

Education Assistance Policy

Policy Owner:	Human Resources
Policy Applies to:	All Sobeys Inc. employees
Effective:	February 17, 2016
Last Updated:	February 1, 2021

Sobeys Inc. recognizes continuing education and lifelong learning is an important part of an employee's professional development. We encourage employees to pursue education in job related areas that will help them perform in their current role more effectively, or to support their development for future advancement with our organization.

Sobeys offers a tuition reimbursement program for employees who are meeting performance expectations and want to build a long term career with us. Reimbursement for qualifying educational programs will be based on budgetary considerations and business needs.

SCOPE

This policy covers eligible education an employee has decided to pursue for professional development. This includes courses that maintain relevant professional accreditation (except any required for licensing) for their role at Sobeys. Any education provided by a third party on behalf of Sobeys, completed at the direct request of Sobeys or is required for regulatory professional licensing is not covered under the scope of this policy and should follow the regular business expense reimbursement process.

ELIGIBILITY

All permanent full-time employees with six months of continuous service or regular part-time employees with two years of continuous service are eligible to apply for the program. Regular part-time employees are those who typically work at least 24 hours per week. Student, casual and contract employees are not eligible under this program. Employees must be actively employed and be meeting performance expectations in their current role to be eligible for reimbursement under this policy.

Managers are to review each request for educational assistance on a case by case basis. Any request should demonstrate how the identified course will enhance the employee's competency in their current role and/or support their career development at Sobeys. Educational assistance for career development must fit within a previously agreed upon plan by the employee's manager. Managers may review requests for educational assistance with their respective Human Resources Representative if they require additional guidance.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Applications and approvals must be made on a course by course basis. Degrees, certifications or designations that require multiple courses to complete will not be approved in advance.
- The course must be administered by an accredited educational institution, or a professional organization that has the appropriate credentials to provide the specific training.
- All course requirements must be completed outside of work hours unless manager approval is provided in advance. Overtime compensation is not provided for time spent outside of working hours for courses under this policy.
- There must not be comparable internal training alternatives available which would meet the employee's development needs. See the following link for a list of available internal courses <http://www.readytoserve.lan/OurEmployeeCenter/MyLearningDevelopment/default.asp>
- All costs under this policy are charged to the employee's respective department cost centre.
- Employees are encouraged to update any internal career profile with any relevant education that they complete under this policy.

SOBEYS' SPONSORED PROGRAMS

Sobeys has sponsored customized programs (i.e., CPA and specialized retail training) that are covered outside of this policy. For more information on these programs, please speak to your manager.

REIMBURSEMENT AMOUNTS

Employees are eligible for a maximum reimbursement of \$5,000 per fiscal year for the following:

- All tuition and direct course fees are reimbursed at 80 per cent.
- Ancillary costs that are mandatory for successful enrollment and/or completion of the course such as text books, course notes and exam fees are also reimbursed at 80 per cent. An estimate of this amount and confirmation that they are mandatory should be provided when submitting for pre-approval.
- Optional or supplemental materials that the employee decides to purchase for their benefit will not be reimbursed.

Employees are responsible for ensuring that they are only reimbursed up to the maximum amount. In the event the limit is surpassed, the employee will be required to refund the organization immediately.

Employees receiving other forms of education assistance from external organizations, associations or government agencies will be considered for reimbursement of the difference between the outside organization's benefit and 80 per cent of the reimbursable costs. It is the employee's responsibility to identify any outside assistance received on the initial application form. This includes any governmental grant, scholarship or assistance that would cover the cost of this specific course.

REIMBURSEMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Reimbursement will only be provided after final approval from the employee's leader (Director level at a minimum).
- Sobeys will reimburse an employee for the agreed amount if the employee is unable to complete a course due to relocation by the company, or termination "without cause".
- If the employee resigns or is terminated with cause prior to the completion of the course, they will not be eligible for reimbursement for any outstanding costs.
- Reimbursement is dependent on satisfactory completion of the program with a grade of at least a "C" or equivalent, as defined by the institution. For programs where grades are not assigned, proof of attendance may be requested.
- Reimbursement paperwork must be submitted within 60 days of the latter of course completion or when final grades are issued.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS

Before registering for a course, employees must provide the following documents to their respective leader for approval (Director level at a minimum):

- Completed Education Assistance Application Form
- Final course description

Upon course completion, the grades summary and receipt(s) must be attached to the application for approval. If approved, the leader will submit the completed form to the designated payroll inbox for reimbursement. The employee is responsible for keeping any supporting documentation in the event of an audit.

Instructions/Forms:

- Application Form