

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); January 29, 2020

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 their 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)

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3. This funding is governed by the following principles:
 - a) An application for a professional credential should be for a credential that would contribute to the employee's professional development in the role that the employee currently holds or is pursuing.
 - 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 the completion of certificates, diplomas, undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees and post-graduate degrees from approved or accredited post-secondary learning institutions.
2. Applicants approved for funding must utilize the funding within the budget year and must communicate with the PCE program administrators about their plans to access the funding. Failure to access the funding in the budget year may impact subsequent future funding requests.
3. Executive Management Council, through the annual budget process, will annually determine funding for the program. 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. Applicants must apply for funding annually, and unused amounts cannot be carried forward.
4. 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:
 - a) Certificate, Diploma or Undergraduate Degree: \$10,000 per credential (\$5,000 per budget year).

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- 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 24 equal payments via a payroll deduction plan beginning the month after the loan is claimed.

- 5. SAIT may provide additional support 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.
- 6. Programs, certifications and designations must relate to the employee's role or probable career path, and directly support SAIT's future success.
- 7. Eligible funding is for tuition and administrative fees only. Fees for repeat courses, books, electronic material fees, accommodation, travel, mandatory fees and other expenses will not be funded. Administrative fees include but are not limited to application fees and transfer credit evaluation fees.
- 8. SAIT makes no representation as to whether funding will be considered a taxable benefit and any tax consequences are the employee's responsibility.

B. Service Commitment

- 1. In exchange for SAIT providing tuition funding to an employee, SAIT requires a service commitment from that employee equal to one year of active service at SAIT for every \$5,000 of tuition funding that SAIT provides to the employee. The service commitment commences at the end of the budget year during which the employee receives the funding, on the date that the employee completes the credential or on the date that the employee withdraws from the PCE program, whichever occurs first.
- 2. Employees may concurrently work off their service commitments as they access funding the following budget year.
- 3. Employees who have received tuition funding from SAIT and who resign or retire from their employment or whose employment is terminated by SAIT with cause, before they have completed 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 their resignation, retirement or termination. SAIT may deduct the refund from any amounts due by SAIT to the employee upon retirement,

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resignation or termination. The refund must be made within 30 days of cessation of employment at SAIT or within whatever other amount of time SAIT determines.

4. Employees who have received tuition funding from SAIT and whose employment is terminated by SAIT without cause before they have completed their service commitment requirements will not be required to refund the balance of tuition funding to SAIT proportionate to the service commitment not yet rendered at the time of such termination.

C. Eligibility Criteria

1. Applicants must be permanent salaried employees who have completed a probationary period with satisfactory performance. Exceptions may be approved by the employee's vice president (for example, as a 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, as set out in Section D of this procedure.
4. Certificates offered by other recognized training institutions must be approved by the employee's vice president.

D. Approval Process and Supporting Documentation

1. Proposals for support must be approved by the employee's dean or director and submitted to Employee Services each year by January 31st, to be included in the annual budget process. If approved, funding will be available effective July of the following budget year. The annual budget year runs from July 1 to June 30. Note that courses taken before July 1 will not be eligible for funding commencing July 1.
2. The applicant:
 - a) Prepares a proposal package which shall include the following:
 - i) Proposed course of studies and the offering post-secondary learning institution or other recognized training institution.

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- 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 in completing the credential.
 - v) A letter of support from the applicant's supervisor.
 - vi) Documentation to show 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 time to meet the January 31st deadline for submission to Employee Services.
 - e) Previously approved applicants submit a new HR 30 as per the above process and deadline of each subsequent year, to identify the amount of funding required and to be approved for continued support. Previously approved applicants do not need to submit a proposal package.
 - f) Provides the dean or director with proof of successful completion of coursework at the end of each budget 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:
- 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 in the applicant's performance plan for the approved funding year.

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- 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 or designate 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, Program and/or Institution

1. Any changes to an approved credential, program and/or an accredited institution must:
 - a) Be documented by a new HR30 with updated credential, program and/or institution information.
 - b) Be approved in writing by the employee's director supervisor, the employee's dean or director, and the appropriate vice president or designate.
 - c) Be forwarded to Employee Services, which will update the record.
2. A change is subject to the same funding restrictions that were imposed on the original credential, and only the previously approved funding amount will be granted.

F. Release of Funds

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

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- iii) Name and date of course(s).
- iv) Amount and details of expense.
- v) Method of payment.

Credit card and debit slips are not in themselves 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 the above process.
- c) Submits the originally signed HR 31 and a detailed tuition receipt to Employee Services.
- d) If SAIT has provided payment and the employee withdraws from a course, a course is cancelled, or the employee does not successfully complete a course, the employee must immediately advise Employee Services and arrange to repay the funds to SAIT. Breaches of this requirement are subject to disciplinary action as per the provisions of procedure [HR.4.4.1 Corrective Action](#).

2. Employee Services:

- a) Forwards the original HR 31 and detailed 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 their 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

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PROCEDURE

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