

# **Tuition Benefit Policy for Employees in the Executive Branch and Constitutional Offices**

**Issued by the Human Resources Division  
Updated June 13, 2017**

## **1. Introduction**

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts' primary educational offering is a Tuition Benefit\* Program available to eligible state employees and their spouses. These are the guidelines for the administration of the Tuition Benefit Program that the Human Resources Division (HRD) administers on behalf of Executive Branch agencies. This policy does not cover employees who work in higher education or at the University of Massachusetts as they have their own separate tuition benefit policies and collective bargaining agreements.

\*Community colleges and State universities have two separate components that students pay: 1) "Tuition" and 2) "Fees". The tuition benefit program only pertains to the tuition portion of the student charges.

\*Prior to July 1, 2016, University of Massachusetts had two separate components that students paid: 1) "Tuition" and 2) "Fees". The tuition benefit program operated similar to the way it currently works for Community colleges and State universities which only pertained to the tuition portion of student charges.

## **Important changes effective July 1, 2016**

Effective July 1, 2016, the University of Massachusetts has consolidated their mandatory fees and tuition charges into a single tuition amount. The billing format has also been updated so that tuition and mandatory fees no longer appear as separate charges and instead will appear as a single tuition amount. Consequently, beginning July 1, 2016, the tuition benefit for state employees taking classes at one of the University of Massachusetts campuses will be applied as a "tuition credit" against the total tuition and it will be the same value that has been in place for many years. As it has in the past, the tuition credit continues to only cover a portion of total charges.

If employees have questions about the value of the tuition credits they should be directed to contact the Bursar's Office at the college of interest. Please also see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) (FAQs) that the University of Massachusetts has posted.

## 2. Eligibility

The Tuition Benefit is available to regular full-time state employees and their spouses if the employee has at least six months of full-time service with the Commonwealth. Prior part-time service can be counted towards the six month requirement on a pro-rated basis as long as the employee is currently working full-time. . In case of a break in service, regular full-time state employees will be credited with previous service as long as the break has been less than three (3) years.

Contract employees and their spouses are not eligible for tuition benefits.

Retired state employees and their spouses are not eligible for tuition benefits.

An employee's eligibility can be verified in HR/CMS by viewing the Employment Dates page in job data. The service date field is the employee's state service date.

## 3. Benefits

### **Community Colleges and State Universities:**

100% tuition benefit shall apply to enrollment in a traditional day course or program at the undergraduate or graduate level **only at** Public Community Colleges or State Colleges. 50% tuition benefit shall apply to enrollment in a course or program offered through continuing education **only** at Public Community Colleges or State Colleges.

### **University of Massachusetts:**

A tuition credit, valued at the amounts listed below, shall apply to enrollment in a traditional day course or program at the undergraduate or graduate level at University of Massachusetts Campuses (excluding the MD program at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and the Law School at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth).

The maximum value of the full-time undergraduate tuition credit per academic year at each campus is as follows (the value will be prorated if attending on a part-time basis): Amherst = \$1,714; Boston = \$1,714; Dartmouth = \$1,417; Lowell = \$1,454.

The maximum value of the full-time graduate tuition credit per academic year at each campus is as follows (the value will be prorated if attending on a part-time basis): Amherst = \$2,640; Boston = \$2,590; Dartmouth = \$2,071; Lowell = \$1,637.

A 50% of tuition credit shall apply to enrollment in a continuing education program at the University of Massachusetts campuses (excluding the MD program at the University of Massachusetts Medical School and the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth Law School) as defined by the institutions.

The tuition benefit for online courses at one of the University of Massachusetts campuses is at the discretion of each campus; questions regarding the online courses should be directed to each campus.

Employees should check with the Bursar's Office to determine if a program or course is eligible under the tuition benefit program and, if so, the value of the benefit.

#### **4. Limitations**

Eligible employees must use this benefit on their own time and at no cost to the state agency. Agency heads are encouraged to allow all eligible staff to use flex-time, part-time, vacation or personal time to accommodate staff participation in courses covered by the tuition benefit.

Admission to all programs is on a space available basis. Spousal eligibility is subordinate to the tuition benefit rights extended to full-time state employees.

Employees and spouses of employees must apply for admission and meet all the regular admissions standards and criteria for the desired course/program they wish to attend.

Since most programs of continuing education at community colleges, state colleges and universities are self-sustaining, each local campus administration reserves the right to cancel any continuing education course in which a minimum number of full tuition paying students has not enrolled.

Employees and their spouses who use this tuition benefit are responsible for all other tuition and fees charged by the college or university.

#### **5. Administration**

HRD administers this program for Executive Branch agencies for eligible state employees and their spouses as follows:

- Managerial and confidential employees in the Executive Branch
- All non-union employees of Constitutional Offices (Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Attorney General, State Auditor, State Treasurer)

- Employees in the Executive Branch and the Attorney General's Office covered by collective bargaining agreements

The Employee Service Center (ESC) at HRD handles all tuition benefit forms (online via an [eForm](#)) for agencies which participate in ESC. Please see this page for more information: <http://www.mass.gov/anf/employment-equal-access-disability/hr-policies/masshr/employee-service-center/>

All other state agencies process tuition forms for their employees. Employees in these agencies should consult their Human Resources Director for applicable Tuition Benefit policies and procedures. The Human Resources Director is usually the Signatory Authority for the agency.

## **6. Application Procedure**

Employees must complete a Tuition Benefit Certificate and submit to the ESC (online via an [eForm](#)) for agencies which participate in ESC. All other employees submit the Tuition Benefit Certificate to their Human Resources Department for verification of employment. If the benefit is being used by an eligible employee's spouse, the employee must also submit proof of marriage such as a Marriage Certificate.

It is the employee's responsibility to submit the form allowing sufficient time for its processing. Colleges do not allow retroactive tuition benefit certificates. They must be submitted according to the institution's regulations (usually at the time of registration for the course or program).

Once eligibility is verified, the Agency Head or his/her designee must sign the certificate. The form is then returned to the employee who submits the certificate with their tuition bill, or at the time of registration with the school.

This certificate is valid for 120 days from the date of issue. A new certificate is required for each academic semester.

## **7. Record Keeping**

Employees and agencies are to keep copies of Tuition Benefit Certificates.

## **8. Audit Process**

The Tuition Benefit Program is administered by HRD for Executive Branch agencies to ensure that the Tuition benefit is provided only to eligible employees and/or their spouses according to these guidelines.

If an employee granted the benefit is found to be non-eligible, the agency will notify the employee and the college/university attended that the employee must reimburse the school for the cost of the tuition credit. Until this requirement is met, the employee will not be eligible for additional Tuition benefits.

## 9. Institutions

Click on the following website links to learn more about programs and courses at the public Community Colleges, State University campuses, and the University of Massachusetts.

Public Higher Education Campuses	Location	Website
Board of Higher Education	Boston	<a href="http://www.mass.edu/">http://www.mass.edu/</a>
Berkshire Community College	Pittsfield	<a href="http://www.berkshirecc.edu/">http://www.berkshirecc.edu/</a>
Bunker Hill Community College	Charlestown	<a href="http://www.bhcc.mass.edu">http://www.bhcc.mass.edu</a>
Bristol Community College	Fall River	<a href="http://www.bristol.mass.edu/">http://www.bristol.mass.edu/</a>
Cape Cod Community College	Barnstable	<a href="http://www.capecod.edu/">http://www.capecod.edu/</a>
Greenfield Community College	Greenfield	<a href="http://www.gcc.mass.edu/">http://www.gcc.mass.edu/</a>
Holyoke Community College	Holyoke	<a href="http://www.hcc.edu/">http://www.hcc.edu/</a>
Massachusetts Bay Community College	Wellesley	<a href="http://www.massbay.edu/">http://www.massbay.edu/</a>
Massasoit Community College	Brockton	<a href="http://www.massasoit.mass.edu/">http://www.massasoit.mass.edu/</a>
Middlesex Community College	Bedford	<a href="https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/">https://www.middlesex.mass.edu/</a>
Mount Wachusett Community College	Gardner	<a href="http://www.mwcc.mass.edu/">http://www.mwcc.mass.edu/</a>
Northern Essex Community College	Haverhill	<a href="http://www.necc.mass.edu/">http://www.necc.mass.edu/</a>
North Shore Community College	Beverly	<a href="http://www.nsccl.mass.edu/">http://www.nsccl.mass.edu/</a>
Quinsigamond Community College	Worcester	<a href="http://www.qcc.edu/">http://www.qcc.edu/</a>

<b>Public Higher Education Campuses</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Website</b>
Roxbury Community College	Roxbury	<a href="http://www.rcc.mass.edu/">http://www.rcc.mass.edu/</a>
Springfield Community College	Springfield	<a href="http://www.stcc.edu/">http://www.stcc.edu/</a>
Bridgewater State University	Bridgewater	<a href="http://www.bridgew.edu/">http://www.bridgew.edu/</a>
Fitchburg State University	Fitchburg	<a href="http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/">http://www.fitchburgstate.edu/</a>
Framingham State University	Framingham	<a href="http://www.framingham.edu/">http://www.framingham.edu/</a>
Massachusetts College of Art and Design	Boston	<a href="http://www.massart.edu/">http://www.massart.edu/</a>
Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts	North Adams	<a href="http://www.mcla.edu/">http://www.mcla.edu/</a>
Massachusetts Maritime Academy	Buzzard Bay	<a href="http://www.maritime.edu/">http://www.maritime.edu/</a>
Salem State University	Salem	<a href="http://www.salemstate.edu/">http://www.salemstate.edu/</a>
Westfield State University	Westfield	<a href="http://www.westfield.ma.edu/">http://www.westfield.ma.edu/</a>
Worcester State University	Worcester	<a href="http://www.worcester.edu/">http://www.worcester.edu/</a>
University of Massachusetts Amherst Maximum full-time tuition credit per academic year which will be prorated if attending on a part-time basis is: Undergraduate: \$1,714 Graduate: \$2,640	Amherst	<a href="http://www.umass.edu/">http://www.umass.edu/</a>
University of Massachusetts Boston Maximum full-time tuition credit per academic year which will be prorated if attending on a part-time basis is: Undergraduate: \$1,714 Graduate: \$2,590	Boston	<a href="http://www.umb.edu/">http://www.umb.edu/</a>

Public Higher Education Campuses	Location	Website
University of Massachusetts Dartmouth (Law School is not eligible for the tuition benefit program)  Maximum full-time tuition credit per academic year which will be prorated if attending on a part-time basis is:  Undergraduate: \$1,417 Graduate: \$2,071	North Dartmouth	<a href="http://www.umassd.edu/">http://www.umassd.edu/</a>
University of Massachusetts Lowell  Maximum full-time tuition credit per academic year which will be prorated if attending on a part-time basis is:  Undergraduate: \$1,454 Graduate: \$1,637	Lowell	<a href="http://www.uml.edu/">http://www.uml.edu/</a>
University of Massachusetts Medical School (MD program is not eligible for tuition benefit program)  For current tuition credit amounts, contact the Bursar's Office at 508-856-2248.  <a href="http://www.umassmed.edu/prospective-students/tuition-and-fees/">http://www.umassmed.edu/prospective-students/tuition-and-fees/</a>	Worcester	<a href="http://www.umassmed.edu/">http://www.umassmed.edu/</a>

### **Document History**

**Table 1: Document History**

Date Issued	Action	Effective Date (Version Change)	Next Review Date
1984	Original policy issued	1984	n/a
1997	Revised policy issued; tuition benefit extended to spouses	1997	n/a

<b>Date Issued</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Effective Date (Version Change)</b>	<b>Next Review Date</b>
12/6/2002	Revised policy issued; form approval is delegated	12/20/2002	n/a
3/2/2011	Revised policy issued	3/2/2011	n/a
2/11/2015	Revised policy issued; MassHR Employee Service Center approval added for participating agencies	2/11/2015	n/a
4/18/2017	Updated information on UMass billing system and tuition benefits	4/18/2017	4/18/2018
6/13/2017	Clarified undergraduate and graduate academic year limits on tuition credit	6/13/17	6/13/18