

Academic Education Benefits Program

I. Overview

To increase the career building opportunities available to employees at the University of Virginia, enhance the performance of staff members and their units, and encourage professional growth, the University offers an Education Benefit that includes two components: Tuition and Professional Development. These are two separate offerings with different requirements and financial amounts. In addition, departments may choose to offer additional educational benefits through departmental funding. Education Benefits are paid through your paycheck within two pay periods from the date of approval. Employees are encouraged to submit requests far enough in advance to obtain approval prior to registering for courses.

The final date for annual submission is posted on the UVA HR Education Benefits page.

II. Regulations & Definitions

A. Eligibility

An employee is eligible for Education Benefits if the following conditions apply:

- Currently employed at the University of Virginia in a benefited position for at least 6 months by the program start date, and intends to, and does, remain on the active payroll during the entire term of the class.
- Eligible service time includes direct transfers from the UVA Medical Center or within UVA Academic Division departments, provided there is no break in service, and both roles are benefits eligible.
- Transfers from other state agencies, as well as transitions from temporary, wage, or other non-benefited employment, are not considered eligible service time.
- If attending a conference, event, or a non-credit course it must be directly related to the employee's current position.
- Takes the course for credit, or for-credit certification in the employee's field of study.
- Successfully completes the course, defined as receiving a grade of "C" or better, or "passing" when the course was taken pass/fail.
- Provides the required documentation (proof of itemized invoice, proof of payment and proof of successful completion) after completion of the course.

B. Qualifying Courses

To qualify for the Tuition Benefit:

- The employee must be enrolled in for-credit courses working towards Associate's, Bachelor's, Master's, or Doctoral degree OR for-credit certificate program.
- Must receive a grade of "C" or better.
 - If the course is not graded, documentation of pass (if pass/fail) shall serve as evidence of course completion.
- Courses must be taken at nationally recognized (U.S. Department of Education or American Council on Education) accredited colleges, universities, or technical schools. In addition, the employee must receive a grade of "C" or better, or "passing" if course was taken pass/fail.
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To qualify for the Professional Development Benefit:

- This includes professional development classes, certification training, conferences, courses, or events must be job related, career growth related, or a developmental opportunity within their current field.
- Education must be provided or sponsored by a recognized provider of learning experiences which will be determined by central Human Resources.

Education must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Contributes toward employee development by updating and enhancing knowledge and skills.
- Promotes career advancement within current field/role.
- Taken to complete requirements for a high school diploma.
- Required for job-related maintenance of professional certification or license.
- Enhances the University's ability to respond to current and future needs.

Accredited Education Institutions

Courses must be taken from educational institutions accredited by recognized accrediting agencies and institutions, including those approved under government education and training programs. U.S. Department of Education and American Council on Education Courses will be sources used to verify approval. Visit [U.S. Department of Education](https://www.ed.gov) for resources about accreditation.

Non-eligible Programs or Expenses

Examples of non-eligible programs and expenses include but are not limited to:

- Personal enrichment courses/workshops, sports, games, hobbies, & exam prep courses (exception: if earning certificate or ceu's), professional licenses/memberships dues/fees, special examinations for admission to degree programs, private consultant refresher

courses to take examinations and admission examinations are not eligible for reimbursement, prerequisite courses for admission to degree programs.

- Courses related to mindfulness, yoga and other similar-related courses should be supported through Hoo's Well, or other vendors, and are not part of the Education Benefit program.
- Books, materials, travel, lodging, and food are not eligible expenses.
- Subscriptions to learning sites, open-ended courses with no required completion date, and application fees are not eligible.
 - **Exceptions:** sites that earn CEU's and/or credit toward professional certifications. CBT Nuggets, Code Academy and Pluralsight for ITS employees only.

C. Amount of Support

General Terms

The benefit covers tuition and conference registration fees only, excluding other expenses.

Examples include but not limited to:

- Student activity fees, parking, books, travel, food, lodging, galas, etc.

The Tuition Benefit covers up to \$5,250 for degree programs, while Professional Development provides up to \$2,000 for training and conferences, with a combined annual limit of \$5,250. Departments may offer additional funding at their discretion.

Employees submitting requests for departmental funds must submit funding requests with manager approval and provide Worktag/FDM Values.

Tuition and Professional Development benefits over \$5,250 annually are taxable and reported to the IRS, with federal, state, and FICA taxes withheld on excess amounts.

Education Benefits are accrued in the calendar year that they are issued and cannot cross calendar years.

- Tuition is calculated at the in-state rate, regardless of residency.

Examples:

- An employee requests \$1,500 tuition benefit in November 2025 for classes that begin in January 2026. \$1,500 is paid in 2025 and accrues in the 2025 calendar year.
- An employee requests \$1,500 tuition benefit in January 2026 for classes that began in December 2025. The \$1,500 is paid in 2026 and accrues in the 2026 calendar year.

D. Work Schedule Accommodation

Where possible, employees should plan to take courses scheduled at times that will not require absence from work during regular work hours. The employee will need to check with their supervisor (prior to registration) to determine whether the supervisor can approve a work accommodation request.

The decision to grant work accommodation for the Education Benefit is at the department's discretion based on the operational needs of the unit.

In the event attendance at an approved course will necessitate an absence during normal work hours, various accommodations are possible, depending on the needs of the unit and the staff member. Supervisors are encouraged to make a reasonable effort to find appropriate work schedule accommodation, but it is at the discretion of the supervisor or department.

The following accommodations are possible:

Revised Work Schedule

An employee may be granted a revised work schedule to enable them to attend a course that could not be scheduled during non-work hours, if the supervisor determines that the employee will be able to meet all the job requirements under the revised work schedule.

Excused absence with use of leave time

In some cases, the needs of the unit and/or the staff member may be better served by permitting a staff member who wishes to take advantage of the Tuition and Professional Development Benefit to use leave time. Any such arrangement is made at the discretion of the unit supervisor.

Release time with pay

In some instances, a staff member may be granted up to 3 hours per week of release time from work with pay if it is related to a degree that is job related. Any such arrangement is made at the discretion of the unit supervisor. The 3 hours per week of release time includes travel time to and from class.

E. Request for Education Benefits

To take advantage of the Education Benefits Program, employees must submit the request through [Workday](#).

- Requests may be submitted 90 days ahead of the start date.
 - Requests for conferences may be submitted up to 5 months ahead of the start date.
- Requests for reimbursement (i.e.: event has been completed and paid for), may be submitted no later than 6 months **after** the start date.

- Funds may only be requested once for each class/program (i.e.: cannot request funding in December, and remaining balance in January).

F. Process for Payment

Approved funds are deposited in the next available pay period, up to two pay periods. Employees should submit documents via the Workday inbox task within 30 days of course completion. See [Substantiation FAQ](#) for more information.

Returning Funds

Failure to complete substantiation will result in repayment of the benefit beginning on the next pay period through payroll deductions.

- Employees who leave the University (excluding transfers to the Medical Center) or who fail to complete, stop attending, or does not register for their program after receiving an education benefit must immediately repay the full disbursement.
- If there is an outstanding substantiation that is more than 30 days overdue, it needs to be resolved before additional funds can be issued.
- Ineligible expenses identified during the substantiation review will require repayment.

No further benefits will be issued until repayment is complete.

Please contact askhr@virginia.edu for more information.

Source of Funds

Providing Central Funding for Education Benefits (Tuition & Professional Development) under this program is the responsibility of Human Resources. Additional departmental funding is at the discretion of the department.

Education Benefit payments cannot be made as direct charges to sponsored projects. For employees paid from sponsored projects, the employee's unit is responsible for the costs. Work time off to attend classes is permitted on sponsored projects.

Education benefits will only be applied to tuition paid out-of-pocket by the employee. Any amounts covered by grants, scholarships, or other forms of assistance will not be included in the total eligible amount.

Tuition paid with student loans must be supported by documentation confirming the loan was disbursed.

Appeals Process

Employees may appeal an Education Benefits denial within 2 weeks of the denial notification. Appeals may be submitted using the link below:

[Appeal Submission](#)

A decision should be made within 2 weeks following receipt of the appeal. Education benefit denials that are appealed and approved cannot be retroactively applied toward a previous calendar year.