. first class, upgrades, etc.)

Travel and lodging will not be reimbursed for educational classes or opportunities that are available at SHC for no charge.

Travel and lodging is not recommended for education that is readily available locally.

Lodging reimbursement will be made at a regular room rate.

For employees covered by a union contract, see Appendix A.


**C. Expenses Not Covered**

Expenses not covered include, but are not limited to, uniforms, equipment (such as stethoscopes), subscriptions, fees for licensure, entrance exams and preparation classes for entrance exams.

For employees covered by a union contract, see Appendix A.

**D. Program/Course Qualifications**

1. All courses and degree programs must relate to approved employee goals and development plans or departmental goals as determined by the employee’s supervisor and department head. All courses and programs must meet at least one of the following criteria:

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- a. Related to Present Position - Courses, seminars or degree programs determined by the organization to be relevant to maintaining or improving knowledge/skills for performance in the current job.
  - b. Career Development - Courses, seminars or degree programs related to knowledge/skills necessary to fulfill an identified and approved objective for promotion/transfer within the organization or to respond to an organizational or operational need.
  - c. Health Education - Internally sponsored courses that are designed to educate staff on methods of preventing or alleviating special health problems. Also included are courses approved by your manager and sponsored by Stanford University. Physical fitness and exercise programs are not covered.
  - d. High School Completion - Courses leading to a high school diploma or completion of the General Education Development (GED) exam.
2. A manager's evaluation of courses should consider cost, quality, length, and timing. Internal courses are preferred however, external courses may be considered if it is the best interest of the hospital. As much as possible, employees should be encouraged to attend classes/conferences locally if one can be found that meets the educational need.
  3. Should a question arise as to interpretation of the criteria, a rationale should be presented in writing to the employee's department head and/or vice president, whose decision will be final.

For employees covered by a union contract, see Appendix A

E. Prior Approval Process

1. Employee Responsibility - Prior Approval

The employee must request prior approval from her/his manager prior to beginning the course. If prior approval has not been obtained, reimbursement may not be allowed. Prior approval for events within the Continental United States is obtained by submitting a written request to your manager with adequate documentation regarding the content of the event.

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Travel outside the Continental United States requires approval from the employee’s Vice President or his/her designee.

2. Manager Responsibility – Prior Approval

The manager is responsible for ensuring that the employee is eligible for this benefit in advance of approving the request and at the time of reimbursement; the reimbursement requested will not exceed the maximum fiscal year allotment for the employee; and the course meets the objectives of this plan. Managers must ensure that an employee’s request for time off to attend class(s) will not adversely affect staffing or operational needs. Approval is at the discretion of the employee’s manager and nothing in this policy shall limit the department’s denial of this benefit based on staffing and operational needs, or if the request falls outside the parameters of the intent of the policy. The manager will be responsible to review all receipts, course certifications, attendance verifications and approve the online reimbursement form.

F. Internal Courses Pre-Approved for Transfer of Funds

Some internal courses have been pre-approved for Transfer of Funds. For those courses, the employee sends the approved *Educational Assistance Transfer of Funds for Internal Course Form* to the appropriate course provider as listed in Step 3 on the form. No payment is required. However, Payroll will debit the employee’s account of funds available for the fiscal year. If the internal course has not been approved for transfer of funds, the employee will pay for the course and request reimbursement after course completion.


G. Requesting Reimbursement after Course Completion for External Courses and Internal Courses Not Pre-approved for Transfer of Funds.

1. Employee Responsibility

- a. The employee must submit the required documentation listed below within ninety days of course completion to be reimbursed.

- (1) The completed Tuition Reimbursement Online Form;

- (2) Evidence of payment e.g., receipt(s), canceled check(s), or photocopy of bank statement(s) to manager; and

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(3) Proof of course completion (with grade of C or higher for degree programs for graded courses).

Employees should attach the documentation listed in G.1. (2) and (3) to the Tuition Reimbursement Online Form

- b. For employees reaching termination date, all reimbursements need to be approved and submitted before the employee’s termination date. Once the employee is terminated, the education assistance balance will be terminated. Please refer to the Termination Policy for education assistance after a layoff.


H. Taxability

The Educational Assistance program is intended to be an educational assistance program under Internal Revenue Code section 127. To the extent possible, benefits under the Educational Assistance Plan are intended to be tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code sections 127 or (if applicable) as a “working condition fringe benefit” under Section 132 of the Code. Most courses are not taxable according to current IRS regulations. If a course or any related fees or expenses are determined to be taxable, based on the information provided on the application, the tuition reimbursement will be reduced by the applicable taxes.

The Professional Membership Reimbursement program is intended to be a fringe benefit program under Internal Revenue Code section 132(d). To the extent possible, benefits under the Professional Membership Reimbursement Policy are intended to be tax-exempt as a ‘working condition fringe benefit’ under Section 132(d) of the Code. Such fringe benefits are excluded from taxation to the extent that, if paid for by the employee, they would be deductible under Code sections 162 or 167. If based on information provided on the application or a change in applicable law any related fees or expenses are determined to be taxable, the reimbursement will be reduced by the applicable taxes.

I. Monitoring Tuition Account Balances

Departments are responsible for tracking usage to ensure that employees do not exceed the maximum yearly funds available based on the eligibility requirements described above. Internal courses paid for by Transfer of Funds are to be included in the calculation.

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J. Release Time for Classes

1. If the organization requires an employee to attend a particular course, the hours spent in the class shall be considered time worked and the employee shall be compensated accordingly.
2. Voluntary attendance at classes is normally on the employee's own. An employee wishing to attend a class being held during his/her normally scheduled working hours may request a schedule change or approved time off without pay or with PTO. Managers have full discretion to approve or deny requests for time off based on staffing and operational needs.


For union represented employees, see Appendix A

V. **RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

- A. Tuition Reimbursement Eligibility, Covered Expenses and Process:
- B. PTO and Other Time Off Policy
- C. Termination Policy

VI. **DOCUMENT INFORMATION:**

- D. Author/Original Date  
April 1998 by Felix Barthelemy, Vice President of Human Resources
- E. Gatekeeper of Original Document  
Stanford Health Care Human Resources Compliance Officer
- F. Distribution and Training Requirements
  1. This policy resides on the Intranet of the hospital.
  2. New versions of the policy will be posted on the Intranet and communicated to applicable staff.

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G. Review and Renewal Requirements

This policy will be reviewed every three (3) years and/or as required by change of law or practice.

H. Review and Revision History

October 1998 by C. A. Bergman, Project Manager  
July 2000 by C. A. Bergman, Project Manager  
October 2003 by T. Davis, Director of Human Resources  
June 2007 by L. Quintel, Director of Employee and Labor Relations  
February 2009 by G. Souza, Vice President of Human Resources – LPCH  
January 2010 by M. Pellarin, Director of Human Resources  
January 2011 by L. Johnson, Manager of HR Business Center  
September 2011 by L. Johnson, Manager of HR Business Center  
December 2012, Create Separate Policies for SHC and LPCH  
November 2013 by M. Wedell, Manager of Training & Organizational Development  
August 2015 by M. Gaines, Administrative Director Employee & Labor Relations - SHC  
July 2016 by M. Gaines, Administrative Director Employee & Labor Relations – SHC  
November 2016 by M. Gaines, Administrative Director Employee & Labor Relations – SHC  
February 2017 by M. Gaines, Administrative Director Employee & Labor Relations – SHC  
October 2017 by M. Gaines, Administrative Director Employee & Labor Relations – SHC

F. Approvals

July 2000 by F. Barthelemy, Vice President of Human Resources

October 2003 by C. Johnson, Vice President of Human Resources  
June 2007 by Lori Curry, Vice President of Human Resources – SHC  
June 2007 by Greg Souza, Vice President of Human Resources – LPCH  
March 2009 by the Human Resources Policy Committee – SHC/LPCH  
February 2010 by the Human Resources Policy Committee – SHC/LPCH  
April 2011 by the Human Resources Policy Committee – SHC/LPCH  
June 2011 by the Human Resources Steering Committee – SHC/LPCH  
October 2011 by L. Quintel, Director of Employee and Labor Relations  
December 2013 by G. Souza, Interim Vice President Human Resources  
August 2015 by K. Duron, Vice President of Human Resources – SHC  
July 2016 by M. Gaines, Administrative Director Employee & Labor Relations – SHC



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November 2016 by M. Gaines, Administrative Director Employee & Labor Relations – SHC  
 February 2017 by M. Gaines, Administrative Director Employee & Labor Relations – SHC  
 October 2017 by David D. Jones, Chief Human Resources Officer – SHC

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<b>This policy applies to:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Stanford Health Care</i>	<b>Effective Date:</b> February 2017
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## Appendix A

Hospital policy governs Educational Assistance, except when an applicable union contract conflicts with the policy. Employees covered by a union contract should refer to the union contract (SEIU Article 16, CRONA Section 10) for specific language regarding Educational Assistance that may differ from the SHC Policy. In cases where the contract differs from the policy, the contract shall control.

Following are the sections of the contracts related to Education Assistance that may differ in at least certain respects from the policy. This appendix is not exhaustive, does not create any new rights or obligations, and does not supersede the terms of any applicable contract.

### SEIU – UHW

Educational Assistance Article 16.1

### Committee for Recognition of Nursing Achievement (CRONA)

Purpose 10.1

Eligibility 10.2 .1

Reimbursement 10.3

Educational Training and Classes Required by the Employer 10.4.5

Program, Course, and/or Exam Qualifications 10.5.1

Pre-Approved Vacation and Pre-Approved Education Days Policy