401 Educational Opportunities Program

Revised: May 2025

In order to foster employee self-development and to make optimum use of human resources, the University has adopted the following policy relative to skills upgrading and educational opportunities:

1. Courses, Seminars and Conferences Taken or Attended at the Direction of the University

When an employee attends a course, seminar or conference at the request of their department, the full cost of such attendance (including course fees and such expenses as travel and accommodation) shall be borne by that department. It is the responsibility of the employee's department head or supervisor to identify the educational opportunities available and the staff members who would most benefit in their job performance from such attendance.

2. Part-time Courses Taken on the Employee's Own Initiative

The cost of tuition (excluding the costs of textbooks and laboratory fees) is waived for:

A. Regular full-time employees and 8-9-10 month continuing limited term employees who have completed twelve (12) months of (non student) service with the University.

B. Employees on 8-9-10 month continuing limited term positions who have transferred from a regular full-time position without a break in service of more than two (2) weeks.

C. Such waiver applies to eligible employees for any credit course offered by the University, courses offered by the School of Continuing Studies, or courses offered in the University of Guelph-Humber programs, provided the employee is accepted and subject to the following conditions:

a) no more than four non-credit courses may be taken by an individual employee during any one calendar year;

b) where the quality of a non-credit course may be jeopardized by a preponderance of employee enrollment, such employee enrollment may be limited by the instructor in consultation with the Director of the School of Continuing Studies;

c) normally, an individual employee may not enroll in the same non-credit course more than once in any three year period if the employee has attended less than sixty percent of such course;

d) an employee may be subject to late registration fees.

D. When possible, the courses attended should be scheduled outside the employee's normal working hours. When this is not possible, the employee will not lose regular pay (excluding premiums) for attendance during working hours up to a maximum of three hours per week provided that:

a) if the course is available outside the employee's working hours, the paid leave as mentioned herein will not be available to the employee, however employees may take advantage of tuition waiver provided they make arrangements with their supervisor to make up any time off work that may be required; and

b) a request for the application of tuition waiver and leave of absence must be approved by the Chair / Department Head prior to registering for the course. Such approval will not be unreasonably withheld; and

c) such leave will be granted provided that the operating needs of the department are not prejudiced, but the University agrees to take into account the needs of the employee. In the event of conflicts between employees,

such conflicts will be resolved on a seniority basis where operating requirements of the department are not a factor; and

d) the employee will inform their supervisor of their course schedule as soon as the employee is made aware of their schedule.

Procedures

1. Employee to complete the Tuition Waiver Request Form [1] and obtain their Chair / Department Head's Acknoweldgment and Approval in section C.

2. Employee to submit the request to Human Resources by email to hr@uoguelph.ca or through interoffice mail to Human Resources.

3. Human Resources to retain one copy, return one copy to the employee and forward copies to the appropriate offices.

Off-Campus Courses

Where an employee wishes to take courses at institutions other than the University of Guelph and doing so will likely increase job proficiency, the financial resources of the department permitting, the employee will be reimbursed for 100% of the cost of tuition up to a maximum of $800 in any one calendar year provided that:

a) Approval for the chosen course or program must be secured in advance from the employee's Chair / Department Head. The nature of the program should be such that it will increase the effectiveness of the employee in their present or possible future position with the University.

b) Reimbursement is contingent upon successful completion.

c) Departments are to submit cheque requisitions together with evidence of successful completion and an invoice covering the cost of the course to Accounts Payable to reimburse the successful employee.

d) For control purposes, expense account 62255, regarding training programs, is to be used for tuition fee reimbursements.

Full-Time Programs Leading to a Degree

An employee who wishes to undertake a programme which requires full-time attendance may apply for a leave of absence without pay for a period of up to eight calendar months. Such leave shall be approved provided:

a) The application is made at least two months in advance of the commencement of the leave.

b) Prior approval of the leave is given by the Chair / Department Head who shall take into account the operating needs of the department.

During the period of such leave without pay, the normal benefits cost-sharing arrangements will continue for benefits. Pension contributions (at the employee's option to participate) will be two times the normal pension contributions. The forementioned is provided the employee continues employment following such leave for a period of no less than one year.

An employee who wishes to undertake a full-time programme which will require more than eight months full-time attendance must resign from the University staff on commencement of their studies, provided that no other possible arrangements for class attendance can be devised. The University is unable to give any commitment concerning future employment either in the summer or on a permanent basis in this situation.

Source URL:https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/staff-faculty-hr-policies-all-employees/401-educational-opportunities-program

Links
[1] https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/system/files/Tuition%20Waiver%20Request%20Form%202026.06.24_3.pdf