

Procedures for:
Coursework Approval
Tuition Waiver Request
Tuition Reimbursement Request

Coursework Approval Procedure (Reference Teacher/Board Master Contract 8.1 & 8.16)

In order to advance lanes on the salary schedule, **prior** approval for coursework is required. Approval must be received 10 work days prior to the start of the course or program at issue. Employees must complete the Coursework Approval Request Form and submit to Human Resources. The request will be either approved or denied and returned to the employee. The form should be retained by the employee.

If approved in advance, any teacher may apply up to eight (8) credit hours per year (September 1 – August 31) toward horizontal lane advancement. Teachers working toward their first approved Master's degree may apply up to eight (8) credit hours per semester toward horizontal lane advancement. Additionally, such a teacher shall be permitted to advance to the MA column, even if such advancement would cause the teacher to advance more than sixteen (16) hours in one year.

Coursework for lane advancement (and tuition reimbursement) must comply with the following guidelines:

- 1) All coursework must be earned through an accredited institution. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is nationally recognized, but all coursework must come from an (approved) accredited institution. The Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools is another example of an acceptable accreditation agency.
- 2) Coursework must be completed through an accredited graduate degree program in an instructional, content-specific area, or post-graduate degree graduate coursework must be from an accredited institution and must also be in an instructional, content specific area.
- 3) Undergraduate coursework may be considered for lane advancement if the coursework is part of an accredited undergraduate degree program in a hard-to-fill area, which may include but is not limited to special education, Spanish, ELL, or ESL.
- 4) Undergraduate coursework may be considered for lane advancement if the coursework is from an accredited institution and is leading to an additional endorsement or is needed to satisfy a prerequisite which must be taken to proceed with another approved program.
- 5) Online degree programs will **not** be approved. Online courses may be approved if other requirements and guidelines are met.

- 6) Employee must demonstrate successful completion of approved coursework in order to receive credit for lane advancement. Standards of the university program must be met in order for completion to be considered successful.
- 7) Employees seeking to take coursework in an area that is non-instructional or not content specific to the employee's position (e.g., general administrative educational technology) must have demonstrated leadership capacity. For any program requiring an internship, the employee must include a letter of initial commitment from the potential internship site supervisor (e.g., principal).

Official transcripts reflecting completion of approved coursework are due by September 15 and February 15 for lane advancement on the salary schedule. Salary adjustments will be reflected on the October and March payrolls, and credit shall be retroactive to the start of the semester in which the evidence of academic credit is presented.

Tuition Waiver Request Procedure (Reference Teacher/Board Master Contract 8.16)

Teachers earn NIU waivers for NIU students under their supervision. If a supervising teacher does not use his/her waiver, Human Resources may assign it to another professional employee.

Employees must complete the Coursework Approval Request Form (check Yes and supply your ZID# for Request for NIU Waiver) and submit to Human Resources. Upon course approval, the waiver and request form will be returned to the requesting employee. Reimbursement cannot be requested if a waiver is used. If there are no waivers available, the request form will be returned without a waiver, and then tuition reimbursement may be requested.

Tuition Reimbursement Request Procedure

Teachers will be reimbursed \$100.00 per semester hour for courses taken meeting coursework approval guidelines as indicated in the coursework approval procedures. Prior approval of coursework is required. No more than eight (8) total hours will be reimbursed in any school year; however, teachers working toward their first approved Master's degree may be reimbursed up to eight (8) credit hours per semester.

- 1) First year teachers receiving mentoring will be excluded from tuition reimbursement.
- 2) Coursework should be completed within six months of the original application date.

Upon completion of approved coursework, the Tuition Reimbursement Request Form must be filed with Human Resources. An official transcript, along with a copy of the receipt for the class must be submitted with the form. A separate reimbursement check will be sent to the employee from Accounts Payable, not through the payroll check.