

Ben E. Keith Company	POLICIES/PROCEDURES	PAGE NUMBER Page 1 of 4
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SECTION: Educational Assistance Program		ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT Human Resources

PURPOSE

This policy establishes a procedure for providing eligible employees with financial assistance for education. Ben E. Keith Company (BEK) understands the value of education for its employees and encourages employee development through formal education. This policy further explains how an employee becomes eligible for, applies for, and receives funding under this benefit.

PROCEDURES

1.0 Eligibility of Employee

Full time employees become eligible on the first of the month following six (6) months of employment. Full time classification is decided based on your position’s designation on file.

Employees may not apply for benefits under the Educational Assistance Policy while on a paid or unpaid leave of absence. If an employee is approved for benefits under the Educational Assistance Policy and later commences a leave of absence (paid or unpaid) the benefits will continue unless terminated under another provision of this policy.

Employees must be able to complete the courses outside the employee’s regularly scheduled working hours unless otherwise approved by the employee’s supervisor/manager and Human Resources.

2.0 Maintaining Eligibility

Employees must apply each semester before the deadlines as stated below to maintain eligibility. Further, an employee’s job performance may be considered in determining continued eligibility under the program.

3.0 Course / Degree Program Eligibility

All degree programs need to be submitted and approved by BEK Educational Assistance Committee before the course begins and before the deadlines stated below. Expenses that are not pre-approved will not be reimbursed. All degree programs must be completed within a reasonable amount of time as determined by the BEK Educational Assistance Committee.

REVISION	DATE OF LATEST REVISION N/A	SUPERSEDES ISSUE DATED All
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The BEK Educational Assistance Committee will consider the following degree programs:

Associates	All Degree Programs approved, subject to other requirements of this policy.
Bachelors	All Degree Programs approved, subject to other requirements of this policy.
Masters	Degree programs approved, subject to other requirements of this policy, if (i) the course maintains or improves the skills or performance in the employee's current position or department, OR (ii) the course prepares the employee for an identified future position which the employee can reasonably be expected to qualify for within the Company as determined by the BEK Educational Assistance Committee.
Executive MBA	Not included in the Educational Assistant Program; Division President may nominate a participant for approval.
Ph.D. and other doctorate degrees:	Not included in the Educational Assistance Program, subject to BEK Educational Assistance Committee review.

Programs not eligible for assistance are non-credit academic courses for special skills such as computer courses, language courses, conferences, seminars, workshops, and training sessions. Investment in non-credit training and required continuing education are managed by the individual supervisor's employee training and/or professional education/development accounts.

4.0 Application Deadlines

Deadlines for employees to submit application to the Ben E. Keith Educational Assistance Committee.

Fall Semester – July 15th

Spring Semester – November 15th

Summer Semester – April 15th

If any of these dates fall on a holiday or on a weekend, the application deadline will be following Monday.

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5.0 Qualified Institutions

Qualified institutions for course credit are two-year junior and community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, graduate or other professional schools, provided that they are:

- (1) Recognized as an accredited institution by the appropriate national, regional or professional association. Employees should inquire with Human Resources in advance whether their proposed institution qualifies; and
- (2) Recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as an institution to which contributions are deductible for Federal Income Tax purposes under Internal Revenue Code Section 170.

Online educational programs require additional review.

6.0 Reimbursement Cap

BEK will reimburse an employee a maximum of \$5,250 per year ("Reimbursement Cap"). For purposes of this policy, each year will be the calendar year. Over the course of an employee's lifetime, an employee may receive up to \$40,000 in total reimbursements for qualifying educational expenses.

Employees will be responsible for the tax consequences of this reimbursement. As an example, as of the effective date of this policy, \$5,250 per year is reimbursed tax-free (not taxed as income); however, this is subject to change by the IRS.

Employees approved for reimbursement under this policy can only submit the following expenses for reimbursement to meet the Reimbursement Cap.

1. Tuition
2. All Mandatory Fees
3. Textbooks
4. Diploma Fee

7.0 Reimbursement

1. Grade Requirement: Reimbursement is contingent upon the employee earning a passing grade that is accepted by the school for the credit or confirmation of satisfactory completion of the course from the school when a course is not graded. A passing grade is defined as an "A," "B," or "C" grade for undergraduate and graduate classes. If the course is a "Pass/Fail," a "Pass" is acceptable.
2. Timing of Reimbursement: BEK will reimburse expenses per semester after the employee submits a transcript, invoices, and receipts, plus any additional documentation ("Reimbursement Documentation") by the BEK Educational Assistance Committee. In some circumstances, direct pay or pre-pay option may be approved by the BEK Educational Assistance Committee.

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3. An employee will not receive tuition reimbursement if their employment is terminated (voluntarily or involuntarily) prior to completion of an approved course.
4. Employees must disclose any additional funding received by the employee towards educational expenses covered by this policy to the BEK Educational Assistance Committee. Failure to do so may result in disqualification from this benefit and disciplinary action. Employees are not to use the Educational Assistance Program reimbursement monies as a means for additional income if his or her educational cost is covered by a grant or scholarship.

8.0 Exceptions / No-Contract

BEK has the right to create any exceptions to this policy and change this policy at any time without notice. This policy does not create a contract with the employee or alter at-will status of the employee.

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