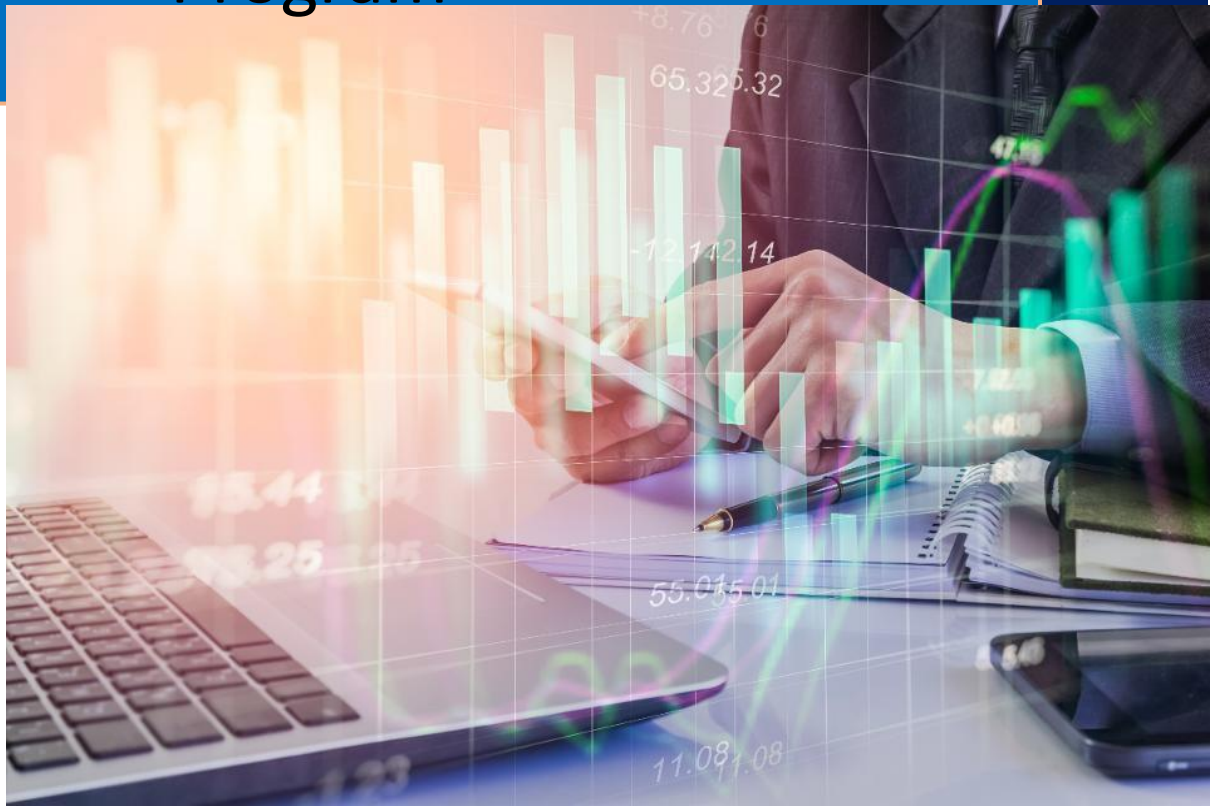


# Advanced Degree and Certification Program



Office of Title III Programs

Voorhees College

2021-2022

# Tuition Reimbursement Policy

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**Purpose:** The Advanced Degree Completion Program (ADCP) at Voorhees College is designed to provide monetary assistance to Voorhees College faculty and staff to develop and expand a cadre of credentialed and qualified faculty and staff, subsequently increasing the number of terminal degree and certificate holders. The ultimate goal is to develop individuals that will serve as Voorhees College faculty and staff that will be experts in their discipline and serve as role models and mentors to Voorhees College students in planning their education and careers.

Tuition reimbursement is a way for Voorhees to invest in our employee’s future career growth and help them further their knowledge, skills and job effectiveness through higher education. Employee tuition reimbursement is provided by Title III Programs in accordance with the guidelines below. Approved degree programs and certificates are those that align with the employee’s development plan and enhance the employee’s capabilities. All advance degrees must be recognized by SACSCOC.

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## **Tuition Reimbursement Policy for Advanced Degrees**

### **Reimbursement Provisions**

The program will pay up to 90 percent of tuition and other mandatory, incidental expenses required for enrollment as follows:

- \$5,250 per calendar year for all formal education
  
- Successful completion of courses is required for a tuition reimbursement to be granted
  
- **Advance degrees** must receive a B or better for reimbursement:
  - Letter Grade “A” = 90% reimbursement
  - Letter Grade “B” = 80% reimbursement
  
- All professional development certifications will be reimbursed up to 90% at the discretion of the committee.
  - **Certifications** that are based on a letter grade will be based on the above scale.
  - **Certifications** that are based on a passing score, then reimbursement will be up to 90%.

### **General Eligibility Guidelines for Tuition Reimbursement**

#### **Eligibility to Participate:**

- Must be a full-time employee
  - Must have completed at-least one-year full-time employment
  - Must meet the performance expectations of his or her current position.
  - Must not have any formal disciplinary actions with Voorhees College within the previous 18 months. Formal disciplinary actions include written warnings, demotions, or suspension.
  - Must have an individual development plan in place, reviewed and agreed to by the supervisor with recognition that the educational investment is part of the employee’s development for their current position.
  - Must have clear alignment among the employee’s educational ambitions, the organization’s needs, the employee’s performance management agreement and individual development plan.
  - Must ensure the educational institution is a regionally accredited doctoral program.
  - Must be officially admitted into doctoral program
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- Must be approved for reimbursement consideration prior to enrollment in doctoral courses or for professional certificate. It is advisable for application to be made 60-90 days in advance of the course/certificate to allow time to consider approval and budgeting, as appropriate.
  - The program can be paid in advance for faculty and staff by the Office of Title III Programs. Faculty and staff can deliver upfront under their discretion, and the program will reimburse the employee following the tuition reimbursement guidelines.

### **Ineligibility**

**Employees are not eligible for Tuition Reimbursement if they are:**

- A temporary employee
- An intermittent employee
- A summer hire or an intern
- All part-time employees
- Unable to work due to illness or injury, or are on a personal, disability, labor dispute or military leave of absence or family medical leave of absence (FMLA) (if the absence or leave began prior to the application for Tuition Reimbursement).

### **Limits on Tuition Reimbursement**

**The Tuition Reimbursement program will not cover the following expenses:**

- Textbooks, testing fees, review courses, parking permits, travel, student ID cards, student event tickets, meals, costs for computers, hardware or software upgrades, equipment, and internet connections required for on-line coursework and other miscellaneous expenses.
- It is expected that time needed for completing the educational requirements for coursework will be limited to the employee's personal time off, vacation or unpaid leaves of absence. Occasional time allowances can also be made between the supervisor and employee to participate in required activities such as examinations, registration, etc. Voorhees College is allowed ultimate discretion to limit time off.

### **Reimbursement**

- All reimbursement requests must be received within 10 days of the course end date.
- Please allow a minimum of 10 days for reimbursement processing
- All requests must include proper documentation as listed on the reimbursement request form.
- Payment will be issued to the employee once proof of grades and paid invoice has been submitted

### Application Packet

Eligible Voorhees College faculty or staff applicants should submit a completed application packet that includes the following:

- (1) Letter of Interest indicating:
  - A) discussion of how the certification or doctoral degree completion by the applicant will benefit Voorhees College,
  - B) the philosophy of college teaching and faculty mentoring of the applicant, and
  - C) an explanation of the career pathways plan that will benefit majors in said discipline at Voorhees College; (NOTE: Letters B & C pertains to faculty only)
- (2) One external professional reference that can speak to the relevance of the certification or doctoral work;
- (3) Letter of support from the appropriate Department Chair and Provost as it pertains to degree you wish to pursue.

### Professional Development Certification Course Guidelines

Certification courses will be approved by on a case-by-case basis depending on the following criteria:

Description	Type	Reimbursement
<b>Certification courses that are necessary for the job to ensure the employee has the immediate competencies to satisfactorily perform the job.</b>	Training	Up to 90% tuition reimbursement
<b>Certification courses that are not essential for the employee to perform the job but will enhance an individual's capabilities in his or her job and are linked to the employee's development plan.</b>	Formal Education	Up to 80% tuition reimbursement
<b>Certification courses that are not essential for the employee to perform the job and are not linked to the business need or to the employee's development plan.</b>	N/A	Denied

**Terms and Termination of Employment**

- Employees who accepts the doctoral tuition reimbursement, for every \$5,000 received **must** commit to regular full-time service of one year following the completion of an advanced degree course(s). In the event that an employee voluntarily terminates their employment with Voorhees College or is terminated for cause at any time during the course of employment, the employee agrees to repay Voorhees College the entire amount of tuition paid to-date that have been paid for all courses. **Note: Failure to return funds may result in legal actions against the Employee.**
- If an employee does not repay any amounts due as indicated above on or before their last day of employment, any such amounts will be deducted from the employee’s final paycheck or from any other amounts payable to the employee upon or following termination of employment, including but not limited to vacation, incentive compensation payments, bonuses or special compensation awards, and will authorize such deduction. Employees will also acknowledge that any balance still owed to Voorhees College after the deductions referenced above must be repaid to Voorhees College. Once all options of the above are exhausted, Employee will have three months to repay all funds back to Voorhees.
- Repayment will not be required if the termination of their employment is due to death, long-term disability, layoff or involuntary termination for any reason other than cause.

## **Approval and Reimbursement Process/Checklist – Advanced Degrees**

- Read the Voorhees Tuition Reimbursement Policies
- Obtain supervisory approval on the Individual Development Plan
- Complete Tuition Reimbursement Application Process
- Committee will review Application will be reviewed
- Chosen applicants will be invited to a panel interview
- Approval or denial letter will be sent to employee
- Complete and submit final approval packet with signed Acknowledgement forms
- Upon each course completion and receipt of grade, complete a Request for Reimbursement on Voorhees College Requisition Form.
- Attach the necessary documentation of grades and expenses eligible for reimbursement to the requisition form:
  - Itemized tuition and fees
  - Copy of receipt of paid tuition & fees (if tuition was deferred, please attach documentation)
  - Proof of course completion with grade report or copy of certificate
- Within 60 days of course completion date, employee submits approved forms, documents and receipts to Office of Title III for reimbursement processing. Please allow at least 30 days for reimbursement processing. Reimbursement will be processed through Accounts Payable.

Any questions regarding this program should be directed to:

Dr. Damara Hightower-Mitchell  
Provost & Vice-President for Academic Affairs  
803-780-1026

Mr. Quincey Bellamy, Ed.S  
Director of Title III Programs  
803-780-1274

**NOTE: ALL DECISIONS ASSOCIATED WITH ANY MATTER RELATED TO THIS PROGRAM, ARE EXERCISED AT THE SOLE AND ABSOLUTE DISCRETION OF THE OFFICE OF TITLE III PROGRAMS AT VOORHEES COLLEGE. AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION / EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER SPONSORED BY U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION/TITLE III PROGRAMS.**