



## EMPLOYEE AND DEPENDENT TUITION FREE PROGRAM PROCEDURES

Any employee who has completed twelve months of full-time employment is authorized to take credit or non-credit courses at the College during any given time period without tuition charges. An employee's dependents are also eligible for this program. Non-credit Continuing Education and Workforce Training courses are not considered for free tuition.

The employee and dependents are responsible for paying the parking fee and the Recreation Center fee at the time of registration. **Employees and dependents are also responsible for differential and special fees associated with a particular course.** Textbooks are not included. Any remaining balances after the tuition waiver must be paid in full. Installment payments for remaining balances will not be allowed.

An employee's courses must be pre-approved by the employee's supervisor and vice president, and must not affect regular working hours unless specifically requested by supervisor and approved by vice president. In those instances where classes are available only during normal working hours, supervisors may provide flexible work schedules and/or approve use of appropriate paid leave (i.e. vacation, compensatory time, etc.). Such approval is subject to the operating needs of the College. Courses are only eligible if tied to a degree plan or an employee and/or dependent may only take a maximum of three (3) courses unrelated to a degree plan. Failed, incomplete, or withdrawing from a course will be circumstances for disqualification under this program. Payment may be required. See Repayment section for clarification.

An employee and dependent must maintain a >2.0 cumulative GPA. Failure to do so will make s/he ineligible for the program. If an employee and/or dependent wishes to dispute his/her cumulative GPA, please follow the Appeals Process as stated below.

### **PROCEDURE:**

**The following procedure outlines the steps to apply for and receive a waiver for tuition and fees:**

- An eligible employee and/or dependent must first register as a student with Texas Southmost College.
- Once accepted as a student, the employee and/or dependent, registers for the course(s).
- The employee and/or dependent must pay the parking fee and the Recreation Center fee upon registration.
- The employee and/or dependent must pay the differential and course fees upon registration.
- TSC employee must complete and submit the Employee and/or Dependent Tuition Free Application form.
- Employee must attach to the application form:
  - The official statement of charges which includes the student name and classes.
  - If Dependent, attach a recent tax return to establish dependent eligibility. If dependent is not covered on the tax return and lives with the biological parent, a birth certificate will be required to establish dependent eligibility. A marriage license will be required to establish dependent eligibility for a spouse. If biological parent is spouse of employee, then marriage certificate should also be provided along with drivers license of dependent to establish eligibility.



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- Certify via online application that the courses being requested for this program are not repeat courses.
- The Deadline to submit Employee/ Dependent Tuition Free Application form is **at least one week prior to the registration deadline for the semester as per the TSC Academic Calendar.**
- The Office of Human Resources will review the documentation and determine eligibility.
- If approved, the Business Office will waive the employee's and/or dependent's tuition and applicable fees, update the employees account accordingly and notify employee and/or dependent via TSC email.
- If declined, the Business Office will state the reason and notify employee and/or dependent via TSC email.
- If the employee and/or dependent drops or changes the approved class the employee and/or dependent should immediately resubmit a completed application with updated statement of charges..
- All forms will be included in the employee's personnel file.
- Questions regarding these procedures should be directed to the Office of Human Resources.

### REPAYMENT:

An employee who receives free tuition and fees is required to repay Texas Southmost College the amount of the tuition and fees waived as follows:

- The employee and/or dependent fails to complete an approved course;
- The employee and/or dependent does not earn a >2.0 for an approved course;
- The employee resigns or is terminated with or without cause before the employee and/or dependent completes an approved course.

Repayment funds shall be submitted to the Business Office. Employee complaints regarding repayment or other issues under this procedure must be submitted to the Office of Human Resources for review and final decision. Repayment must be made within thirty (30) days.

Texas Southmost College will not require repayment of tuition and fees waived for any of the following:

- A mandatory military obligation required the employee to leave or be unavailable to attend;
- A change in employment schedule or responsibility made by and for the College's benefit;
- A serious illness that prevents the employee from completing the course work, provided the employee submits medical documentation justifying the withdrawal; or
- The employee is terminated due to reductions in force, reorganization or other reasons not related to employee performance or conduct, before completing an approved course.

An employee seeking to avoid repayment due to any of the above circumstances shall submit the request and supporting documentation to the Office of Human Resources for review and final decision.



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### Appeals Process:

An employee and/or dependent that wishes to appeal s/he ineligibility for the program because of not maintaining a Cumulative GPA  $>2.0$  must submit the Appeal Form notating:

- Reason for Appeal: Cumulative GPA  $<2.0$
- Personal Statement – Statement/Letter must be typed and MUST explain the following:
  - What were the extenuating circumstances that prevented you from meeting the Cumulative GPA  $>2.0$ .
  - What has changed in the situation that will allow you to demonstrate Cumulative GPA  $>2.0$  at the end of next semester.
- Extenuating Circumstances which may/may not include:
  - Medical – If you experience a medical condition, illness, or injury which resulted in a low Cumulative GPA, attach documentation confirming you received medical treatment for the semester(s) affected.
  - Death/Illness – If the death or illness of a family member had a negative impact on achieving your academic goals, please attach appropriate copies of medical records, death certificate, or obituary.
  - Other Circumstances – Please explain extenuating circumstances and attach appropriate documentation.

The Appeals Form will be reviewed by Human Resources and once a decision has been reached, the Employee/Dependent will be notified of decision.

*While the intent of this exemption is to allow and encourage completion of a degree, there is no guarantee that an employee would be fully funded or awarded every semester. This benefit and associated procedures are subject to change without notice.*

*Misrepresentation of family members identified within this policy by the TSC employee will subject the employee to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.*