



# Amazon Offers To Pay Tuition for 750,000 US Staff

Discussion > Advanced 7



## Exercise 1 – Vocabulary

<b>tuition</b>	Money paid for studying at a college, university, etc.
[noun]	<i>Ex: She's saving money to pay for her <b>tuition</b>.</i>

<b>retain</b>	To continue to have or keep a person or thing.
[verb]	<i>Ex: The house is over 250 years old, but it <b>retains</b> many of its original features.</i>

<b>front-line</b>	Relating to the most important or central position in a particular field, activity, etc.
[adjective]	<i>Ex: <b>Front-line</b> medical workers say conditions in hospitals are worse than the government claims.</i>



<b>turnover</b>	The rate at which employees leave and are replaced at a company.
[noun]	<i>Ex: Stressful jobs like this one have a high rate of <b>turnover</b>.</i>

<b>grueling</b>	Extremely difficult or tiring.
[adjective]	<i>Ex: After a <b>grueling</b> few days, we finally completed the project.</i>

<b>unreasonable</b>	Beyond what is considered acceptable.
[adjective]	<i>Ex: A lot of customers have complained that the gym's fee increase is <b>unreasonable</b>.</i>



## Exercise 2 – Reading

*Read the text aloud with your tutor and discuss the key points.*

### **Amazon Offers To Pay Tuition for 750,000 US Staff**

Amazon has offered to pay the college tuition of over 750,000 of its hourly employees in the US as a way to attract and retain more staff.

In a statement, the e-commerce giant said it would spend \$1.2 billion between now and 2025 on education and training, starting in January. The money will be used to pay for undergraduate degrees, as well as high school diplomas, English language courses, and other skills programs.

Staff can use the scheme after working at Amazon for just 90 days, so long as they continue working full or part-time while taking their course.

All fees will be paid by Amazon before classes start and don't have to be paid back when the employee leaves the company. There is also no limit to how long employees will be able to continue to receive education funding, meaning they can use the scheme to get more than one qualification.



The move comes as Amazon experiences high front-line worker turnover, especially in its warehouses, with many new recruits only lasting days or weeks, according to a June 2021 report by the New York Times.

Constant monitoring, high injury rates, physically grueling work, unreasonable deadlines, and having no time off are just some of the complaints shared by Amazon employees.

According to the US Department of Labor, job vacancies in the US are also at record highs, reaching nearly 11 million in July — making hiring even harder.

"Today, there are not enough workers to fill every job in the United States, which means businesses are struggling to hire, especially for roles that require specific or technical skill sets," Cheryl Oldham, from the US Chamber of Commerce Foundation told The Guardian.

In July, Walmart also offered to pay full college tuition for approximately 1.5 million part-time and full-time US employees. Target followed in August, saying it would offer free degree programs to more than 340,000 US staff.



## Exercise 3 – Discussion

*Discuss the following questions with your tutor.*

1. What are your thoughts on Amazon offering to pay the college tuition fees of its staff members?
2. Is it common for companies in your country to offer training or education benefits?
3. Is there a high turnover rate at your place of work? If so, why do you think that is the case?
4. Has your company ever had trouble finding people to hire?
5. What would you say are the most useful things you've learned at your job?
6. Are there any qualifications you're interested in pursuing?
7. Do you know anyone who's retrained in order to change careers?
8. Are college fees expensive in your country? How do most people pay them?