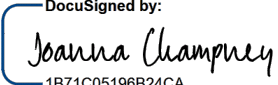


POLICY AND PROCEDURE

<u>POLICY TITLE:</u> DSAMH Tuition Reimbursement Process Policy	<u>POLICY #:</u> DSAMH051
<u>PREPARED BY:</u> Office of DSAMH Deputy Director	<u>DATE ISSUED:</u> 10/2004
<u>RELATED POLICIES:</u>	<u>REFERENCE:</u> DHSS PM 17: Employee Tuition Reimbursement State of Delaware Operating Budget
<u>DATES REVIEWED:</u> 01/22/2024	<u>DATES REVISED:</u> 07/2008 12/2012 04/2013 11/2015 01/2016 02/2022 02/15/2023
<u>APPROVED BY:</u> DocuSigned by:  1B71C05196B24CA... <u>DATE SIGNED:</u> 4/8/2024 9:34 AM PDT	<u>NOTES:</u> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> DSAMH Internal Policy <input type="checkbox"/> DSAMH Operated Program <input type="checkbox"/> DSAMH State Providers <input type="checkbox"/> Delaware Psychiatric Center <input type="checkbox"/> Targeted Use Policy (Defined in scope)

I. **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear guidance for staff and managers regarding the process for approval of tuition reimbursement applications within the Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health's (DSAMH) educational and training assistance program for qualifying employees.

II. **POLICY STATEMENT:**

The education and training assistance program is designed to ensure DSAMH employees are afforded the opportunity to perform at their highest level of functioning to foster quality client care and effective management of its systems. This policy provides guidance regarding the administration of educational and training assistance benefits for DSAMH employees. All requests for educational assistance will be managed and monitored by the DSAMH Education Council.

III. **DEFINITIONS:**

"DSAMH employee" means any full-time or part-time merit and exempt DSAMH employee, exclusive of casual, seasonal, temporary, or limited term employee.

"Education Council" means the group that meets to review and recommend approval or denial to the Division Director for tuition reimbursement. The Education Council includes the Deputy Directors of DSAMH, Chief of Addiction, Director of DPC, Chief of Community Mental Health, Associate Deputy of Research, Evaluation, and Population Health, Associate Deputy of Policy,

Compliance, and Workforce Development, Chief of Social Determinants, and Director of Executive Programs and Grant Administration.

“Good Standing” means an employee status defined by an attendance record that reflects adherence to the employee’s work schedule and leave policies and procedures, compliance with required trainings and job requirements, and no documentation of behavior that would be grounds for disciplinary action.

“Job-related” means enhancing the ability of the employee to perform assigned duties and improve productivity, quality, and/or effectiveness of the work unit/organization.

IV. **SCOPE:** This policy applies to all permanent full-time, permanent part-time, temporary, and seasonal DSAMH employees who are not on initial merit system probation, extension of probation, or probation due to disciplinary action, and who are in good standing.

V. **PROCEDURE:**

- A. DSAMH will allow reimbursement for formal job-related education and training costs, including tuition reimbursement and educational leave for continuation of an employee’s education through coursework, degree, or certificate programs.
- B. Staff shall refer to PM17 Employee Tuition Reimbursement for guidance on reimbursement limitations and the documentation required to complete the application.
- C. All documentation must be submitted prior to any review of an application.
- D. Staff must have the request for reimbursement reviewed by their supervisor before any next steps can be taken. The supervisor shall screen the employee’s request against the criteria listed in PM17 and the below criteria before approving:
 1. Is the course substantially related to the employee’s current or desired professional role within the behavioral health service continuum?
 - a. The role does not need to be offered within the Division to qualify.
 - b. Academic degrees that do not result in a new credential will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
 2. Has the employee already earned a degree at this educational level?
 - a. Multiple degrees that do not result in an additional professional credential should not be approved.
 - b. If the degree is at an educational level already achieved by the staff member and is not applicable to a role within DHSS, the additional professional credential should not be approved.
- E. The Education Council shall consider the availability of funds in the Division’s education budget when evaluating a student’s request for tuition reimbursement.
 1. Requests will be considered in the order they are received. Requests that meet all criteria but that exceed available budgetary resources will be denied.
 2. The Education Council shall evaluate availability of funds for DPC based on epilogue language in the Delaware Code, which sets forth minimum amounts to be made available for DPC, with a special carve-out for Direct Patient Care staff.
 3. The Education Council shall evaluate the availability of funds for all other DSAMH staff requests against the general fund.
- F. Timeline:
 1. Once approved by the supervisor the completed documentation must be submitted to the Executive Assistant to the Division Director at least 30 days prior to the first day of a course.

2. The completed application will be sent to the Deputy Director who chairs the Education Council, within two (2) business days of receipt.
3. The Deputy Director will review the application with the Education Council within five (5) business days of receipt to provide an approval or denial.
4. Once approved by the Council, the Division Director will review the approval and make a final decision to confirm or deny the application within two (2) business days of receipt.
5. The Division Director or designee shall forward a copy of the completed and signed request to the OSEC Administration Training Unit (DHSS_unit_training@delaware.gov) one (1) business day after confirming the application.

G. Reimbursement:

1. In accordance with PM 17, tuition reimbursement will be made to the employee, and not paid directly to the academic institution. The Delaware Division of Human Resources may allow direct tuition payment to the school for certain position series.
2. Once the course has been completed, the employee must send their final course grade, completed application, and proof of payment to the OSEC Administration Training Unit to obtain their reimbursement. (See PM17).
3. The employee must also complete and submit the New Supplier Registration Form found on the [State of Delaware eSupplier Portal](#), by choosing 'Register as a Supplier' and completing the registration process.

VI. **POLICY LIFESPAN:** This policy will be reviewed annually by the Policy Committee.

VII. **RESOURCES:**

- A. [PM17 Employee Tuition Reimbursement](#)