

Policy # 107	Subject: Course Reimbursement for Special Education Certification (Content Area Teachers)
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DSCYF/DMSS/ Education Unit

I. PURPOSE

To define the policy and procedures to be followed when reimbursing coursework completed toward special education certification for content area teachers already employed by the Education Unit in a teaching position.

II. BACKGROUND

14 Del. C. § 34 recognizes the value in providing financial assistance for higher education through a variety of reimbursement options, stating “this will improve student achievement by enabling and encouraging those teachers to pursue education that will enable them to become fully certified and prepared to deliver high-quality instruction in state-approved critical needs areas”. All Areas of Special Education are recognized at this time. <https://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/1060>

To supplement these programs, which often have limited funding available to a wide pool of applicants, the Unit has allotted funds from their IDEA grant to support professional development for teachers wishing to earn their special education certification. The availability of tuition reimbursement is dependent on the annual allocation of funding and Unit priorities.

DSCYF Educational Unit programs traditionally serve a larger than average special education population. Historically, that number averages fifty percent (50%) across the unit but may be higher in certain buildings. Staff at our secondary sites are usually content area certified but would benefit from special education certification. Current regulations require five three-credit courses and successful completion of the PRAXIS II for special education certification.

III. POLICY

Any full-time content area certified teacher who wishes to obtain special education certification may apply for available reimbursement funds in accordance with the procedure outlined below. Approval may not exceed total budgeted to fund reimbursements for applicable coursework. Courses which are eligible for reimbursement are identified in *Appendix A*.

IV. PROCEDURE

Application Procedures

- Complete the Tuition Reimbursement form attached and submit to the applicant's direct supervisor at least two weeks in advance of the course start date. **Under no circumstances will a course be approved if the application for tuition reimbursement is received after the course start date.**
- Complete one application for each course for which tuition reimbursement is being requested
- Once the application is approved by the Education Unit Supervisor, the employee is responsible for registering and paying for the course as directed by the providing institution/college

Course Selection and Completion Requirements

- The course shall directly relate to the pursuit of special education certification (See Appendix A)
- Courses being taken toward initial certification/licensure are not eligible for reimbursement
- The course must be successfully completed with a "B" or better in order to be eligible to receive reimbursement

Required Documentation

The following documents will be submitted to the Education Unit Supervisor in order to process the reimbursement claim:

- Proof of payment (receipt)
- Proof of successful completion (copy of final grade slip or official transcript)
- State of Delaware Employee Expense Voucher

Amount of Reimbursement

- The amount of reimbursement will not exceed the tuition rate charged to a Delaware resident who takes a course at the University of Delaware.
- Other fees and costs (i.e. textbooks, lab fees) associated with taking the course are not reimbursable
- Funding shall be divided into two equal parts. The first half shall be divided among eligible employees who complete coursework prior to February 15th. The second half shall be available to employees who submit verification of successful course completion submitted to the Unit prior to June 15th
- In the event that funds remain in either portion of the year, the Unit will reallocate those funds to reimburse eligible employees in the other portion of the year whenever possible

Appendix A

Special Education Certification Coursework Requirements Title 14 Section 1500 Professional Standards Board

1571 Special Education Teacher of Students with Disabilities

Completion of a minimum of fifteen (15) credits or their equivalent in professional development as approved by the Department, with a focus in special education or in students with disabilities in the following content areas:

4.1.1.5.1 Diagnosis and Instruction for Reading / Literacy (3 credits);

4.1.1.5.2 Education Evaluation and IEP Development (3 credits);

4.1.1.5.3 Curriculum and Instruction in Special Education (3 credits);

4.1.1.5.4 Applied Behavior Analysis (3 credits); and

4.1.1.5.5 **One of the following areas:**

4.1.1.5.5.1 Legislation, Policy & Procedures/ Special Issues in Special Education (3 credits);

4.1.1.5.5.2 Transitions from Secondary Special Education or Secondary Transition Planning (3 credits);

4.1.1.5.5.3 Collaborative Teaming in Special Education (3 credits); or

4.1.1.5.5.4 Assistive Technology (3 credits).