# 722 – EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS

**722.1 Statement:**

Eligible employees of Hood College may receive educational benefits for themselves, their spouses, and dependent children in accordance with this policy.

**722.2 Philosophy:**

The College supports employees who seek personal or professional growth through education. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines that will enable employees to utilize educational benefits for themselves, their spouses, and their dependents.

**722.3 Procedures:**

*Definitions:*

An **eligible employee** is a regular full-time employee or a part-time employee with an established full-time equivalency (FTE) of 0.50 or greater employed as a regular employee at least one year and with successful completion of their 90-day introductory period.

A **spouse** is an individual lawfully married, including civil union or common-law marriage, to an eligible employee.

A **dependent child** follows the IRS guidelines (see Publication 501, Exemptions, Standard Deduction and Filing Information) or if the employee is under court order to provide for college expenses for a dependent child.

*Guidelines for Tuition Benefit:*

The Hood College Educational Benefit covers ***tuition only*** for Hood College classes. **It does not apply to supplemental costs, fees, books, room and board, or other incidental expenses incurred by the employee, the employee's spouse, and/or dependents. Nor does the benefit cover any related taxes**. This benefit will be applied first to a student account followed by additional financial aid/scholarships, if applicable.

Full-time eligible employees and their spouses may enroll tuition free in graduate (excluding doctoral programs) or undergraduate courses at the College, and their dependent children may enroll tuition free in undergraduate courses at Hood. Dependent children of full-time employees enrolled either full-time or part-time in Hood's graduate program (excluding doctoral programs) will receive a $500 tuition discount per semester, not to exceed $1,000 for the academic year. ***Note***: Dependent children may apply for educational benefits or a GA waiver; however, both options cannot be applied at the same time.

Part-time eligible employees and their spouses may enroll and are eligible for educational benefits in proportion to the employee's FTE status in graduate (excluding doctoral programs) or undergraduate courses at the College. Their dependent children may enroll and are eligible for educational benefits in proportion to the employee's FTE status in undergraduate courses at Hood. For example, an employee who has an FTE status of 0.50 receives 50% off tuition for courses taken at Hood. Dependent children of part-time employees enrolled either full-time or part-time in Hood's graduate program will receive the tuition discount in line with above-mentioned amounts but proportional to the employee's FTE status. ***Note***: Dependent children may apply for educational benefits or a GA waiver; however, both options cannot be applied at the same time.

*Admission, Registration and Benefit Application Steps:*

Any employee, spouse, or dependent child with an intention to seek an undergraduate or graduate degree must start the admission process at least 45 days in advance of the start of a semester, no later than July 1 for the fall semester or December 1 for the spring semester. This is normally a one-time process. Thereafter, the employee, spouse or dependent child may skip this step and register for classes during the designated registration period via the Registrar's Office.

**Graduate School Admission**

- Follow instructions on the Graduate School website > How to Apply
- ***Important Note:*** If an employee or family member is interested in enrolling in graduate coursework as a non-degree seeking student, meaning not interested in pursuing a certificate or master level program, then visit the non-degree webpage for application guidelines. The employee or family member will need to complete the non-degree application/registration form.

**Undergraduate Admission**

- Follow instructions on the Hood website > Admission & Aid > Apply Now
- ***Important Note:*** The Dual Enrollment Program has its own admission process and must be started at least 45 days in advance of the start of a semester.

**Register for Classes**

Once the admission process is complete, the employee, spouse or dependent child may register for classes during the designated registration period.

**Application for Educational Benefits**

To receive educational benefits, the application for educational benefits must be submitted each semester/session for which the benefit is requested for an eligible employee, spouse or dependent. This application should be submitted simultaneously or after the employee or family member has registered for classes. Failure to complete and return this form to HR at least one week before the start of each semester/session may result in the enrolled not receiving the benefit for the semester.

*Employees*

Employees may earn up to two degrees. Employees may take up to a full-time course load outside of working hours. Full-time employees may take one course per semester during working hours, with the supervisor's prior approval. Supervisors have discretion to determine if work hours missed due to a course must be made up during the same work week or if there's adequate coverage to forego making up the hours. This educational benefit does not cover any off campus or independent study academic programs.

*Spouses & Dependent Children*

Spouses and dependent children may complete one degree program. Any additional coursework will not be eligible for educational benefits.

Spouses and dependent children seeking a degree may enroll as full-time or part-time students in Hood's undergraduate program via the educational benefit program, but they must earn a degree in no more than nine consecutive semesters. Winter and summer sessions are not considered semesters and will not be a break in nine consecutive semesters. However, if tuition remission benefits for the winter and summer sessions are elected, those sessions will count against the nine consecutive semesters.

This benefit program does not cover tuition costs associated with study abroad programs or any other educational programs, including independent study programs.

*Hood's Dual Enrollment Program (formerly Hood Start):*

Dependent children of a full-time employee may enroll tuition-free in the College's Dual Enrollment program for high school students who wish to get a head start on their college coursework. Dependent children of part-time employees may enroll in the program at a reduced rate, in proportion to the employee's FTE status. Under the Dual Enrollment program, students may take up to two Hood College courses in a semester, with a maximum of four Hood College courses overall. The courses taken as part of this program will not count against the nine semesters available through the tuition remission program. Fees other than tuition (i.e., books, lab fees, comprehensive fees) are not waived. For program details, please visit the Dual Enrollment program webpage.

*Availability of Space:*

**Educational benefits are subject to availability of space at both the undergraduate and graduate level**. In no case will a course be closed to a regular student so that an employee, spouse, or dependent child of an employee can enroll in the course; nor will a course be held open if it lacks enough students who are not employees of the College. The provost's office, in consultation with other key departments, determines if/when courses are cancelled.

Faculty resources will not be hired nor paid more to accommodate an employee, spouse or dependent child using this benefit during winter and summer sessions.

*Doctoral Programs:*

In general, doctoral programs are not covered by this benefit for employees, spouses, or dependent children.

Eligible employees of Hood College may receive educational benefits for the Doctoral Program in Organizational Leadership (DOL), specifically the Doctorate in Organizational Leadership (DOL), in accordance with **Policy 723 – Educational Benefits for Doctoral Program DOL.** See this policy for more information.

*Educational Benefits status when an employee separates:*

Educational benefits are forfeited if an employee voluntarily terminates employment or is involuntarily terminated for cause by the College. If the termination occurs mid-semester, the employee, spouse or dependent child who is receiving educational benefits is responsible for paying the pro-rata share of remaining tuition. *See Period of Service after Receiving Tuition Remission Benefits* for more information about financial obligations.

When involuntary termination occurs due to a layoff, long-term disability or death of an eligible employee during an academic year, the employee, spouse and/or dependent children may continue educational benefits through the end of that academic year.

Period of Service after Receiving Tuition Remission Benefits:

Employees who have used this benefit on behalf of spouses or dependent children seeking a degree are required to continue employment at least one year after the last use of the benefit or completion of a degree. Failure to do so will result in the employee being responsible for repaying the College all tuition benefits for the degree. Employees who have used the benefit personally are not bound by the one-year requirement.

This provision does not alter the At-Will Employment agreement between the employee and Hood College as referenced in Section 101.1 of this manual.

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