



CITY OF MADISON POLICE DEPARTMENT
STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE



Tuition Reimbursement and Educational Incentive (MPPOA)

Eff. Date 01/31/2023

Purpose

The Madison Police Department (MPD) has implemented various procedures to provide appropriate reimbursements per the Madison Professional Police Officer Association (MPPOA) contract. This standard operating procedure (SOP) is to explain the procedures an employee will need to follow in order to access the provisions in the MPPOA contract related to educational incentive pay and tuition reimbursements.

Procedure

EDUCATIONAL INCENTIVE

- When an officer applies for employment at MPD, part of the application process is to submit transcripts. These transcripts are verified by the Lieutenant of Training. Verification will include ensuring that college level courses are from an institution listed by name in the MPPOA contract, or from an institution accredited by an organization approved by the US Department of Education and by the MPD Police Chief. Any credits from a foreign institution or from an unaccredited US institution must be converted to US accredited equivalencies. Applicants who are providing this transcript information as part of our hiring process and current employees who are seeking an educational benefit are subject to this requirement and are responsible for all costs related to this process. Once hired, this information is provided to the MPD Finance Unit by the Training Program Assistant, in order to track eligibility for educational incentive. The educational incentive is added to an officer's first full paycheck after completing 42 months of continuous employment as a commissioned member of the MPD. Current employees will be provided their educational incentive once a degree is earned and is determined eligible, pursuant to the accreditation requirement cited above.
- When the officer completes the 42 months of service, the MPD Account Tech will calculate the appropriate educational incentive from the hiring transcripts and years of service. If an officer completes any coursework between the date of hire and the completion of their probation, it is the officer's responsibility to ensure that the appropriate transcripts and/or other paperwork is submitted to the MPD Finance Unit in order to update the officer's beginning educational incentive amount.
- Prior to the start of an officer's educational incentive, MPD Finance staff will email each officer the educational incentive percentage for which they are eligible based on the initial documents. The officer should review this information and notify MPD Finance immediately if there are any issues or concerns with the percentage level calculated. **Any concerns must be communicated within 30 days of the officer's receipt of this email.**
- If an employee has **less than** a bachelor's degree, a file will be maintained in the Finance Unit to track ongoing awards of training points and/or credits. Per the current MPPOA contract, the following information is used to determine the number of points and credits each employee has earned:
 - All credits from an approved educational institution will be counted as credits except for the following:
 - Transfer credits are included if they are listed individually and the transcript clearly demonstrates that there is no duplication. If the transcript does not include the detailed information, the MPD Finance Unit will require the officer to submit a transcript from the awarding institution in order to verify that the credits are for added coursework, not duplicates.
 - Testing credits are included if they are for regular courses (e.g., math, English, etc.) that are counted by the educational institution towards a degree program.
 - Neither Transfer nor Testing credits will be counted as credits if they are for "life experience," for police work, or for the police academy. Non-degree testing credits are also not counted.
 - Once an employee earns a degree from an approved/accredited institution, they are entitled to the full educational incentive for that degree, regardless of whether some of the credits were testing or transfer credits.
 - If an associate's degree has been awarded with less than 70 credits, additional points will be awarded to total 70 points. Coursework at any technical college will not add to credits above 70.

Once 70 credits have been earned at a two-year school, any additional credits will count only as points.

- If an officer transfers credits from one school to another, the credits can only count one time (for example: if an officer takes 10 credits at one college and then transfers to a second college where an associate's degree is received, those 10 credits become part of the 70 points awarded for an associate's degree; they cannot count twice. If only six credits transfer, then six credits will be included in the 70 and four will be added to the 70 **IF** they were taken at a four-year college. If they were taken at a two-year college, they do not increase the credits achieved.)
- Since the MPPOA contract awards educational incentive at a different rate for points vs. credits, points and credits will be tracked separately (for example, in the current MPPOA contract, a 15% educational incentive is either 130 points **OR** 96 college credits.)
- As Tuition Reimbursements are paid, those additional credits will also be added to the Education Incentive file to help track the officer's progress. **Submission of transcripts with a request for reimbursement will be considered proper notification to your departmental PD Purchasing under Article VIII of the MPPOA contract, i.e., for additional incentive points – unless there is a discrepancy between the grade report and previously received transcripts.**
 - If a discrepancy is noted between the transcripts and the grade report, the officer will be notified that they should submit a current and complete transcript to ensure that the points/credits are up-to-date. There will be no update in the educational incentive until the discrepancy is resolved.
- Accredited vocational school courses with non-transferable as well as transferable credits will receive full credit. Non-accredited vocational and military courses will count as 1/48 point. Appropriate documentation of hours attended at either vocational or military courses will be required in order to receive points.
- Reference the current MPPOA contract (for the period January 1, 2022-December 31, 2025): Appendix 'A' item C7, 1/16 of a point is awarded for each class hour at approved seminars, short courses, etc., conducted by state, federal, or other training agencies, outside of the in-service or other MPD training provided by the department.
 - The documentation needed for this is proof that an officer attended and, if applicable, passed the course. This would be in the form of a diploma/certificate. Documentation must be provided by the employee to the MPD Finance Unit within six months of completion of the course. Providing documentation to MPD Training personnel will not be considered as fulfilling the requirement to provide this documentation to the Finance Unit. Documentation must include the date of the course, total number of hours attended, location of the course, and information regarding who provided the training.
 - Training completed pre-employment will not be given points.
 - Training that is provided by MPD personnel is not eligible for training points.
 - Training hosted by the MPD (usually at the Training Center) may be eligible for training points provided that the course is taught by non-MPD personnel and is not counted toward the required in-service or employee development needed to maintain state certification.
 - Training attended on duty time will not be given points.
- One point is added for each full year of service in the department, to be given on each officer's anniversary date.
 - Every year, the Account Tech will update the year on each officer's sheet to increase the points by one. The Account Tech will then evaluate if a step increase is warranted.
- If a new incentive level is reached, the Account Tech will submit the appropriate paperwork to payroll.
 - Educational Incentives start at the beginning of the next pay period **AFTER** the employee submits the documentation. **Educational Incentive is never backdated.**
- The Account Tech will then email the employee of the change in education incentive pay with a reminder that the employee should verify the incentive level. **It is ultimately the officer's responsibility to verify all points are correct and the correct incentive level is given.**

Please refer to the MPPOA contract for the outline of educational incentive percentages for each level of points/credits.

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT

Tuition Reimbursement is for members of MPPOA once they successfully complete all parts of the pre-service academy and all field training phases. Any officer that leaves the department with less than five years of service, following receipt of tuition reimbursement, will need to repay 100% of those funds received in those five years unless they are eligible for WRS, Social Security, or other public employment fund annuities.

This procedure is for those officers seeking their FIRST bachelor's degree only: once a bachelor's degree is attained, no additional bachelor's level courses are authorized for tuition reimbursement.

- In Mid-October, the Chief will send out a memo outlining the process for those who will be seeking tuition reimbursement for the subsequent year.
- Officers must fill out the Tuition Request Form, which is emailed along with the Chief's memo, and submit it to the Chief by November 1st of the year preceding the year in which they are seeking reimbursement.
 - The form should provide the name of the college in which the officer will be enrolled, the classes that the officer plans to take, and the cost of each course.
 - If the officer does not know exactly which classes they will take, they should list the number of classes and the cost per class or cost per credit. If the initial application is approved, prior to enrolling in the classes, the officer will contact the Account Tech with a list of classes and the costs. The Account Tech will submit the list to the Chief of Police for approval. Classes which are not approved will not be eligible for reimbursement.
 - Undergraduate internships may be allowable, but the officer is required to submit for review papers required in conjunction with the internships for which college credits are awarded.
 - In general, coursework should be taken at an institution listed as approved in the MPPOA contract, or at an institution that is US accredited by an organization approved by the US Dept. of Education. Any exceptions will need to be approved in advance by the Chief of Police.
- The Chief will review all requests and inform the applicants of their status by December 31st.
- The Account Tech will notify each applicant of their approval and remind them of the process to follow once they have successfully completed the course.
- Once the undergraduate applications are approved, the Chief will make a decision if funds will be made available to officer's seeking a master's degree. This procedure will be determined by the Chief.
- **Within 30 days of completion** of an approved course, the officer will need to fill out the Reimbursement Request form located on SharePoint, Forms & Resources, Forms, Finance. **The officer will submit this form by email, along with the grade report and a paid invoice, to the MPD Finance Unit at PDPurchasing@cityofmadison.com.**
 - Only amounts that are paid by the officer will be reimbursed. Tuition paid for by grants or scholarships will not also be reimbursed by the City.
 - Fees, books, interest or service charges, or other miscellaneous costs are the responsibility of the employee and will not be reimbursed by the City.
- **Courses must be completed in the calendar year they are approved.** If an officer is unable to complete a course within the calendar year, that officer needs to notify the Account Tech. If a course starts in one year and ends in the next year, the tuition reimbursement process for the year in which an officer receives the reimbursement will need to be followed (for example: if a course starts in November 2014 and ends in January 2015, the grade report will not be received until February 2015 so the reimbursement request will be made in 2015. The officer in this scenario would follow the tuition reimbursement process that starts in November of 2014 for the 2015 calendar year).
- **Tuition reimbursement funds do NOT carry forward from one year to another. If you do not take the courses in the year for which they were approved, you will need to reapply for funding for the year in which you will take them.**
- As soon as an officer becomes aware that they will not be completing all the approved courses, that officer should email the Account Tech so that the funds can be released to other officers who were not granted the full amounts of their requests.

Procedures for Master Level Tuition Reimbursement

If additional funds are available after the undergraduate monies are awarded **AND** the Chief so decides, this process may be opened up to officer's seeking a master's degree.

- After the funding for bachelor's level tuition has been awarded, the Chief will have a memo sent out announcing the opportunity to submit requests for master's degree reimbursement. All courses need to be in a related field.
- Only graduate level courses are acceptable, unless the undergraduate course is a prerequisite for acceptance into an approved master's degree program. Internships and other alternate courses are currently not allowed.
- In general, coursework should be taken at an institution listed as approved in the MPPOA contract, or at an institution that is US accredited by an organization approved by the US Dept. of Education. Any exceptions will need to be approved in advance by the Chief of Police.
- The officer will need to compose a memo indicating why their courses will benefit the MPD and how it relates to their current duties.
- Only applications received by the due date will be considered.
- Once the Chief reviews the application and makes his decision, a memo outlining the officer's award will be sent out.
- The process for receiving reimbursement for a master's program is the same as outlined above for a bachelor's program.

Original SOP: 04/01/2014

(Revised: 02/24/2016, 02/08/2017, 05/23/2017, 09/08/2017, 11/18/2019, 01/31/2023)

(Reviewed Only: 12/26/2017, 01/31/2026)