

# Frequently Asked Questions about my Tuition Benefits

## 1. What is the process for taking courses and receiving tuition reimbursement?

Submit Course Approval Request before enrolling in the course, <https://courereg.fcps.org>. Please review Direct Pay & tuition Reimbursement Deadlines above.

After successful completion of course, submit:

- Official transcript to [courseapproval@fcps.org](mailto:courseapproval@fcps.org)
- Upload invoice/bill showing course name, amount paid, and a zero balance

## 2. Why do I need to submit a course approval before enrolling in a course?

All of our negotiated contracts require approval prior to enrolling in coursework. You cannot receive tuition reimbursement without prior coursework approval. We verify coursework request meets specific requirements as determined by COMAR (for certificated staff) and progresses the employee's skills in either current job or for promotional purposes at FCPS. If there are concerns about a course selection, you will be notified with the reason why and offered some alternative suggestions.

Certificated staff are responsible for knowing the requirements needed for certification renewal. Specific details by certificate type are available here. If you want us to verify that a specific course will fulfill your certification requirements (i.e. a reading credit requirement), indicate so on your request and we will gladly verify for you.

## 3. Why do I need to get coursework approval if I don't plan on requesting tuition reimbursement?

If you are certificated and will be submitting coursework towards certification renewal requirements, you need to submit a coursework approval request PRIOR to taking the course. There are specific requirements for certificated staff for both certificate renewals and salary advancement based on coursework. We verify the coursework request meets specific requirements as determined by COMAR and FCPS regulations.

## 4. How will I know if my coursework approval request has been approved?

You will be notified via email to your FCPS email account. Please allow us 5 business days to evaluate and respond to your request.

If there are issues or specific questions about the coursework, that information will also be sent to your FCPS email.

## 5. What do I need to do to submit for tuition reimbursement?

Prior to the submission deadline, submit to HR:

- Official transcript to [courseapproval@fcps.org](mailto:courseapproval@fcps.org)
- Upload invoice/bill showing course name, amount paid, and a zero balance

## 6. I submitted my reimbursement request. When will I receive my reimbursement?

It can take up to **30 business days for your reimbursement to be processed**. We must check your prior reimbursements, verify eligibility, verify that you've submitted all the required documentation, record your course information in the system, and then process the payment. The payment goes through the approval process in HR, Finance, and then Payroll.

You will receive three emails regarding your reimbursement (assuming you aren't missing any required documentation) to let you know where your reimbursement request is within the process. The third and final email comes from payroll indicating that your reimbursement has made it through the approval process and will be included on your next paycheck.

## 7. What is the repayment obligation?

With the exception of extenuating circumstances, employees who leave FCPS employment within two (2) years of receiving tuition benefits (including tuition advance, reimbursement, and direct pay) shall be required to repay the monies received. That amount typically will be withheld from your final paycheck. In some cases a repayment plan will be established. The entire obligation must be satisfied within (6) months of the employee leaving FCPS.

## 8. What is the Direct Pay program?

New July 1, 2016 for fall enrollments, FCPS has entered into a partnership arrangement with Frederick Community College (Support only), Frostburg State University, Hood College, McDaniel College, Mt. St. Mary's University, University of Phoenix, and Walden University. For certificated employees enrolled in graduate coursework at those schools, FCPS will pay to the college any eligible tuition amount for eligible students who have been approved to participate. Click here to go to the [Direct Pay request form](#).

- Certificated staff must complete the direct pay approval form
- Upon approval, employee must sign a release agreement allowing the college to release billing information and at the end of the course your transcript directly to FCPS.
- The college will bill the employee directly for any non-eligible expenses (tuition in excess of your benefit amount or availability, fees, transcript, etc). The employee is responsible for making timely payment to the college for these non-eligible expenses.
- At the end of the semester, the college will bill FCPS and release transcripts to FCPS for participants.
- FCPS will pay eligible expenses and update your professional education.

- NOTE: Direct Pay benefits count against your overall tuition benefit allotment for the fiscal year, and are treated the same as a tuition reimbursement.

## 9. How do I access Professional Education to verify my courses taken, credits received, and amount reimbursed?

Human Resources records all coursework completed as an FCPS employee in the Professional Education screen of PeopleSoft.

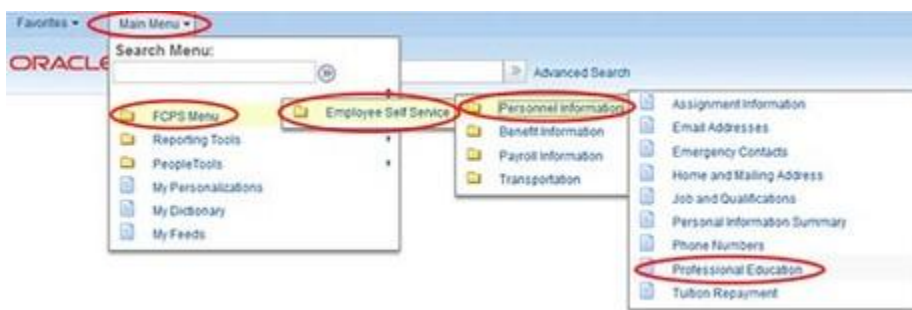
- From any computer go to <http://www.fcps.org>
- Click on For Staff
- Click on Employee Self Service Portal
- Click on Employee Self Service
- Type in your email Username and Password. click Sign In



- You are now logged into the FCPS Network. Type in your email Username and Password again to log into Employee Self Service. Click Sign In



- Select Main Menu, FCPS Menu, Employee Self Service, Personnel Information, Professional Education



Human Resources encourages all employees to check the Professional Education screen at least annually to verify its accuracy.

## 10. What should I do if there are courses missing from my Professional Education?

Contact HR via email ([courseapproval@fcps.org](mailto:courseapproval@fcps.org)) indicating the Course #, Course Title, the approximate semester/year the coursework was completed, and the college or university where you took the course.

HR will add the course to your Professional Education upon verification by official transcript.

## 11. How do I estimate the tuition benefits I have remaining for the fiscal year?

- Tuition benefits are based on a FISCAL year cycle (July 1 – June 30).
- Determine the starting amount for which you are eligible to receive (based on the chart).
  - [Certificated](#)
  - [A&S/AMT](#)
  - [Support](#)
- Go to Employee Self Service, to Professional Education.
  - The "entry dt" shows the date of the reimbursement
  - Reimbursed shows the amount reimbursed
  - Subtract any reimbursements received between July 1-June 30 of the fiscal year from the starting amount. IMPORTANT: Be sure to include any pending reimbursements for courses you have not yet completed/submitted including Direct Pay benefits for eligible staff.



Description	Acquired Dt	Entry Dt	Course Id	Type	Credits	Units	Reimbursed	School
Intro Educational Research	05/31/2014	05/27/2014	EDUC577	GD	3.0		\$1,215.000	HOOD COLLEGE
Math: Construct Reading G3	02/18/2014	02/05/2014	121910	MSDE	1.0			MARYLAND ST DEPT OF ED
Tech Liter: Ldrsh, Ltr	12/31/2013	01/15/2014	EDUC592	GD	3.0		\$1,215.000	HOOD COLLEGE

## 12. I still have questions. Who can I contact?

You can email your question to [courseapproval@fcps.org](mailto:courseapproval@fcps.org) or call Human Resources.

Teachers and Administrators, MSDE Certification questions - please email [certification@fcps.org](mailto:certification@fcps.org)