

Procedures for:
Program Approval
Tuition Waiver Request
Tuition Reimbursement Request

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

In order to advance lanes on the salary schedule, **prior** approval for a program is required. Approval must be received prior to enrollment in the program. Employees must complete the Program 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.

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

- 1) All program must be earned through an accredited institution. The National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) is nationally recognized, but all program 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) Program must be completed through an accredited graduate degree program in an instructional, content-specific area, or post-graduate degree graduate program must be from an accredited institution and must also be in an instructional, content specific area.
- 3) Online degree *programs* will not be approved.
- 4) Employee must demonstrate successful completion of approved courses within the program in order to receive credit for lane advancement. Standards of the university program must be met in order for completion to be considered successful.
- 5) Employees seeking to take program in an area that is non-instructional or not content specific to the employee's position (e.g., general administrative, curriculum and assessment, 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 program 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 Program Approval Request Form (check Yes and supply your ZID# for Request for NIU Waiver) and submit to Human Resources. Upon program 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 (Reference Teacher/Board Master Contract 8.16)

Teachers will be reimbursed at a rate of \$100 per semester hour for programs taken meeting program approval guidelines as indicated in the program approval procedures. Prior approval of program 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) Programs, other than doctorate programs, should be completed within 3 years of the original application date.

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