




City of Olympia Administrative Guidelines

GUIDELINE #16 Educational Assistance	
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SECTION INDEX: 16 Educational Assistance

- 16.1. [Purpose](#)
 - 16.2. [Reference](#)
 - 16.3. [Application](#)
 - 16.4. [Policy](#)
 - 16.5. [Guidelines](#)
 - 16.5.1. [Funding](#)
 - 16.5.2. [Job Performance](#)
 - 16.5.3. [Required Training](#)
 - 16.5.4. [Course Requirements](#)
 - 16.5.5. [Funding Priorities](#)
 - 16.5.6. [Tuition Only](#)
 - 16.5.7. [Reimbursement Limitations](#)
 - 16.5.8. [Approval Criteria](#)
 - 16.5.9. [Request Without Prior Approval](#)
 - 16.5.10. [Completion Requirements](#)
 - 16.5.11. [Time Off](#)
 - 16.5.12. [Non-compensable Hours](#)
 - 16.5.13. [Pyramiding Prohibition](#)
 - 16.5.14. [Procedures](#)
- [Request Form](#)

Administrative Guideline #16 – Educational Assistance

16 Educational Assistance

16.1. PURPOSE: To establish guidelines for employee participation in the educational assistance program.

16.2. REFERENCE:

16.3. APPLICATION: This policy applies to all regular employees who have completed their probationary period. Reimbursement for part-time employees will be pro-rated based on the budgeted FTE authorization as shown in the budget complement. Employees covered by the Police Guild Labor Contract or receiving educational incentive pay under other agreements, are not eligible for this program.

16.4. POLICY: Educational opportunities which increase the ability of employees to effectively perform their work and prepare them to take on greater responsibility within City service benefit both the employee and the City. It is the policy of the City of Olympia to encourage employees to seek additional educational opportunities on their own initiative by reimbursing them for tuition expenses.

16.5. GUIDELINES:

16.5.1. FUNDING: The ability to offer educational assistance is subject to availability of funds.

16.5.2. JOB PERFORMANCE: Department directors may deny an employee the opportunity to participate in this program on the basis of an employee's documented job performance deficiencies.

16.5.3. REQUIRED TRAINING: Courses required by a department, which are taken for the sole purpose of updating and/or maintaining skills required by the employee's current job, will not be reimbursed by this program but may be reimbursed through departmental training programs.

16.5.4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS: Reimbursement will be made only for courses which may reasonably be applied toward the completion of a degree or certification program and taken at an accredited college, university or vocational education institution.

16.5.5. FUNDING PRIORITIES: The course, or the degree program, to which it would reasonably be applied, must be related to the employee's current position or reasonable career opportunity within the City. If limited funds are available, preference will be given first to courses directly related to the employee's current job. Second, to courses applicable to a degree program directly related to the employee's current employment. Third, to courses related to career opportunities reasonably available to the employee within the City of Olympia.

[back to Index](#)

Administrative Guideline #16 – Educational Assistance

16.5.6. TUITION ONLY: Educational assistance is for tuition reimbursement only. No reimbursement will be allowed for books, lab fees, travel expenses, material costs or other expenses.

16.5.7. REIMBURSEMENT LIMITATIONS: Reimbursement will be limited to a pre-established maximum annual amount per-individual. The City reserves the right to determine the individual maximum amount based on the availability of funding sources. It is expected that employees will select educational opportunities at the least possible expense. Accordingly, the City will pay tuition costs for courses at State of Washington supported institutions. Tuition at more expensive private institutions may also be covered. Reimbursement for courses at a private institution will be based on the average state rate per credit hour. The average rate per credit hour will be determined each year by averaging the rate of State supported institutions in the immediate area (South Puget Sound Community College, The Evergreen State College, University of Washington extension).

16.5.8. APPROVAL CRITERIA: Approval of reimbursement will be made on the basis of date of request, compliance with the above criteria, and department director approval.

16.5.9. REQUEST WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL: Requests for reimbursement which have not been submitted in advance will be considered on a first come, first served basis according to the priorities established in 16.5.5, after all prior commitments have been met.

16.5.10. COMPLETION REQUIREMENTS: The employee must successfully complete the course obtaining a C grade or better, or a Pass in a Pass/Fail system, or as required to retain status in the program if a higher standard is imposed by the school. (For educational institutions that do not offer the option of grades, alternative arrangements to gauge successful completion must be agreed upon by the department and the employee prior to the beginning of the school period.)

16.5.11. TIME OFF: Courses which are offered only during regular working hours may be approved by the department director, provided time off can be arranged conveniently and reasonable arrangements can be made to make up time off and/or leave without pay is granted.

16.5.12. NON-COMPENSABLE HOURS: Hours spent in courses reimbursable by this program are not considered compensable hours.

16.5.13. PYRAMIDING PROHIBITION: Tuition expenses will not be reimbursed if the employee is receiving tuition reimbursement or educational incentive from any other source.

16.5.14. PROCEDURES:

- a. **Notification:** The Human Resources Department will notify all eligible employees of the availability of the program annually. Notification will include the annual allowable maximum and the credit hour rate for private institution reimbursement.

[back to Index](#)

Administrative Guideline #16 – Educational Assistance

- b. Application:** Employees must complete the Request for Educational Assistance form and submit it to Human Resources prior to course registration.
- c. Requests For Reimbursements:** Requests for educational assistance must be submitted to the Human Resources Department to be considered for reimbursement. Approved requests will obligate the specified amount for reimbursement at the end of the school period. If the requested class(es) is not approved, the employee will be notified immediately. The Human Resources Department will review and approve those requests which meet the above criteria.
- d. Notification of Insufficient Funds:** In the event funds are limited during any part of the year, the Human Resources Department will notify employees of this fact in sufficient time to make alternate funding arrangements or postpone the class.
- e. Reimbursement Processing:** Reimbursement will be made when the employee submits documentation showing successful completion of the course to include: grade report, receipt for payment of the course and other documentation which may be required by the Human Resources Department.

[back to Index](#)

REQUEST FOR EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE

Reimbursement for educational assistance is made in accordance with the City of Olympia’s Educational Assistance Policy. This policy allows the City to reimburse employees for approved classes, up to an individual maximum each year. Please contact Human Resources for the current annual maximum and fund availability. Please refer to the Educational Assistance Administrative Guideline for more information.

Name:	Department:
Position:	Section:
Supervisor:	Date of Request:
Date of Hire:	Work Phone:

➤ Please list the classes you are requesting reimbursement for attending:

COURSE	SCHOOL	SEMESTER/QUARTER DATES	CREDITS	COST (TUITION ONLY)
TOTAL REQUESTED: ▶				

➤ How do the classes listed above relate to your current position or career goals?

Employee Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Department Director’s Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

[back to Index](#)