

Morehouse School of Medicine Employee Academic Assistance Program (EAAP) Policy

Purpose

The **Employee Academic Assistance Program (EAAP)** at the MSM is a tuition reimbursement/waiver initiative that is provided for all regular full-time eligible employees in support of their educational pursuits. A reimbursement would be provided for courses taken at undergraduate and graduate programs outside of MSM. A waiver would be provided for courses taken within graduate programs taken at MSM. The EAAP encourages the development of skills in your area of interest or the building of skills for new areas of interest.

Note: Courses within the MD and PA degree programs are not eligible under the EAAP. Graduate classes taken in extramural doctoral programs are also not eligible under the EAAP.

Eligibility

Regular full-time benefit eligible employees may apply for tuition reimbursement or waiver benefits. All prospective students must meet normal criteria for admission. Specific information regarding admission criteria for courses taken at MSM programs may be obtained from the Office for Graduate Education in Biomedical Sciences (GEBS), Office of Graduate Education in Public Health (GEPH) or directly from graduate program directors. To qualify for educational benefits, an employee must be employed in a full-time benefits-eligible position and meet service and other requirements specified under each benefit. The employee must be in good standing with no record of disciplinary action. Tuition benefits must be approved first by the employee's supervisor before application submission and program registration.

Regular full-time employees and faculty members may receive 100% of tuition waiver benefits effective the first full semester following the completion of one year of continuous employment service. To continue in the tuition reimbursement or waiver program, employees must remain in an eligible academic and employment status.

Note: Part-time employees and faculty members are not eligible for the tuition waiver or remission benefits.

Course Reimbursement/Waiver Guidelines

Tuition Reimbursement

Tuition reimbursement is available to employees who wish to enroll in undergraduate courses or graduate courses that cannot be taken at MSM under the tuition waiver program (i.e., remission) and/or the employee cannot get release time for graduate courses offered at MSM. Employees may receive up to **\$2,500** per fiscal year (**July 1-June 30**) for job-related courses at a degree-granting institution other than MSM. Employees may apply for a tuition reimbursement during any one semester/quarter but not for both tuition reimbursement and tuition waiver during the same semester/quarter.

Tuition Waiver

Tuition waivers for eligible employees is limited to a maximum of two graduate courses or six credit hours per fall, spring, and summer semesters. For the purposes of this policy, summer sessions will be treated as one semester. Costs for tuition waiver may not exceed \$10,000 per fiscal year per recipient. Tuition waivers are available to eligible employees seeking courses and degrees at MSM only. All requirements for program eligibility under this policy apply.

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Tuition reimbursement must be directly related to the employee's job or within their career path (i.e., tied to the employee's current MSM's development plan). Tuition reimbursement cost cannot exceed **\$2,500** per fiscal year per recipient. MSM requires that employees participate in coursework from a regionally accredited institution within the State of Georgia. To qualify for tuition reimbursement, the coursework must be part of a degree-granting program and must be taken at a regionally accredited institution.

Program Limits

- Tuition reimbursements will be awarded at an amount not to exceed **\$2,500** per recipient per academic year based on the availability of funds. Tuition waivers will be awarded at an amount not to exceed **\$10,000** per recipient per academic year. No more than **10** recipients per year will be awarded based upon the availability of funding.
- Graduate classes in extramural doctoral programs are not eligible for tuition reimbursement or waiver benefits.
- Employees hired on or before June 1, 2020, may use tuition benefits to receive one undergraduate degree and/or graduate degree. Additional degree programs after the first degree under EAAP are not eligible for further tuition benefits.
- Faculty and administrative employees hired prior to June 1, 2020 are eligible to apply for the reimbursement or waiver benefits. Employees are subject to the one year wait period when separated from employment at MSM for 6 months or more.
- Acceptance into MSM program courses are on a space-available basis for employees.

Employment Commitment

Employees and faculty must continue full-time work at Morehouse School of Medicine for a period of 2-years after payment of coursework or be subject to payback of reimbursement or waiver.

Limits on Benefits Offered

An total amount of \$100,000 of funding will be available per academic year. Priority will be given to tuition waivers for MSM degree programs.

Covered Costs

Tuition reimbursement and waiver benefits under the EAAP apply to tuition charges only. Maximum coverage for tuition reimbursement is **\$2,500** per academic year per recipient; maximum coverage for tuition waiver is **\$10,000** per academic year per recipient for courses taken at MSM only.

To be eligible for tuition reimbursement, the employee may not receive grades less than "C" for undergraduate courses and "B" for graduate courses. Tuition reimbursement is based upon a sliding scale where 100% of the reimbursement is received for grades of "A"; 90% of the reimbursement is received for grades of "B"; 80% of the reimbursement is received for grades of "C"; and no reimbursement is received for grades below "C" for undergraduate courses and "B" for graduate courses.

Expected Timing of Reimbursements

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Reimbursement is provided on a course-by-course basis as follows:

1. The employee must apply and be accepted into the Employee Academic Assistance Program (EAAP).
2. The employee is required to pay for the course out-of-pocket and apply for reimbursement after the completion of the coursework.
3. Under the tuition waiver program, the employee will receive a tuition waiver at the end of the coursework if all established guidelines and requirements for the course and program have been met.
4. Tuition reimbursement will be received within 45 days of the submission of all required documents (e.g. transcripts and proof of course payment).

Flex Schedule for Staff Employees

MSM encourages supervisors to support professional development efforts of their staff employees by allowing flexible work schedules if the workflow of the department/office is not affected. Tuition waivers are authorized with the understanding that class and study hours do not conflict with regular work schedules or some agreement has been appropriated through the Office of Human Resources for a flexible work schedule. Employees attending courses during the normal workday are required to use vacation or personal leave time provided that:

- The course is not offered at a time outside regular working hour,
- The employee consults with his/her supervisor in advance of registering for the course and obtains the supervisor's approval by completing a Flex Schedule Form or submitting a leave request, and
- There is appropriate coverage for the office while employee is attending class.

Tuition Reimbursements or Waivers Following Termination of Employment

When an employee voluntarily or involuntarily separates for cause from employment with MSM prior to course completion and the end of a semester in which they are receiving tuition reimbursement benefits, no reimbursement will be paid to the employee upon course completion. When an employee voluntarily separates from employment with MSM prior to the 2-year requirement of employment following tuition reimbursement or waiver benefits received, the employee is required to pay back tuition costs to the school on a pro-rated basis.

Submission Guidelines

Applications for the Employee Academic Assistance Program (EAAP) may be completed on the EAAP Website at www.msm.edu/HR/EAAP.

Taxation

The tuition reimbursement costs received for courses taken for an undergraduate degree is not taxable income unless the employee has previously earned an undergraduate degree at any four-year college or university. Tuition for graduate level courses or a second undergraduate degree is taxed after the tuition reimbursement exceeds **\$5,250** in value. Any amount over \$5,250 is considered imputed income to the employee.
Note: The taxation of the EAAP benefit at MSM is determined by the Internal Revenue Service Code.