

Inclusive Organizational Tuition Policies: FAQs



Summary: Organizations should adopt a strategic and inclusive tuition policy to attract, retain, and grow diverse talent in an equitable manner. These FAQs address the factors organizations should consider when implementing a tuition policy that reflects inclusivity.

Why should an organization offer tuition benefits?

Organizations should implement tuition benefits to attract, retain, and grow talent. Tuition benefits can provide employees with equitable learning opportunities, optimize costs for corporate learning, and drive employee engagement.

What are the types of tuition policies?

The most common tuition policies are tuition reimbursement or tuition assistance.

What is tuition reimbursement?

Tuition reimbursement is a benefit provided by employers *after* the employee has provided proof of successful completion of coursework. The employee pays for his/her coursework upfront and then submits the cost of the coursework to their employer for reimbursement.

What is tuition assistance? Tuition assistance is a benefit provided by employers where the employer pays the university or institution *directly* on behalf of the employee.

Why does tuition assistance vs. reimbursement matter?

Offering tuition assistance vs. reimbursement can significantly impact an individual's intent and ability to pursue higher education via the tuition policy. With reimbursement, the individual does not receive funds until after completing their coursework successfully, as determined by the company policy. While this might mitigate risk for the employer, this could create a significant financial burden on employees who cannot or do not want to pay tuition upfront. Perhaps these individuals don't have a credit card or have a low credit limit, requiring them to find an alternate source of funds to pay for the program in advance with student loans, credit, or cash.

In such a scenario, a tuition reimbursement program could disproportionately affect employees who are low-income, have poor credit, and generally may not have the same financial resources as others to pay for education upfront. This creates an inequitable corporate learning environment, as these employees may be less likely to pursue higher education and may miss out on opportunities for professional development and career advancement, ultimately leading to a lack of diversity within the organization.

How do you drive inclusivity and reduce bias in tuition benefits?

Organizations should review their tuition benefits and policies to determine if certain employees might be less inclined to take advantage of the benefit due to the individual's circumstances. Companies should consider the amount of tuition assistance, the degree level requirements, grade achievement, organizational tenure, retention requirements, and performance requirements. Please leverage our checklist for an inclusive tuition policy.

What is a Direct Bill Plan?

Direct Bill is available to students for whom an employer or third party will be paying DeVry directly for tuition and fees. The Direct Bill Plan allows the employer or 3rd party to delay full payment of the tuition and fees.

How does Direct Bill impact a tuition policy?

Direct Bill allows employees without a credit card or those who cannot carry a credit card balance, or who do not choose to put tuition on their credit card to leverage a company's tuition reimbursement program, without having to take out loans or accrue debt. Without Direct Bill, employees must pay for tuition upfront until they prove satisfactory course completion (example; C+ or higher in the course), upon which the company will reimburse the employee.

How do tuition benefits support talent management initiatives?

- **Talent Acquisition:** Tuition benefits aid in attracting highly skilled employees. When potential employees are considering job offers, they may weigh the benefits and compensation packages of different companies. If one company offers a tuition policy or a higher value tuition policy than another company, this may be more attractive to job seekers who are looking to further their education.
- **Retention:** Offering tuition benefits can help organizations drive retention by giving employees the opportunity to further their education while working and develop new skills that can benefit the organization.

- **Engagement:** When employees feel they can advance their careers and improve their job mobility within the organization, they are more likely to be motivated to stay with the company long-term.
- **Professional Growth:** Offering tuition benefits can help organizations close critical skill gaps by providing employees with the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge they need or will need to effectively perform their jobs and contribute to the organization's success. When employees can pursue education that aligns to the organization's goals and mission, they can develop the skills and expertise necessary to fill key roles.
- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB):** Offering tuition benefits can aid an organization's DEIB initiatives by providing employees from underrepresented groups with the resources and support they need to acquire new skills to advance their careers. Offering tuition assistance with a direct billing relationship with a university represents a higher level of inclusivity as it provides equitable access to educational opportunities for all employees.

How does DeVry University support our partners?

- DeVry establishes meaningful relationships with our partner organizations and reviews company tuition benefits, ensuring employees have an equitable and efficient path to enrollment.
- DeVry works with our partners to select the relevant academic programming that aligns to the organization's needs.
- DeVry allows for a direct bill deferred payment relationship with our partners so that employees receive an equitable tuition benefit while avoiding risk for an employee who does not meet the policy requirements.