Your Tuition Reimbursement Guide

What You Need to Know Before, During and After Making the Request

1. Check With Your Employer First

Many organizations already offer tuition reimbursement, so **first ask your HR department to see if processes and guidelines have already been established.** They also may be able to help you with your application and answer additional questions about graduate school.

If your employer does have a policy, be sure to understand the details. Assistance programs usually have specifics on how much tuition will be covered and how payments will be distributed. They also might require maintaining a certain GPA or studying a specific field.

2. Build Your Case

If your organization does not have a program already in place, you will need to make your case to your HR department or manager directly.

Before then, research is required. Ask colleagues if they have asked for tuition benefits or similar assistance in the past. They can offer you advice on the best approach as well as how to balance graduate school with full-time employment.

Develop talking points outlining the value your master's can provide your employer, and research what similar organizations or competitors offer as a point of comparison. As you refine your talking points, it is essential to frame them as a benefit to your career and the organization's long-term success. Many employers fear that their employees will take advantage of tuition assistance and then take what they learned to another organization, so **be clear that you have yours and their goals in mind.**

3. Schedule a Meeting

Schedule a private meeting with your manager. Bring your well-researched talking points and be prepared to answer any detailed or tricky questions they may have about embarking on this process with you. **You may need to answer questions about the degree program itself, including its length, cost and its potential impact on your full-time role.**

Be prepared to share the research you have found about other organizations' assistance programs, the tangible benefits your employer could expect and any other relevant materials.

4. Be Ready for Any Outcome

It is impossible for you to know the exact inner workings of your organization. Depending on the size of your organization, your manager may not be the final decision-maker on whether you receive tuition assistance.

If your employer does decline, it is important to be respectful of that decision and those mitigating factors because there is a possibility that they decide to change that policy later on.

5. Don't Put Your Future On Hold

Even if you do receive a 'no,' that does not mean you should stop pursuing assistance. Alternative financial aid options can help fill the gaps you hoped tuition reimbursement would cover.

Reach out to an admissions outreach advisor at William & Mary to learn about other opportunities that may be available to you, including:

- Scholarships
- Federal student aid
- Graduate loans
- Loan repayment and forgiveness

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