Policy Name: Staff Tuition Reimbursement Assistance Program (STRAP) Policy

Policy Owner: Human Resources

Policy Contact: Gail Imoukhuede, Director, Benefits & Retirement, gail.imoukhuede@ohr.gatech.edu

Reviewed By: Georgia Tech Human Resources; Office of the General Counsel; Interim Sr. Director, Total Rewards, Human Resources; Deputy Director, GTRI Talent Management Department

Policy Steering Committee Approval: October 2023

Policy Purpose: STRAP offers eligible employees’ partial reimbursement of tuition when pursuing academic degrees or certificates for programs not offered through the University System of Georgia Tuition Assistance Program.

Summary of Substantive Policy Changes:

- Throughout, Procedures for Application and Reimbursement sections removed and links provided to ASC Knowledge Base article Staff Tuition Reimbursement Assistance Program (STRAP) and Human Resources Educational Assistance website.
- Page 2, Ineligible Programs section added to provide clarity and provide more examples of programs not related to a career field at Georgia Tech.
Staff Tuition Reimbursement Assistance Program (STRAP) Policy
Policy No. 13.9
Type of Policy: Administrative
Effective Date: January 2004
Last Revised: December 2021
Policy Owner: Human Resources
Policy Contact: Gail Imoukhuede, Director, Benefits & Retirement, gail.imoukhuede@ohr.gatech.edu

1. Reason for Policy
To provide Georgia Tech employees that are pursuing a degree program, diploma or certificate program not offered through the University System of Georgia’s (USG) Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) partial reimbursement of tuition for programs that are applicable to a career at Georgia Tech. This policy reinforces Georgia Tech’s Strategic Plan focus area: Leading by Example to develop a world-class workforce committed to enhancing employee skills and providing a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment.

2. Policy Statement
The Staff Tuition Reimbursement Assistance Program (STRAP) provides employees with an opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge needed for career development and advancement. This program supports the Institute’s commitment to foster professional growth and development of its eligible employees. Programs of study must be applicable to a career field at Georgia Tech.

Employees are encouraged to use the University System of Georgia’s (USG) Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) whenever possible.

Eligibility & Application
Benefits-eligible, full-time (1.0 FTE) staff (exempt and non-exempt) who have a minimum of one full year of employment with Georgia Tech by the STRAP application deadline date may apply for the program. STRAP participants must be employed at Georgia Tech through the exam date and completion of the course in order to receive reimbursement. Eligibility ends upon termination of employment at Georgia Tech.
Eligible employees are required to submit a new STRAP application by the deadline for each semester in order to be eligible for reimbursement. STRAP does not cover expenses for fees, books, and other costs. STRAP application deadline dates can be found here.

STRAP applications received after the STRAP application deadline will be denied. There is no exception or appeal to this requirement. When extenuating circumstances such as hospitalization, death of an immediate family member, or other catastrophic events occur a one-time exception may be granted when documentation is provided to the Tuition Assistance Program Coordinator.

Acceptable Courses and Schools
Accredited degree programs, diplomas or certificate programs not offered by the USG under TAP, may be reimbursed through STRAP for programs if taken at an accredited non-USG educational institution or Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) vocational/technical college.

Ineligible Programs
Employees may not enroll in certain programs or courses of study under the STRAP policy. Those ineligible programs, or courses of study, include academic courses in the following professional schools: dental, law, medical, pharmacy, theology, veterinary, or executive total cost programs. Other ineligible programs, or courses of study, include: workshops, seminars, continuing education courses (e.g. Certified Public Accountant (C.P.A.) exam preparation courses, management development programs, special examinations for admissions to degree programs, or private consultant refresher courses to take examinations such as a professional certification (e.g. SHRM, Project Management, etc.) , non-academic certificate programs, admissions examinations, and other similar types of programs or classes. Support for these types of programs may be provided by departmental policies.

Reimbursement
STRAP provides reimbursement upon completion of course work with a grade of C or better. The Institute will reimburse approved applicants for tuition costs up to a maximum of six (6) credit hours per semester. Requests for reimbursement must be made within thirty (30) days following the completion of course work. The original tuition receipt showing a zero balance and an official transcript must be submitted to receive reimbursement. Expenses for fees, books, and other costs will not be reimbursed.

Please visit the STRAP website for how to apply, exclusions, reimbursement limits and tax implications.
**Funding**

STRAP funds are limited. Requests for reimbursement are processed on a first-come, first-served basis and are subject to the approval of GTHR.

**Work Schedule Arrangements**

To the extent possible, employees should not take courses that would require them to be absent from work during regularly scheduled work hours. If attendance in an approved STRAP course requires that an employee be absent from their assigned workstation during normal work hours, various accommodations may be possible, depending upon the needs of the unit/department and of the employee. Alternate work arrangements are within the sole discretion of the immediate supervisor.

3. **Scope**

This policy applies to benefits-eligible, full-time (1.0 FTE) staff (exempt and non-exempt) with the Georgia Tech. Learn more about participation eligibility below.

4. **Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acceptable (Academic) Coursework</th>
<th>Certificates, diploma, or degree programs taken for academic credit. Must be related to a career field at Georgia Tech. Non-credit continuing education courses, non-credit certificate programs, and Executive Programs are not eligible for reimbursement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff Tuition Reimbursement Assistance Program (STRAP)</td>
<td>Program offered by the Georgia Institute of Technology. Provides partial reimbursement to eligible employees taking academic coursework at an accredited private (non-USG) educational institution or Technical College System of Georgia (TCSG) vocational/technical college.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition Assistance Program (TAP)</td>
<td>Program offered through the University System of Georgia. Provides a waiver of tuition for eligible employees taking academic coursework at a USG institution.</td>
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</table>

5. **Frequently Asked Questions**

For more information and FAQs, [click here](#).
6. Responsibilities

Employees

Each employee must:

- meet the admission requirements of the educational institution,
- acquire approval from their immediate supervisor and department head,
- submit the STRAP application by the deadline date,
- receive approval from their immediate supervisor and GTHR each semester for each course to be reimbursed.

Supervisors

Supervisors are encouraged to make a reasonable effort to find appropriate work schedule accommodations; however, alternate work arrangements are within the sole discretion of the immediate supervisor. The supervisor should ensure that the employee’s participation in STRAP will not adversely affect departmental services or result in undue hardship for other employees.

Employees and Supervisors should consult with their HR Business Partner or Coordinators for questions or concerns about alternative work arrangements.

Tuition Assistance Coordinator

The Tuition Assistance Coordinator is responsible for processing STRAP applications, approves participation, and reviews documentation for extenuating/catastrophic events exception.

Georgia Tech Chief HR Officer

The Chief HR Officer is responsible for supporting compliance to this Policy and reviewing appeal requests.

7. Related Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Link</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STRAP Website</td>
<td><a href="https://hr.gatech.edu/staff-tuition-reimbursement-assistance-program">https://hr.gatech.edu/staff-tuition-reimbursement-assistance-program</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Board of Regents TAP Policy</td>
<td><a href="https://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits/tuition_assistance_program/tuition_assistance_program_policy">https://www.usg.edu/hr/benefits/tuition_assistance_program/tuition_assistance_program_policy</a></td>
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## 8. Policy History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revision Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 2022</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Updated to remove professional certifications in compliance with USG policy and procedure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2021</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Updated Policy to include professional certifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 2018</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>Updated Policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2004</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
<td>New Policy</td>
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