

EDUCATION ASSISTANCE POLICY

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Contents

1. Purpose.....	2
2. Scope	2
3. Definitions	2
4. Provision of Assistance	2
5. Eligibility	2
6. Application Process	2
7. Approval Process	3
8. Repayment of Education Assistance Costs.....	4
9. Types of Assistance Available.....	4
9.1 Financial.....	4
10. Document Change Control	5

1. Purpose

APIC recognises that appropriate continual learning can be valuable for the development and welfare of its employees. Appropriate education can contribute to the quality and competence of employees and in turn increase further the productivity and success of APIC's business.

The objective of this policy is to outline the assistance APIC may provide to employees who wish to undertake relevant continuing education courses with APIC's approval. This policy covers both the financial assistance and assistance with working arrangements, which may be provided by APIC, to assist employees balance the demands of work and further studies.

2. Scope

This policy applies to employees who wish to undertake further education courses and who meet the eligibility requirements listed below. This policy does not form part of any employee's contract of employment.

3. Definitions

Item	Definition
<i>Education course</i>	Includes, but is not limited to; further part-time and distance learning education courses leading to the award of a recognised academic or vocational qualification, from a recognised educational institution.

4. Provision of Assistance

APIC may, at its absolute discretion, provide assistance to employees to complete education courses where the:

- proposed educational course is relevant to APIC's business requirements;
- proposed course is relevant to the employee's career development with APIC; and
- employee has consistently demonstrated a satisfactory or above average job performance.

5. Eligibility

Employees will be eligible to apply for educational assistance where:

- the employee has been employed by APIC for a minimum period of 12 months, prior to commencing the course of study; and
- the course directly relates to the employee's current/prospective job description and responsibilities with APIC.

6. Application Process

Employees are required to make a written application for educational assistance prior to enrolment in the relevant educational course.

Written applications should include the following details:

- course name;
- type of qualification being pursued;
- the name of the educational institution in which the course will be undertaken;
- the duration of the course, indicating whether it will be completed on a part-time, full-time or by distance learning basis;
- a list of the course subjects and a summary of the contents of each course;
- where the employee has already completed some components of the course, a list of the subjects already completed and evidence of the grading received for each completed subject;
- a list of the prescribed reading materials (textbooks/resources etc.);
- an itemised list of the costs involved in completing the course (e.g. course fees and other expenses expected to be incurred such as textbooks, travel time etc.) and evidence to confirm these costs;
- an explanation of how the course of study directly relates to the employee's current/prospective job description and responsibilities and how it will contribute to the employee's career development; and
- an explanation of how the course of study is relevant to the business objectives of APIC.

7. Approval Process

Once an application has been received, the Human Resources Manager will advise in writing whether APIC will provide educational assistance, in what form this assistance will be provided, and over what period. For example, APIC may choose to provide assistance on a term by term basis.

Any assistance provided is at the absolute discretion of APIC and may be withdrawn at the end of the specified approved period without additional assistance being provided. As such, employees should bear this in mind prior to enrolling in an education course.

The employee will be required to incur all education costs upfront and APIC will reimburse those approved expenses provided the employee has satisfied all other requirements. The provision of assistance is also conditional upon the following:

- the employee passing the relevant units/subject for which assistance has been approved and provides evidence to APIC's satisfaction of this;
- the employee has, during the course of study, consistently maintained a satisfactory or above standard in their work performance;
- the employee is still employed by APIC, at the completion of the relevant course units/subject for which assistance has been approved; and
- the employee agrees to repay the financial assistance provided in the circumstances listed below.

Retrospective assistance will not be granted. Therefore, applications for financial assistance made after the completion of a course will not be accepted. An employee is required to make an application in writing, notifying APIC prior to enrolment in the course.

Approval for educational assistance is valid for a maximum period of twelve months. Employees are required to re-apply at the end of the approval period, prior to re-enrolling in an education course. Continuation of assistance is subject to the satisfactory completion of course units in the prior approval period and the additional criteria listed above.

8. Repayment of Education Assistance Costs

Where an employee ceases to be engaged by APIC for any reason: while completing the education course; or within 2 years of completion of the education course or part thereof, for any part of which the employee has been reimbursed or had the fees otherwise paid by or on behalf of APIC, the employee will be required to repay to APIC as a debt, in accordance with the following scale, all relevant financial assistance provided by APIC in connection with the education course:

- up to 12 months from the date of the relevant reimbursement date – 100% of the costs reimbursed by APIC;
- from 12 months to 18 months from the date of the relevant reimbursement date -50% of the costs reimbursed by APIC;
- from 18 months to 24 months from the date of the relevant reimbursement date -25% of the costs reimbursed by APIC.

If APIC, in its absolute discretion, decides to pay any education costs on behalf of an employee in advance, if the employee commences but later withdraws from the education course, the employee agrees to immediately repay to APIC that part of the education costs which have been paid by APIC as at the date of the employee's withdrawal from the education course;

- The employee agrees, that any debt that the employee is due to repay to APIC, may be deducted from any monies owed to the employee by APIC on the date of termination of their employment. If no such monies are owed to the employee, the employee agrees to repay the debt immediately.

9. Types of Assistance Available

APIC aims to make continuing education more expedient and/or less costly for its employees. The following forms of assistance may be provided in APIC's absolute discretion.

9.1 Financial

Fees for approved education courses are reimbursed to relevant employees (who are still in APIC's employ) at the end of each semester (or unit of study) upon provision of evidence of successful completion, including a copy of the employee's academic transcript and demonstration of satisfactory or above average work performance. Other approved expenses, such as purchase of required textbooks and other required resources, may be reimbursed by APIC upon the employee meeting the same requirements and in addition, by providing evidence of purchase (such as purchase receipts).

Employees will only be able to claim reimbursement for subjects/course units successfully completed and for reasonable expenses incurred. Reimbursement will take place by electronic fund transfer (EFT) unless otherwise agreed.

Financial assistance is limited to \$4,000.00 (inclusive of GST) for each employee.

10. Document Change Control

Version	Change Description	Date	Author
1.0	Put in new policy format	23 December 2016	Corinne Green