

# TechLance Tuition Reimbursement Policy

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## Introduction

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TechLance is committed to supporting the professional growth and career development of our employees through comprehensive educational assistance programs. We believe that investing in our team members' education not only enhances their skills and career prospects but also brings valuable knowledge and capabilities back to our organization. Our tuition reimbursement program is designed to help employees pursue higher education, professional certifications, and skill development opportunities that align with their career goals and contribute to TechLance's success.

Education is a lifelong journey, and we recognize that our employees may need to balance their learning goals with work responsibilities and family obligations. Our program is structured to accommodate working professionals who want to advance their education while maintaining their career momentum. Whether you're pursuing your first degree, advancing to graduate studies, or seeking professional certifications to enhance your expertise, TechLance is here to support your educational journey.

We view tuition reimbursement as a partnership between the employee and the company, where both parties benefit from the investment in education. Employees gain new knowledge, skills, and credentials that enhance their career prospects, while TechLance benefits from a more skilled and knowledgeable workforce. This mutual investment creates a commitment to continued employment that helps both individual career development and organizational stability.

## Eligibility Requirements and Performance Standards

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To be eligible for tuition reimbursement, employees must have completed at least 12 months of continuous full-time employment or 18 months of part-time employment (minimum 20 hours per week). This tenure requirement ensures that employees have established themselves in their roles and demonstrated commitment to TechLance before receiving educational benefits.

Performance standards are equally important in determining eligibility. Employees must maintain a performance rating of “Meets Expectations” or higher on their most recent annual review, have no active disciplinary actions or performance improvement plans, and maintain good attendance with no unexcused absences in the past six months. These requirements ensure that educational pursuits complement rather than detract from current job performance.

Throughout your course of study, you must remain actively employed and maintain full-time status if you’re pursuing degree programs. Part-time study is strongly encouraged to ensure that coursework doesn’t interfere with work responsibilities and performance. While we support employee development, your primary obligation remains to your current role and responsibilities at TechLance.

The approval process begins with discussions between you and your direct manager about how the proposed education relates to your current role or career trajectory within TechLance. Your manager needs to confirm that the educational program will provide value to both your professional development and the company’s needs, and that your schedule can accommodate both work and study commitments without compromising job performance.

## **Covered Educational Expenses and Limits**

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TechLance covers a range of educational expenses including tuition costs, mandatory registration and enrollment fees, required laboratory and technology fees, essential textbooks and course materials, and educational software specifically required for coursework. We also cover graduation fees for degree completion. However, we don’t cover transportation costs, parking fees, housing, meals, optional materials, or general technology purchases like personal computers.

Our reimbursement limits vary based on the level of education you’re pursuing. Undergraduate degree programs are eligible for up to \$4,000 per calendar year, while graduate degree programs

can receive up to \$6,000 annually. Professional certifications are covered up to \$3,000 per year, and individual courses not part of a degree program are reimbursed up to \$2,000 annually.

There's also a lifetime maximum benefit of \$25,000 per employee throughout your entire career at TechLance. This cap ensures that the program remains sustainable while still providing substantial support for employee education. Separate limits apply to undergraduate and graduate studies, and these limits don't reset with promotions or role changes within the company.

For final semester situations where students might exceed annual limits, we may provide additional consideration to help complete degree requirements. However, any expenses exceeding the maximum limits are the employee's responsibility, and we encourage planning your educational timeline to maximize the benefits available.

## **Application and Approval Process**

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The application process must be completed at least 30 days before your course begins to allow adequate time for review and approval. Rush processing is available with a 10-day minimum timeframe but requires manager approval and may not always be accommodated depending on the timing and complexity of the request.

Your application package must include a completed TechLance tuition reimbursement application form, official course descriptions or syllabus, detailed cost breakdown of all expenses, proof of institutional accreditation, and your most recent official transcript. You'll also need to demonstrate how the education relates to your current role or reasonable career progression within TechLance.

The review process involves multiple levels of approval. Your direct manager first evaluates the job relevance and scheduling implications, followed by HR verification of eligibility and policy compliance. For reimbursement amounts over \$3,000, senior management approval is required. The finance team confirms budget availability before final approval is granted.

If your application is denied, you'll receive written explanation of the reasons and information about the appeals process. Denied applications can be appealed to senior management with

additional justification about how the education benefits both your career development and TechLance's business objectives.

## **Academic Performance Requirements**

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To receive reimbursement, you must successfully complete your courses with grades of "C" or better for undergraduate courses and "B" or better for graduate-level courses. Pass/fail courses require a "Pass" grade, and professional certifications require successful completion and achievement of the certification or license.

You must submit official transcripts within 60 days of course completion along with receipts and proof of payment for all covered expenses. No reimbursement is provided for failed courses, incomplete grades, or withdrawn courses, and repeated course failures may impact your eligibility for future educational assistance.

The reimbursement request must be submitted within 90 days of course completion with all required documentation. Processing typically takes 30 days once complete documentation is received, and payment can be added to your regular paycheck, deposited directly to your bank account, or issued as a separate check.

Reimbursements may be subject to income tax depending on IRS regulations and the total amount received during the tax year. We recommend consulting with a tax professional if you have questions about the tax implications of educational reimbursements.

## **Service Commitments and Repayment Obligations**

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Receiving tuition reimbursement creates a service commitment to TechLance that varies based on the type of education completed. Undergraduate programs require an 18-month employment commitment after degree completion, graduate programs require 24 months, professional certifications require 12 months, and individual courses require six months per course.

These commitments begin upon successful completion of the education, not when you receive reimbursement. Multiple courses or programs may result in overlapping commitments, and the longest commitment period applies if there are conflicts.

If you voluntarily leave TechLance before completing your service commitment, you'll be required to repay a portion of the reimbursement received on a prorated basis. Employees leaving within the first six months after completion must repay 100% of reimbursement, those leaving between 6-12 months repay 75%, between 12-18 months repay 50%, and between 18-24 months repay 25%.

There are exceptions to repayment requirements for involuntary termination without cause, workforce reductions or layoffs, serious medical hardships, and situations where TechLance eliminates your position or location. The company reserves the right to pursue legal collection of unpaid amounts, though we typically work with employees to establish reasonable payment plans for large amounts.

## **Educational Leave and Sabbatical Options**

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While we generally expect employees to pursue education on a part-time basis while maintaining their work responsibilities, TechLance recognizes that some advanced degree programs may require more intensive study. Part-time study with a maximum course load of 6-9 credit hours per semester is preferred and can usually be accommodated with evening or weekend classes.

Full-time educational leave is generally not approved, as we need employees to maintain their job responsibilities and contribute to team objectives. However, we do offer educational sabbatical options for employees with exceptional performance records who have been with TechLance for at least five years and are pursuing advanced degrees like PhDs, JDs, or other terminal degrees that clearly benefit both the employee's career and TechLance's capabilities.

Educational sabbaticals are typically unpaid leave with benefits continuation for up to one academic year, with job protection and an extended service commitment of 3-5 years upon return. These arrangements require senior management approval and are considered on a case-by-case basis based on business needs and the strategic value of the education being pursued.

Reduced work schedules or job sharing arrangements are generally not available to accommodate educational pursuits, though we may consider flexible scheduling within your regular full-time commitment to help manage class schedules and study time.

## Approved Programs and Institutions

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TechLance covers education from regionally accredited universities, colleges, community colleges, and professional schools. Online programs are fully eligible as long as the institution is properly accredited and the program meets our approval criteria. We focus primarily on business and technology-related programs including business administration, management, finance, marketing, computer science, information technology, software engineering, data science, analytics, cybersecurity, and project management.

Professional certifications eligible for reimbursement include Project Management Professional (PMP), Certified Public Accountant (CPA), various IT certifications from vendors like Cisco, Microsoft, and AWS, and other industry-specific certifications that are relevant to your role or career progression within TechLance.

Liberal arts degrees and creative fields like graphic design or marketing communications require pre-approval and must demonstrate clear relevance to your job responsibilities or reasonable career advancement opportunities within TechLance. Alternative education programs, non-traditional institutions, and international schools also require special approval and additional documentation.

We maintain a list of pre-approved programs and institutions that have been evaluated for quality and relevance, though employees can request consideration of other programs through the application process. HR can help you determine whether a specific program or institution would qualify for reimbursement before you begin the application process.

This tuition reimbursement policy reflects TechLance's commitment to employee development and lifelong learning. We believe that education benefits both individual career growth and organizational capability, creating a win-win situation that strengthens our team and our

business. We encourage employees to take advantage of these benefits while maintaining their commitment to excellence in their current roles.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

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**Can I get reimbursed for online degree programs?** Yes, online programs are fully eligible for reimbursement as long as the institution is regionally accredited and the program is approved through our standard application process.

**What happens if I get a grade below the minimum requirement?** Unfortunately, grades below our minimum standards (C for undergraduate, B for graduate) don't qualify for reimbursement. However, this doesn't automatically disqualify you from future educational assistance.

**Can I pursue multiple certifications in the same year?** Yes, but you're limited to the annual maximum reimbursement amount for your category of education. Consider spreading certifications across multiple calendar years to maximize benefits.

**Do I have to pay tuition upfront and wait for reimbursement?** Yes, employees typically pay all educational expenses upfront and submit for reimbursement after successful course completion with appropriate documentation.

**What if my course costs exceed the annual maximum?** You're responsible for any costs above the annual maximum limits. Consider planning your educational timeline to stay within annual limits or spreading courses across multiple years.

**Can I take courses that aren't directly related to my current job?** Courses should relate to your current role or reasonable career progression within TechLance. Liberal arts or unrelated courses require special approval with strong business justification.

**What happens to my service commitment if I get promoted?** Service commitments continue regardless of role changes within TechLance. Promotions or transfers don't reset or eliminate your educational service obligations.

**Can I appeal if my educational program is denied?** Yes, you can appeal to senior management with additional documentation about how the program benefits both your career development and TechLance's business objectives.

*This policy is effective immediately and supersedes all previous tuition reimbursement policies. All reimbursements are subject to budget availability, IRS regulations, and the terms outlined in this policy. TechLance reserves the right to modify this policy with appropriate notice to employees.*