

PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIAL ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

Section:	Human Resources (HR)
Subject:	Employee Development and Recognition
Legislation:	
Effective:	November 19, 2004
Revision:	January 21, 2005; April 15, 2005; June 9, 2006; November 17, 2006; April 11, 2008; October 14, 2011; April 20, 2012; December 13, 2012; January 28, 2013; September 1, 2016 (reformatted)

APPROVED: _____
President and CEO

POLICY

The policy of the Board of Governors is to provide and support, within resource limitations, employee knowledge and skills development activities.

PROCEDURE**GOVERNING PRINCIPLES**

1. The Professional Credential Enhancement (PCE) program supports SAIT employees in the pursuit of professional and organizational excellence. The program is intended to foster a culture that values people, supports life-long learning and recognizes the importance of investing in professional development.
2. Employees can apply for tuition funding in the following amounts:
 - a) Certificate, Diploma or Undergraduate Degree - \$10,000 per credential (\$5,000 per budget year)
 - b) Master's Degree - \$15,000 per credential (\$7,500 per budget year)
 - c) Doctorate Degree - \$20,000 per credential (\$10,000 per budget year)

The official controlled version of this document is held in the Board of Governors Office.

3. This funding is governed by the following conditions:
 - a) Application for professional credentials should be for a level higher than the credential the employee currently holds.
 - b) If the credential is a one-year program, up to the full maximum may be accessed if approved by SAIT.
 - c) Only one credential per year will be funded.
 - d) Employees can apply for funding for additional credentials in subsequent years.
 - e) This funding will be reduced by any other funding obtained through SAIT.

PROCEDURE

A. Funding Conditions

1. Tuition funding is available for completion of certificate, diploma, undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate degrees from approved or accredited post-secondary learning institutions.
2. Applicants approved for funding must utilize the funding within six months of the budget year or communicate with the PCE program administrators their plans to access the funding. Failure to access the funding in the budget year may seriously affect subsequent future funding requests.
3. Executive Management Committee, through the annual budget process, will annually determine funding for the program. Given limited funding, SAIT cannot guarantee that all applications received for tuition funding will be accepted or that the total amount of tuition funding applied for will be granted. Funding approved but not used in one year cannot be carried forward into the next year. Applicants must apply annually for funding.
4. Tuition funding provided by SAIT is considered a non-taxable benefit by Revenue Canada. Employees are therefore not entitled to claim the tuition credit up to the amount funded by SAIT, or the education amount, on their tax return.
5. If annual tuition fees exceed the maximum amounts allowed for the credential per budget year, an employee may apply for a loan from SAIT in the following amounts:

The official controlled version of this document is held in the Board of Governors Office.

- a) Certificate, Diploma or Undergraduate Degree - \$10,000 per credential (\$5,000 per budget year)
- b) Master's Degree - \$15,000 per credential (\$7,500 per budget year)
- c) Doctorate Degree - \$20,000 per credential (\$10,000 per budget year)

If granted, the loan will be interest-free and repayable in 12 equal payments via a payroll deduction plan beginning the month after the loan is granted. Interest-free loans are a taxable benefit as per Revenue Canada's prescribed interest rates. This means the amount of interest that would have been paid on the loan if it was not interest-free, is added to the employee's income and taxed.

6. Additional support may be provided through facilitating learning arrangements, facilitating and approving work-related projects, considering requests for employee funded and unpaid leaves of absence and scheduling vacation time flexibility to accommodate program/course residency requirements.
7. Priority will be given where credentials are directly related to SAIT's future success.
8. In exceptional cases where an employee is applying for a credential at the same level or below the employee's current credential or professional designation, approval of the employee's vice president and the director of the Employee Services department is required.
9. Eligible funding will be for tuition fees only; repeat courses will not be funded.

B. Service Commitment

1. In exchange for SAIT providing tuition funding for continuing education, a service commitment equal to one year of active service at SAIT for every \$5,000 of tuition funding provided by SAIT is required of employees who receive such tuition funding. The service commitment will commence at the end of the budget year during which the funding is received by the employee, or on the date of the employee's completion of the applicable credential, or upon the employee's withdrawal from the PCE program, whichever first occurs.
2. Employees can concurrently work off their service commitments as they access funding the following budget year.

The official controlled version of this document is held in the Board of Governors Office.

3. Employees who have received tuition funding from SAIT and who resign from their employment or whose employment is terminated by SAIT, with or without cause, prior to the completion of their service commitment requirements, must refund the balance of tuition funding to SAIT proportionate to the service commitment not yet rendered at the time of such resignation or termination or as SAIT determines. The refund may be deducted by SAIT from any amounts due by SAIT to the employee upon resignation or termination. The refund must be made within seven days of cessation of employment at SAIT.

C. Eligibility Criteria

1. Applicants must be
 - a) Code 1 (permanent salaried), post probationary with satisfactory performance, or
 - b) Code 7 (temporary salaried) with a minimum of one year of service with satisfactory performance.

Exceptions will be as approved by the employee's vice president (for example, condition of hire).

2. The proposed credential must be relevant to the program, school/department or SAIT's needs and a development priority.
3. The proposed credential must be from an approved or accredited post-secondary learning institution. Supporting documentation must be provided.
4. Certificates offered by other recognized training institutions must be approved by the employee's vice president.

D. Approval Process

1. Proposals for support must be approved by the dean or director and submitted to Employee Services each year by January 15th, to be included in the annual budget process. If approved, funding will be available effective July of the following budget year. (Note – Courses taken prior to July 1 will not be eligible for funding commencing July 1.) The annual budget year runs from July 1 to June 30.
2. The applicant:

The official controlled version of this document is held in the Board of Governors Office.

- a) Prepares a proposal which shall include the following:
 - i) Proposed course of studies and the offering educational institution.
 - ii) Timeline for course and program completion.
 - iii) Estimated total cost and amounts requested per year.
 - iv) Description of the applicant's interest in further study, the value to the applicant and to SAIT and why the applicant believes that the applicant will be successful.
 - v) A letter of support from the applicant's supervisor.
 - vi) Documentation to support that the credential is from an approved or accredited post-secondary learning institution.
 - b) Completes the HR 30 Professional Credential Enhancement Application Form.
 - c) If requesting a loan for tuition, completes Tuition Loan section on the HR 30.
 - d) Submits the HR 30 and proposal package to the dean or director for approval in sufficient time to meet the January 15th deadline for submission to Employee Services.
 - e) Previously approved applicants submit a new HR 30 via the above process and deadline of each subsequent year to identify the amount of funding required and to be approved for continued support. No proposal package is required for previously approved applicants.
 - f) Provides the dean or director with proof of successful completion of coursework at the end of each academic year.
 - g) Notifies Employee Services of withdrawal from the funded credential or decision to not utilize funding within the budget year.
 - h) Provides Employee Services with official transcripts or other approved documentation upon completion of the funded credential.
3. The dean or director:

The official controlled version of this document is held in the Board of Governors Office.

- a) Ensures the proposal package and HR 30 are complete. If deemed appropriate, approves the application and forwards the original HR 30 and the proposal package to Employee Services.
 - b) Informs the applicant and the applicant's supervisor of the decision and ensures the approvals will be recorded on the applicant's PPR document.
 - c) If the applicant has applied for subsequent year funding, ensures the applicant has provided proof of successful completion of coursework funded by SAIT before funding is released in the following budget year.
4. Employee Services:
- a) Processes applications and liaises with the appropriate vice president to obtain final approval of the funding requests.
 - b) Advises the applicant of the status of the application and when funding is approved.

E. Changes to Credential

1. Any changes to either an approved credential or an accredited institution must:
 - a) Be approved in writing by both the dean or director and appropriate vice president.
 - b) Be forwarded to Employee Services, where the record will be updated.

As a change is not considered a new credential, it is subject to the same funding restrictions that were imposed on the original credential.

F. Release of Funds

1. The applicant:
 - a) If approved, completes an HR 31 Professional Credential Enhancement Claim Form and attaches a tuition receipt. The receipt must adhere to the definition of a receipt specified in procedure [FN.11.1.1 Expenses Overview](#):
 - i) Name of learning institution.

The official controlled version of this document is held in the Board of Governors Office.

- ii) Date of purchase.
- iii) Name of course(s).
- iv) Amount of expense.
- v) Method of payment.

Credit card and debit slips alone are not receipts since they do not itemize the above information. In exceptional cases, where an employee is experiencing financial hardship, SAIT will pay the learning institution directly.

- b) If accessing portions of the approved funding on more than one occasion during the budget year, completes a new HR 31 and follows above process.
 - c) Submits the HR 31 and a tuition receipt to Employee Services.
 - d) In the case where an employee withdraws from a course or a course is cancelled and payment has been provided by SAIT, the employee must advise Employee Services immediately to make arrangements to pay back the funds. Any violations will lead to corrective action.
2. Employee Services:
- a) Forwards the original HR 31 and tuition receipt to the Finance department for payment.
 - b) Provides deans and directors with mid-year status reports on the utilization of funds for their schools/departments.
3. The deans or directors:
- a) Ensure employees are utilizing the funding, and communicate to the PCE administrators when funding is not being utilized.

POLICY/PROCEDURE REFERENCE

HR.2.2	Professional Development policy
HR.2.2.1	Institutional Professional Development procedure
HR.2.2.2	Professional Development Fund – Academic Staff procedure

The official controlled version of this document is held in the Board of Governors Office.