

## EDUCATIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

### **Objective**

Because Fellowship Bible Church believes that formal education has a positive impact on an employee's contribution to the church, FBC supports self-development and educational efforts by providing reimbursement for tuition associated with seminary level courses.

### **Scope of Policy**

All full-time, pastoral staff (exceptions may be made upon request) are eligible for benefits under this policy following one year of service at Fellowship. Employees may pursue a degree or take individual courses at approved and accredited seminaries under this program, provided the course of study is related to the employee's current position or a probable future assignment and the church approves the course(s).

### **Covered Expenses**

Tuition expenses are eligible for 100 percent reimbursement not to exceed \$5,000 per year with a cap of \$15,000 maximum. Maximum number of students accepted to the program will be 10 per year.

### **Service Obligation**

In consideration of receiving tuition assistance under this policy, the employee is to agree to commit to twelve (12) months of continued service with Fellowship Bible Church following the completion of each course. Should the employee voluntarily resign within 12 months of completing a course and receiving tuition reimbursement, he or she will be required to refund the current year amount.

### **Application and Approval Process**

Employees are encouraged to request tuition reimbursement prior to enrolling for the semester/term but no later than one week after the first day of class. The request will be submitted to the employee's overseer on the form provided for this purpose. The overseer will review the request taking into account the employee's current and future assignments and potential impact on the employee's work responsibilities. The overseer will then forward the request to the Human Resources Department with the overseer's recommendation to approve or disapprove.

The Human Resources Department will review the request for program compliance, will submit the request to the Central Leadership Team and then notify the employee if the initial request has been denied or approved.

Initial approval of a course of study does not obligate the church to future/continued approval of courses in that course of study. Approvals are only valid for the course and semester given. The employee's involvement in this program and class load will be reviewed each year during the Performance Review Process.

Tuition reimbursement will be based on the cost of credit hours only. Student fees (library, activity, registration, late fees, books, supplies, etc) will not be reimbursed. Reimbursement received from other sources, i.e. scholarship, grants, etc. is excluded from the reimbursable amount received.

To be eligible for tuition assistance under this policy, the course or program must meet one of the following criteria:

- Improve the employee's skills in her/his present position.
- Prepare the employee for another appropriate position within the church or;
- Be a course required for the completion of the degree.

The employee must submit verification of course cost to the Human Resources Department. The employee will then be paid 50% of the tuition cost at the beginning of the semester and the remaining 50% will be paid upon completion of the course.

If a particular class course requires onsite work, the employee must take this time away out of their current ministry leave.

There may be tax consequences or imputed income to employees participating in this program.

*Please note – Any exception to this policy may be requested through the employee's Central Leadership Team's representative.*